



ATTENDANCE POLICY

OVERVIEW:

Pioneer Village School (PVS) is committed to providing a holistic education to all children attending the School. The School's attendance policy addresses the need for children to be at school to develop the skills, knowledge and values they need to learn and to succeed in life. Families have a legal obligation to send their children to school for every day it is open for teaching.

Student enrolment and attendance in educational programs in Western Australian schools is governed by legislation. The school Education Act 1999 (Act) and the School Education Regulations 2000 (Regulations) govern the provision of educational programs in Western Australian schools. In brief, the Act requires compulsory-aged students attend school, or participate in an educational program, on the days on which the school program is open for instruction, unless a written arrangement has been entered into for the student. Education is compulsory for students until the end of the year in which they turn 17. The School Education Act 1999 and School Education Regulations 2000 can be viewed electronically on the Government's State Law Publisher website at www.slp.wa.gov.au.

The Principal is responsible for the accurate recording and monitoring of the attendance of all children and for implementing appropriate strategies to restore attendance if there are attendance issues.

PRINCIPLES:

It is widely recognised children need to attend school on a regular basis to gain the maximum benefit from schooling in order to optimise their life opportunities. It is also widely recognised attendance problems are best managed by early identification and intervention.

1. Student achievement

The likelihood of success in learning is strongly linked to regular attendance and appropriate participation in educational programs. Students who have poor patterns of attendance are at risk of not achieving their potential. They may be disadvantaged in the quality of choices they are able to make later in life situations. Attendance at school is a pre-requisite for student achievement. Children who are regularly absent from school are at greater risk of:

- Dropping out of school early;
- Becoming long term unemployed;
- Being caught in the poverty trap;
- Becoming welfare dependent;
- Being involved in the justice system;

- Being socially isolated;
- Harm during times of absence;
- Being more likely to be involved in socially unacceptable and/or illegal activities;
- Have gaps in their knowledge and understanding of basic concepts; and
- Feeling unsure of school.

Once students have begun to develop patterns of poor attendance and lateness, there is the potential the pattern of absences may continue to escalate in later years.

2. Non-attendance

Non-attendance at school is deemed 'acceptable' for a range of reasons including:

- The child is unwell or has a long standing medical condition;
- The School has asked the child remain home due to a communicable disease;
- The child is excluded by the School due to lack of immunity to a vaccine preventable disease; or
- The child is absent with a valid reason in the opinion of the Principal e.g. Family funeral.

Non-attendance at school is deemed 'unacceptable' for a range of reasons including:

- The student chooses not to attend compulsory events such as; sporting events, incursions, excursions, camps;
- The student is absent without a valid reason in the opinion of the Principal e.g. staying at home for birthdays, shopping, hair appointments, avoiding a testing day; or
- The student is absent without parent or carer knowledge.

Non-attendance due to family holidays.

- Family holidays are not encouraged during the school term. If, however, a family seeks to take a family holiday during the school term, families must apply for permission for the child to be absent in writing to the Principal. On receipt of a notification from a parent/guardian the school shall respond, in writing, that it **acknowledges but does not approve** the withdrawal of the student from school, during school term time.

All non-attendance by children should be viewed as critical when it begins to impact on their learning and health and well-being outcomes. This includes those absences which are explained (such as the parent providing the explanation that the student was unwell) and those which are unexplained.

3. Children at Risk

Early intervention for children at risk of developing irregular patterns of attendance is crucial so that these patterns may be reversed.

Indicators children are at risk include the following:

- Frequent lateness;
- Leaving school early;
- Missing lessons;
- Being the victims 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; and
- Health issues experienced by the child and/or family members.

Intervention strategies for children with irregular attendance will be put in place regardless of the age of the child. PVS will monitor attendance patterns and trends and has procedures in place for identifying and following up unexplained absences and improving student attendance.

4. Parent Notification

School starts at 8.30am sharp and concludes at 3.00pm. Students are expected to be at school during these times. Families have a responsibility to ensure their children attend school regularly, and are only absent if ill or if absolutely necessary. Parents have a further responsibility to provide a written note or return a written absence note to the school explaining why an absence has occurred. An SMS will be sent to the parents if there is an unexplained absence. It is the parent's responsibility to respond to the SMS with the valid reason as soon as it is received. The office will follow the School's 'Unexplained Absences Procedure' (see Appendix A) if a response to the SMS is not received.

If a child is to be removed from the school during the day advance notice is required. Please email Reception at reception@pvs.wa.edu.au. Parents must present at the front office to sign their child out. Parents are not to collect children from classrooms without express permission from the office staff.

5. Reporting a student who appears to be missing:

If all attempts to locate a child, including making contact with emergency contacts nominated on the child's file held by the school have failed, after 15 school days and the School has not received advice of the child being enrolled at another school, the Principal will refer the child to the Student Tracking Officer at student.tracking@education.wa.edu.au

Instances of unexplained absence requiring a police or emergency response would fit the description of a Reportable Incident and be managed as such. Reportable Incidents are defined under **Critical and Emergency Incidents Standard 7.2** in the *2020 Guide to Registration and other Requirements for Non-Government Schools*. It states that:

The governing body ensures the Director General is notified of every reportable incident as soon as practicable, and in any event within 48 hours of the incident, using the form published by the Director General for this purpose.

The wording of the relevant **Reportable Incident** is:

An incident requiring a police or other emergency services response when a student appears to have been taken or removed, or goes missing and cannot be accounted for, from the school or from a school-related activity without proper authority.

6. Attendance Record Keeping

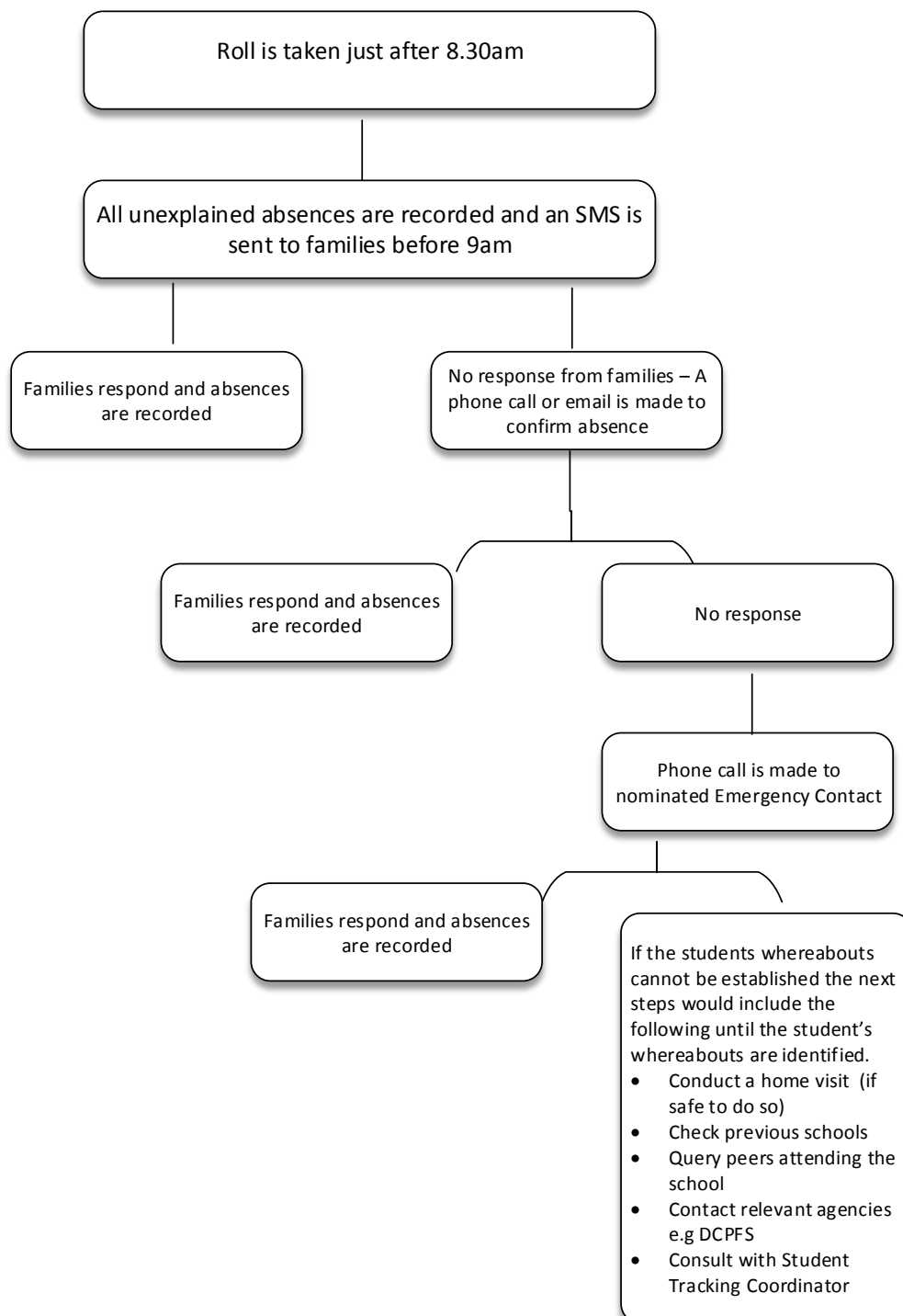
Maintaining privacy over student attendance and associated records is a legal obligation, under the *Privacy Act 1981 (Cth)* and the *Australian Privacy Principles (APPs)*.

Attendance records are stored securely, in a manner to ensure their protection from environmental damage or digital degradation at an off-site secure archiving facility which also allows for ease of retrieval of information. Pioneer Village School retains records in line with the [Australian Society of Archivists Records Retention and Disposal for Non-Government Schools](#).

Appendix A: Unexplained Absence Procedure



Unexplained Absences Procedure



Document Group	Enrolment
Document Owner	Principal
Last Review	March 2021
Next Review	2022
Distribution	Internal/ External