

Highfields State Secondary College

Attendance Improvement Strategy



TARGETS

- To promote 100% attendance at school to **increase life choices** and provide opportunities for **higher achievement**, and
- To build a strong culture of **shared responsibility** for student attendance between students, parents/care, teachers, support team and the administration team.

OUR BELIEFS: THE BENEFITS OF EXCELLENT SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

- Full participation in school optimises life choices;
- There is a strong link between regular attendance and higher levels of achievement;
- Through regular attendance the life skills of self-discipline, punctuality and organisation significantly improve;
- Attending regularly leads to stronger friendships that can be maintained over time.
- The higher the attendance, the greater the understanding of learning and satisfaction about being at school; and
- Being away from school can place a student in unsafe situations.

EXPECTATION

Under the Education (General Provisions) Act 2006, and as outlined in departmental policy, a parent/carer of a child of compulsory school age is *obliged to ensure that their child attends school on every school day* for the educational program in which he/she is enrolled. A parent/carer of a young person in the compulsory participation phase is obliged to ensure that the young person is participating full-time in an eligible option.

Highfields State Secondary College expects students to attend school every day unless illness or a serious family emergency occurs. The school expects that families make every effort to schedule appointments, family activities/vacations outside of school hours and/or during school vacation time.

Communication of expectations:

- The attendance strategy is endorsed by the School P&C.
- The full school attendance policy will be on the school's website.
- The attendance strategy is introduced at key parent events, for example, the New Parent Evening and discussed at all enrolment interviews.
- All staff members speak regularly to students and families about the importance of attendance and have a clear understanding of the attendance strategy of the school.
- Students are advised of their attendance rates four times a year.
- On an annual basis the school sets clear targets for attendance.

Celebration of excellent attendance rates:

The school community celebrates successes at both the individual and whole school level.

Students who achieve 95% attendance or better may be invited to attend celebration events like school socials, end of year excursions.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

STUDENT	PARENT/CARER
<p>Set a personal goal of attending school every day.</p> <p>Monitor personal attendance patterns and calculate % attendance regularly.</p> <p>Understand that it is a legal responsibility to attend school.</p> <p>Ensure all equipment and resources for learning are at school each day.</p> <p>Be on time for classes and attend all classes in the day.</p> <p>Participate in all programs/activities.</p> <p>Seek help if situations at home or at school are interfering with being at school.</p> <p>Ensure notes explaining absences are provided to the school.</p> <p>Catch up on all school work missed when absent.</p>	<p>Ensure their child of compulsory school age is enrolled at a state or non-state school, and attends their educational program every school day.</p> <p>Ensure their child in compulsory participation is participating full-time in an eligible option.</p> <p>Ensure their child has the equipment and resources they need for school each day.</p> <p>Set a high expectation of attendance.</p> <p>Provide a reason for their child's absence as soon as possible.</p> <p>Provide a medical certificate for absences longer than three days.</p> <p>Understand that attending school takes priority over most other family activities (including holidays) during school time; e.g. caring for younger siblings etc.</p> <p>Make every effort to book appointments for medical conditions after or before school or on vacations.</p>

TEACHERS	STUDENT MANAGER	LEADERSHIP TEAM
<p>Classroom teachers:</p> <p>Promote the school's attendance expectations.</p> <p>Mark the class roll on ID Attend every lesson and reference against P, UA etc.</p> <p>Respond to lesson truancy directly with the student and catch up any missed work.</p> <p>Monitor student absences and follow up students who are away from classes.</p> <hr/> <p>Form teachers:</p> <p>Mark roll accurately daily.</p> <p>Monitor and identify the attendance patterns of students.</p> <p>Monitor unexplained absence. Contact the student and family to explain absences.</p> <p>Discuss absences with parents.</p> <p>Refer students to the support or engagement team as necessary.</p> <p>Advise Student Manager of factors impacting on a student's attendance.</p>	<p>Investigate cases of class absence, lateness and school absence.</p> <p>Work with families to develop an Absence Program (or exemption) for planned absence.</p> <p>Support and monitor identified students.</p>	<p>Communicate clear and high expectations to the school community.</p> <p>Inform parents of their legal obligations about enrolment and attendance.</p> <p>Implement strategies to manage student enrolment, absences, chronic absenteeism, school refusal and truancy.</p> <p>Ensure the school has clear attendance policies and procedures reflected in daily operations.</p> <p>Regularly review data with key staff.</p> <p>Provide all students with information about their attendance rate.</p> <p>Supervise and support the engagement team.</p> <p>Principal approves:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flexible Arrangement Plans • Exemptions • Absence Programs • Variations to School Routine.

Intervention

Highfields State Secondary College has a wellbeing team to support students' social and emotional needs. Where students are demonstrating poor attendance patterns, and early interventions have not been effective, the student will be referred to the Student Manager who will work with the student and family to establish an individual attendance improvement plan.

The school will also liaise with a number of external agencies including the Regional Youth Support Coordinator of Education Queensland, Department of Child Safety, the Police Service, and Lifeline etc to support young people who are not attending school regularly.

Students with chronic absence will have an Absence Intervention Record completed.

HIGHFIELDS STATE SECONDARY COLLEGE

Attendance Monitoring

	Level	Attendance Level	School Administration Response
	0	0-50%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parent/School Contract • Individualised attendance improvement program • Flexible Plan developed • Referral to DETE Regional office • Enforcement of attendance processes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deputy Principal to monitor student present attendance 0-85% • Refer to Student Dean where flexible learning options and reengagement is necessary to develop a proactive Wellbeing Plan • Flexible Plan developed - Parent / School Contract • Referral to DETE Regional Office - Reengagement Hub • Begin formal process - see Managing Student Absences and Enforcing Enrolment and Attendance at State Schools.
	1	51-85%	
	2	86-94%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student Manager case management • Targeted student monitoring • Parent feedback and daily contact <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student Manager to monitor student present attendance 86-94%. Phone call home to discuss attendance expectations regardless if approved or not. If repeated next fortnight, arrange meeting with parents to discuss attendance expectations at HSSC. • If not improving, develop an attendance improvement strategy. • Inform attendance officer of absences that have been explained by parent/carer. • Contact recorded on One School • Escalate to DP if no improvement.
	3	95-97%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Target Range • Eligible for non-compulsory events <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • House Coordinator to discuss attendance expectations at form, year level and house meetings targeting where attendance is 95% or less
	4	98-100%	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognition, reward <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • House Coordinator reward and recognise students whose individual attendance is 98-100% on a fortnightly basis by awarding VIVO points per individual student, award form class rewards whose attendance is 95% or above at year level assemblies, house assemblies and whole school assemblies • Deputy Principal recognise and reward student attendance - values certificates 100% attendance on a fortnightly basis, form classes 95% and above and house attendance at assemblies, on Facebook and in the school newsletter.

EXPLAINING ABSENCE

Student absences must be explained at the time of absence **AND** every day of the absence. Each fortnight students will be given a print out of absences. If absences are not explained by the following fortnight, they are coded as UNAUTHORISED.

Occasional Absences can be explained by:

- Phoning the School Absence Hotline.
- Providing a note to the school explaining the reason(s) for the absence.

For **Significant absence**, a medical certificate needs to be provided and evidence that work has been caught up.

Chronic Absence has potentially significant impact on a regular learning program. In these cases, an Individual Support Plan may be developed.

Known or planned absences are unavoidable events that the student must attend which will take time away from school. In these instances, the parent/carer must notify the Principal in writing ahead of the start of the absence. A plan to make sure there is continuity of learning is developed between the student and teachers. When the student returns, the work negotiated is presented to teachers who sign off on the work being completed.

Exemption from school is required when a child will be absent from school for greater than 10 consecutive days. Families need to apply to the Principal in writing for approval for an exemption from school.

[Form 1: Application for Exemption from Compulsory Schooling or Compulsory Participation](#)

Flexible arrangement is when a negotiated program between the school and an external provider supports the engagement and achievement of students.

Arriving on time

Attending Form class in the morning is critical to being part of the school community. This is the time when a student's attendance is recorded and important messages are given. Being late means that the student may miss hearing about sporting, cultural, vocational and academic opportunities. They also risk not understanding policy, procedure and requirements for the day.

Lateness to school requires students to sign in at the student counter and present a late note or reason. If the student does not have a reason outlined in a note, consequences for lateness may be applied in line with the school's Responsible Behaviour Plan.

Students who are late and avoid 'signing in' may also have consequences applied in line with the school's Responsible Behaviour Plan.

Punctual attendance to lessons and events organised for students is courtesy. It also enables students to maximise their chance of gaining the most from the lesson or activity. Being late to class is not acceptable and may result in consequences being applied in line with the school's Responsible Behaviour Plan.

OTHER RELATED ELEMENTS OF ATTENDANCE:

Assessment Policy contains detailed information about a range of issues related to late submission due to absence.

Parent/carer should phone the school on the due date or provide a medical certificate the next day to explain this absence. **Student** submits the assessment on the next day s/he is at school.

Teacher will not accept assessment if a student is absent on the due date and a phone call and/or medical certificate is not received to explain this absence. The **student** is given an **in-class** withdrawal to complete the assessment at the next class they attend. **In withdrawal circumstances**, s/he must not bring in work to submit or information that assists them with their required task. The student may however, choose to submit a rough draft that has been annotated and signed by a teacher.

Athletics & Swimming Carnivals are a compulsory part of the school program. Absences on these days must be explained.

Absence on these days will potentially place a student at risk of not being permitted to attend end of year functions/events. Only students who attend carnivals can attend school socials.

Early Departure from school must be avoided. If an early departure is needed students are to sign out at the student counter. Students are to notify the office of their early departure on the morning of the intended absence. Office staff will issue a notification to leave school early slip which the student will present to the teacher on leaving the class. They must be collected by an authorised adult and depart from the office.

Non-participation in school camps/excursions

Students who do not attend school camps or excursions will be provided a school program and must attend school.

Sick Bay

Students who are ill should not attend school.

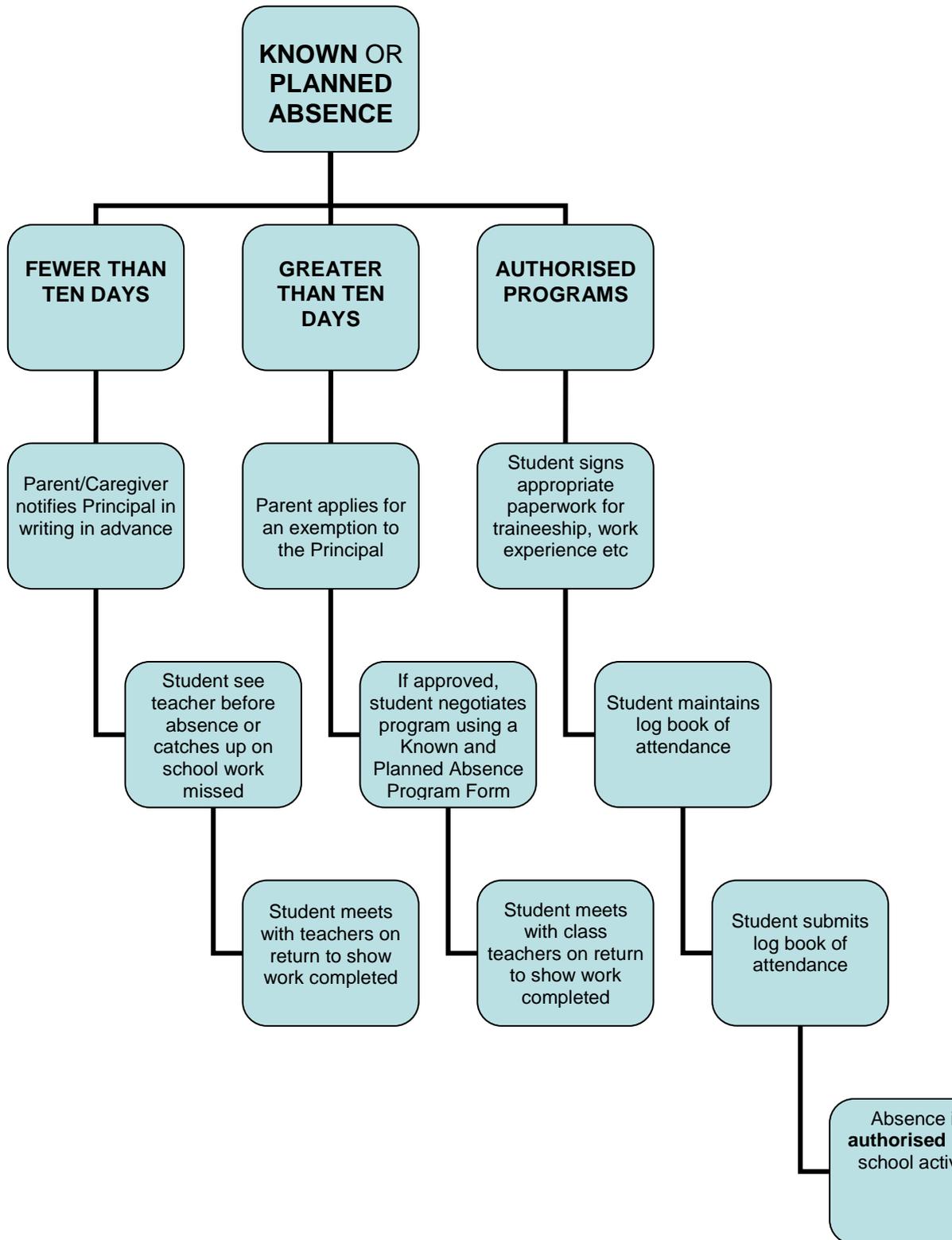
Students who fall ill during the day must report to the school office. Parents/carers will be contacted and the student will remain in the sick bay until they can be collected. Students who present to the office during lesson time are required to stay in the sick bay until the end of the next break. Students cannot present to the office after second break unless they are injured or seriously ill.

Truancy is managed within the processes of the Responsible Behaviour Plan.

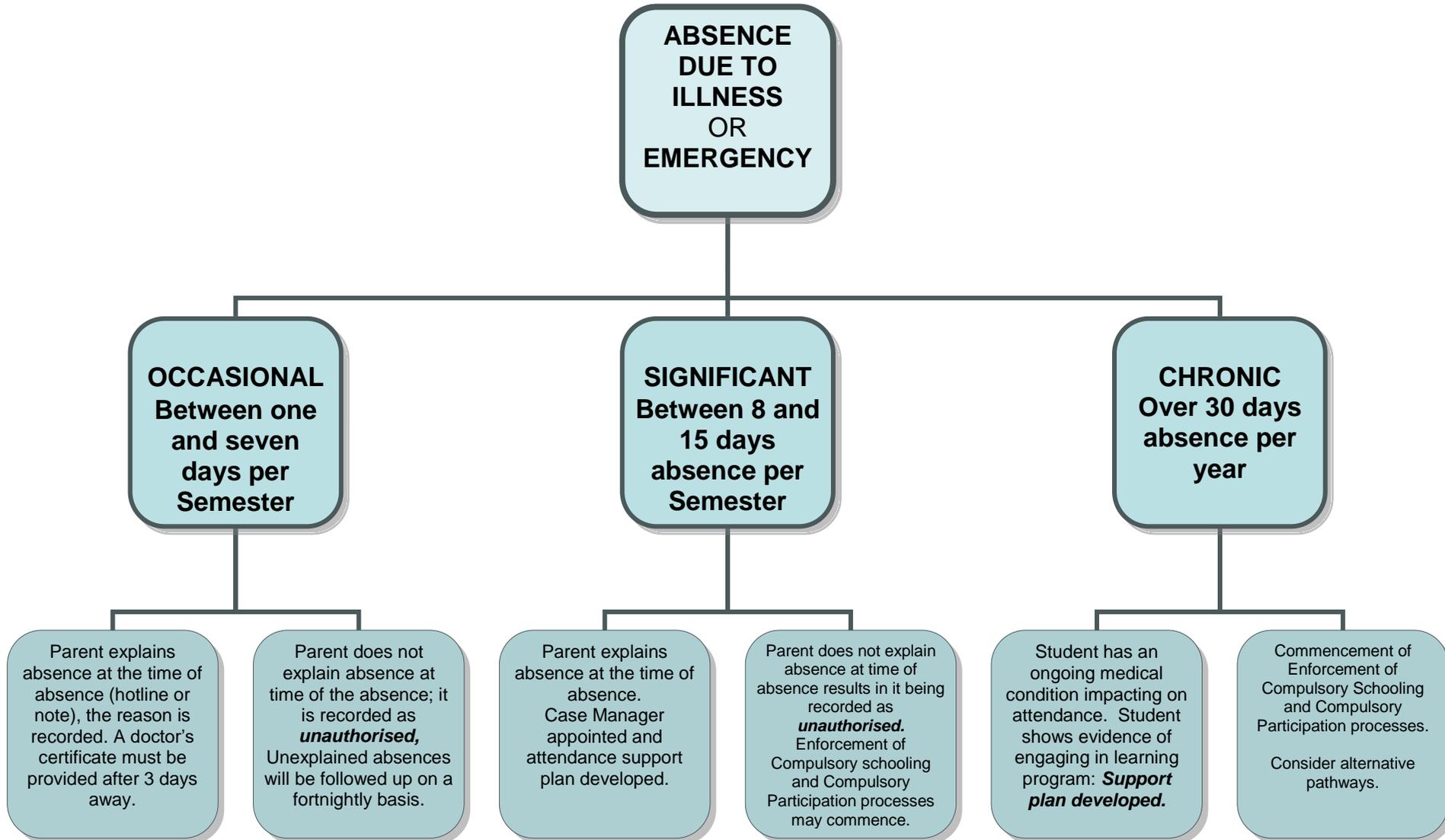
Wednesday Sport takes place after lunch and involves a range of activities. All students have a scheduled program to which they must commit.

Student attendance on Wednesday afternoon is compulsory. Students may **not** sign-out on Wednesday afternoons unless a parent/carer has authorised the early departure. An appointment card must be handed in for ALL medical appointments made during that time AND a doctor's certificate must be provided the following day.

MANAGING ABSENCES: PROCESSES



MANAGING ABSENCES: PROCESSES



GLOSSARY OF TERMS

TERM	EXPLANATION
Absence	When a student does not attend school.
Attendance Level	The attendance rate of a student calculated as a percentage.
Compulsory School Age	A child is of compulsory school age if the child is at least 6 years and 6 months, and less than 16 years. However, a child is no longer of compulsory school age if the child has completed Year 10.
Compulsory Participation Phase	<p>A young person's compulsory participation phase starts when s/he stops being of compulsory school age (i.e. turns 16 or completes Year 10 whichever comes first) and ends when the person:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - gains a Senior Certificate, Certificate III or Certificate IV or - has participated in eligible options for 2 years after the person stopped being of compulsory school age, or - turns 17.
Exemption	Absence from school for greater than 10 days. Families are required to write to the school Principal to seek exemption from the compulsory or participation phase of schooling.
Explained Absence	Parent/carer provides information about a student's absence at the time of the absence
Flexible Arrangement	A shared program between the school and an external agency to support engagement and achievement.
Unexplained Absence	No explanation is provided at the time of the absence. At the end of each fortnight, unexplained absences convert to unauthorised absences and cannot be changed on the student's record.
Known/Planned Absence	Absences where a student is going to be absent and this is known in advance of the absence. A Known and Planned Absence form should be completed before the student is absent from school.
Authorised Absence	Authorised absences are for school activities/programs such as SATS, TAFE, work experience, etc. These programs are authorised by the Principal.
Unauthorised Absence	Absences that parents explain at the time of the absence and those deemed by the Principal not appropriate reasons for absence. These absences are recorded as unauthorised.
Suspension	A disciplinary absence that is calculated as part of the attendance record.

GLOSSARY OF CODES USED FOR STUDENT ABSENCES

These are the codes used at Highfields State Secondary College using the ID Attend Program and descriptors.

Authorised Absences

CODE	EXPLANATION
A	School based activity (on campus but not in scheduled class)
C	Excursion or Camp
F	Off campus activity like Eisteddfod, representative sport and academic competitions
N	Natural Disaster
S	School, Regional, State or National Sport representation/trials
W	n/a

Absences needing explanation and endorsement to be considered for exemption to participation rules

CODE	EXPLANATION
I	Illness (parent must have informed school)
O	Medical Appointments, religious observances, funerals or legal matters
U	Unexplained
H	Holiday

Absences which cannot be used for exemption to participation rules

CODE	EXPLANATION
J	Unauthorised – all other absences
P	Suspension 1 – 10 days
Q	Suspension 11 – 20 days
R	Suspended with recommendation to exclude

Absences assigned the codes of A, C, F, N, S & W will not contribute to a student's attendance level as they are considered a school program.

If a parent/carer has followed the required procedures, the Attendance Officer can change an absence from *unexplained* to *explained and outline the reason*.

Attendance Improvement Strategy

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Why has the school put this strategy in place?

- Students who have great attendance, achieve better and have more choices in life.

What is the improvement the school is trying to achieve?

- An improved attendance level for students 7-12. Our target for 2018 is 95%,

How long have I got to explain an absence?

- The best thing to do is to phone the Absence Hotline before school and inform us of your child's absence and the reason each day the child is away.
- Each fortnight, form teachers will discuss the absences of their students and they can correct errors and ensure all absences are explained. At the end of each fortnight, unexplained absences convert to unauthorised absences and cannot be changed.

When is a Doctor's certificate needed?

- Year 11 and 12 students are required to phone on or before a due date of assessment or provide a certificate. All students need to provide a doctor's certificate for absences longer than three days.

What are students now expected to do?

- If students are away, they need to bring a note from home and make every effort to catch up work they have missed. They take responsibility for their absence.

What if my child has real problems that stop him/her from coming to school?

- If your child has a health issue that makes coming to school hard, the family and school need to work together so that there is a clear plan that is approved by the Principal. Other options can also be discussed to help the student stay engaged in an eligible option. A doctor's certificate needs to be provided for longer absences or frequent absences caused by the same condition, e.g. anxiety, glandular fever.

Can the school actually provide some ideas and help to get my child to school?

- There are a range of support people available at school and we have many contacts in the community that are there to help. Please contact our support centre staff or Head of School for help.

Are we being told to send students to school who are sick?

- No. The most important thing is that the student is physically and mentally fit to achieve well at school. When they are well, it is vital that every effort is made to catch up, seek support if needed and have the absence endorsed.

Is the Principal allowed to decide if a reason for being away is good enough?

- The Principal needs to have every absence explained. The Principal uses guidelines provided by the Education Department to approve the explanation. This is required by legislation.

Highfields State Secondary College

Attendance Improvement Strategy



First Name	
Last Name	

Form Class		Number School Days Absent	
Date(s) of Absence			

	Subject Name	Negotiated Tasks/Activities	Teacher's Name	Teacher Verification
1	English			
2	Maths			
3				
4				
5				
6				

Student Signature: _____ Date: _____

Parent Signature: _____ Date: _____

Head of Department Signature: _____ Date: _____

Highfields State Secondary College

Individual Support Plan

(For Significant Absences)



Highfields State
Secondary College

First Name		Last Name	
Form Class		Medical Diagnosis	

Impact medical issue has on school:

	Subject Name	Negotiated Tasks/Activities	Teacher's Name	Teacher Verification
1	English			
2	Maths			
3				
4				
5				
6				
Other				

Student Signature: _____ Date: _____

Parent Signature: _____ Date: _____

Head of Department Signature: _____ Date: _____

Highfields State Secondary College

Attendance Improvement Plan

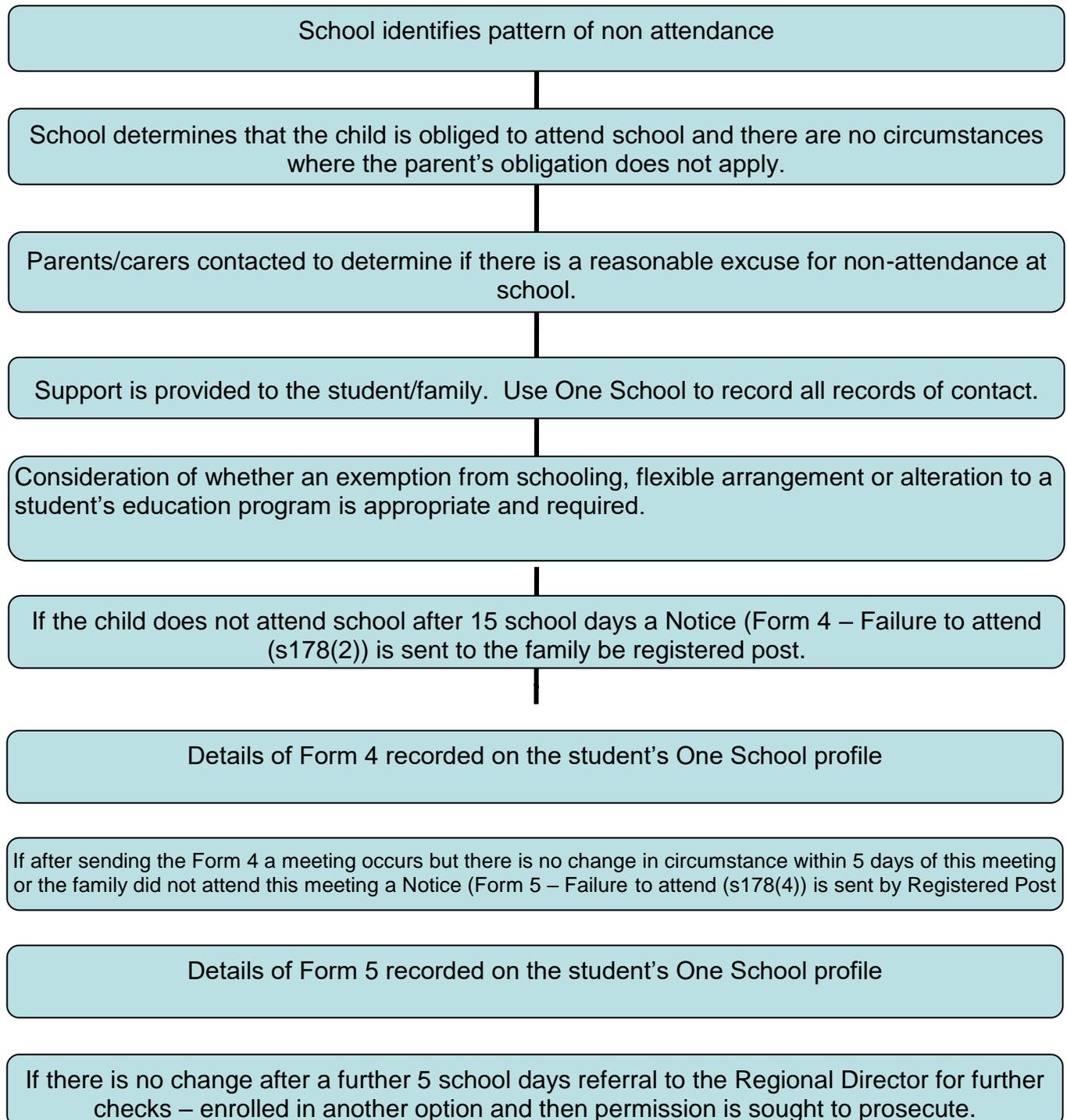


Name:		
Form Class:		Contacts:
General	% Attendance	Comments
Term 1		
Term 2		
Term 3		
Term 4		
Overall		
Other related	Summary Issue(s)	Comments
Behaviour		
Effort		
Achievement		
Relationships		
Home/Family		
Social		
Other		

Insert expectation and goal for this plan:

Managing Student Absences and Enforcing Enrolment and Attendance at State Schools

COMPULSORY SCHOOL AGE



Managing Student Absences and Enforcing Enrolment and Attendance at State Schools

COMPULSORY PARTICIPATION PHASE

