

ST AGNES SCHOOL ATTENDANCE POLICY

This policy is based on the following principles:

- Society has a responsibility to prepare young people for successful participation in learning and the broader community.
- Families, society, peers and educators and other significant adults influence the life choices of young people.
- Parents/carers have a responsibility to ensure that their children attend school.
- Attendance has benefits and consequences that increase or decrease life choices.
- Individuals are able to accept responsibility for their participation in educational programs according to their level of development.
- Continuity of relationships and learning in an educational program is dependent upon attendance.
- Attendance is a shared responsibility between the staff of preschools and schools, parents/caregivers, children and students, and members of the wider community.
- Attendance is critically linked to the quality of the curriculum, teaching and learning and the development of relationships, which then foster improved learning outcomes and increased wellbeing for individuals and groups.
- Participation in educational programs fosters the development of personal and social skills.

Importance of regular attendance:

The likelihood of success in learning is strongly linked to regular attendance and appropriate participation in educational programs. It is crucial that children and students develop habits of regular attendance at an early age, even from the time they are enrolled in a preschool setting.

Students who have poor patterns of attendance are at risk of not achieving their educational, social or psychological potential and are disadvantaged in the quality of choices they are able to make in later life situations. These learners may:

- be socially isolated
- place themselves at risk of harm during times of absence
- be more likely to be involved in socially unacceptable and/or illegal activities
- have gaps in their knowledge and understanding of basic concepts
- feel insecure in the preschool or school environment
- be more likely to leave school early
- be over-represented in the juvenile justice system
- be the victims of bullying and harassment

Once learners have begun to absent themselves from preschool or school, and the initial cause of this remains undetected or unexplored, it is likely that the pattern of absence will continue and escalate through the student's subsequent school career. Late arrival at school through the primary years is often related to non-attendance during secondary school.

Early warning signs:

Early intervention for students at risk of developing irregular patterns of attendance is crucial in order for these patterns to be reversed.

Indicators of students at risk of developing these patterns include the following:

- frequent lateness
- leaving school early
- missing lessons
- being the victim of bullying and harassment

- learning difficulties
- many days absent, either through illness, unexplained reasons or family commitments
- unresolved issues with school personnel (staff or students)
- social or emotional issues
- difficulties at times of transition
- health issues experienced by the student and/or family members

Benefits of regular attendance for students:

- Getting the maximum benefit from school will optimise life choices.
- Attending school regularly will develop skills and attitudes that will help them to be successful in later life. These include self-discipline, punctuality, being organised and keeping to routines.
- Regular attendance leads to an increased likelihood of being successful at school.
- Attending regularly leads to making friends and learning to maintain relationships over a length of time.
- The acquisition of social skills necessary to live and work successfully with others.
- It is safer to be at school than unsupervised away from school.
- People will be more positive students if they have a good attendance record.
- Attending school provides opportunities for socialising with friends.
- Good attendance will mean that students will learn more and will be more likely to enjoy school.

Benefits of regular student attendance for educators:

- You are able to fulfil your responsibilities to the students in your care.
- There will be improved learning outcomes.
- You will enjoy less complex management of the learning program as you will not need to re-teach parts of it to students who were away when you introduced something new.
- There will be less complex classroom management because you will not need to help students re-establish relationships following periods of absence.
- You will be able to help students develop habits such as punctuality, self-discipline and organisation which will be of value to them in everyday situations.
- Resources currently being spent on following up absences can be spent on the classroom program.

Benefits of regular student attendance for parents/carers:

- By encouraging regular attendance you will know that you have positively influenced your child's education.
- You will know that your child is safe at school and not at risk elsewhere.
- You will know that your children are learning more appropriate things than if they were truanting.
- You will have peace of mind in knowing that children who attend school regularly are less likely to break the law and go to jail in later life.
- You will enjoy more structured family routines.
- Your child is more likely to finish year 12 and have broader opportunities.
- You will avoid a fine or legal action due to your child's poor attendance at school.

Benefits of regular student attendance for the community:

- As a member of the community and a participant in this initiative, you will have contributed to the next generation of community leaders.
- Through addressing this initiative, you have an opportunity to work in partnership with schools to achieve a shared goal.
- You will be supporting young people in being less likely to be involved in crime.
- You will be helping to ensure that young people are spending their days safely.
- The community as a whole will experience less cost, both financially and socially.
- Regular attendance by students will promote an increased level of safety for all.

Procedures:

The siren will sound at 8.50am to signify the start of the school day.
Parents/carers are requested to advise the front office prior to the start of the school day if their child/ren are going to be absent. It is advisable to also provide written communication explaining the student absence. A certificate from a qualified medical practitioner is required for student absences for three consecutive days or more.
The teacher will call the roll between 8:50am – 9:00am. Any student absent when the roll is called will be marked as an unexplained absence for the day if the school has not received notification as to the reason for the absence. This will be adjusted if parents/carers provide information at a later time. Any student arriving at school after 8:50am must report to the office and obtain a 'late slip' from the front office staff. The student then proceeds to class and gives the late slip to the class teacher.
The roll book is sent to the front office each day by 9am.
Early departure - parents/carers report to the front office. Parent/carer signs child/ren out and either goes to class to collect child or teacher is notified and child/ren meets parent/carer at front office.
The details of each child's attendance (absence, lateness, early departure) are recorded daily in the class roll book and electronically in the DFE EDSAS software. Class teachers and front office staff will bring persistent lateness/early departures and absenteeism to the notice of Leadership for action.
Following three consecutive days of unexplained absence the class teacher will contact the parents/carers. If unsuccessful the matter will be referred to the leadership team for action. This may include a home visit by leadership and the class teacher and the matter reported to the Attendance & Engagement Officer.

Ways for parents/carers to communicate student absence to the school:

- Phone: 8263 3541 - office hours for phone messages are 8.30am to 3:30pm weekdays. An answering machine service is available for messages outside office hours.
- Skoolbag App: using 'eforms', 'Absentee Form'
- In writing:
 - Write a note in the Student Diary or Communication Book
 - Send a signed and dated note/letter with a sibling/family member/friend to the front office or class teacher
 - email: dl.1091.info@schools.sa.edu.au
- In person: provide details to the front office or to the class teacher

At St Agnes School we are committed to implementing strategies to improve student attendance rates. As at 2017, the DFE target for attendance across the system is 95%. This is also the target for St Agnes School. We will continually work to support students and families to achieve or better this attendance rate.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Absenteeism Flow Chart

Appendix 2: Procedures for Addressing Student Attendance Concerns

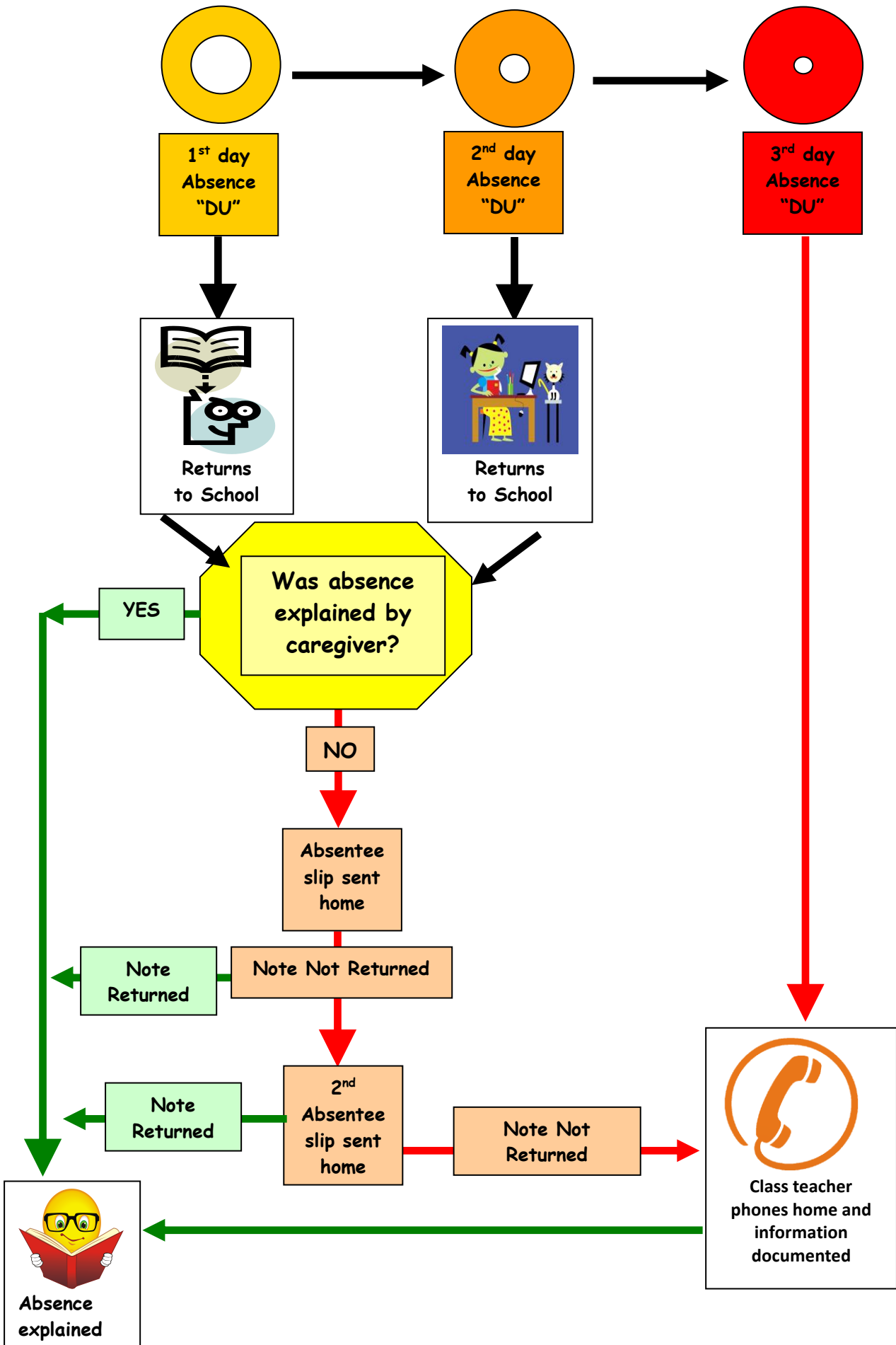
Appendix 3: Contact with Parents re Student Attendance Contact Initiated by Staff

Appendix 4: Reason for Absence Forms

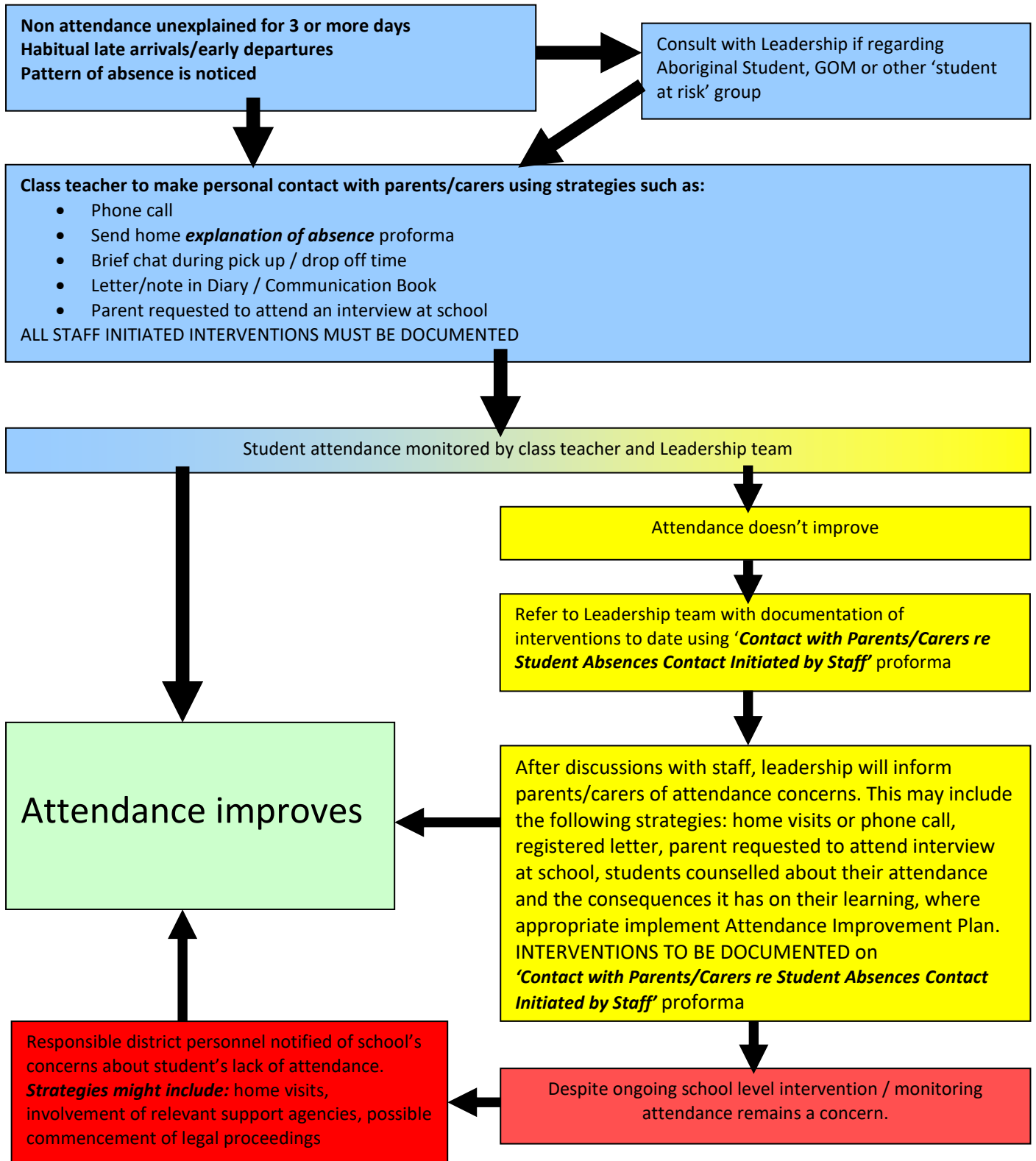
Appendix 5: Student Attendance Improvement Plan

***Ratified by Governing Council 17th May 2017**


Absenteeism Flow Chart



Procedures for addressing Student Attendance Concerns



Appendix 3



Contact with Parents/Carers re Student Absences

Contact Initiated by Staff

Student: _____ Year Level _____ Class Teacher _____

Date of Follow UP	Reason For Concern	Action Taken- Strategies	Outcome of Action	Staff Member involved
e.g. 28.3.2017	<i>Absent 3 consecutive days without note or call to school Absent every Wednesday Has had more than 10 days absence in a term. Regularly 5-10 mins late in the morning</i>	<i>Phoned home Note in diary "Explanation of Absence" Invited parent to meeting to discuss Home Visit Discussed with previous year's teacher Referred onto Leadership Referred onto attendance Counsellor</i>	<i>No answer will call again No Answer – left message Sent correspondence through mail- Registered letter Parent indicated student will be returning in 2 days has been ill- will bring note upon return.</i>	Ms Class Teacher

Please record any attempts made successful or not to obtain explanation for any long term or regular absence. In particular for students who have been absent for 3 consecutive days without explanation, or those who have a poor record of attendance.
Separate sheet for each student of concern.
If referred on to leadership, an up to date copy of this document will need to be forward on, indicating what action has been taken.
Records such as this are required components for regional personnel investigating ongoing poor attendance.

Appendix 4

St Agnes School

Date _____

Dear

According to our attendance records..... was absent from school on the following dates and I have no record of reason for absence. As it is a legal requirement that I keep detailed and accurate records on student attendance, I request that you complete the information below and return it to me as soon as possible.

With thanks

.....

Dates of Absence
.....

Please tick the reason for absence:

Illness with Doctor's Certificate

Illness without Doctor's Certificate

Family

Signed.....

Date.....

Appendix 5



STUDENT ATTENDANCE IMPROVEMENT PLAN

STUDENT NAME: DATE:

PRESENT:

Identified needs or areas for improvement	Goals or task	Expected Outcome	By Whom	By When

Student signature: Date:

Parent/carer signature: Date:

School delegate signature: Date:

Attendance and Engagement Officer signature: Date: