



Attendance Policy

RANGS 3.8

Version 5.0

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| Version | Date | Notes |
|---------|------------|---------------------------|
| 5.0 | March 2019 | Updated to CEN Hub Policy |



Version History

| Version | Date | Notes |
|---------|---------------|--|
| 1 | Feb 2011 | Draft Document for Board Approval |
| 2 | Mar 2014 | Revised and adopted |
| 2.1 | May 2015 | Revised and adopted including new ministerial codes |
| 3.0 | Nov 2015 | Updated in line with Government Guidelines - Adopted |
| 4.0 | July 2016 | Updated in line with AIS Guidelines for Independent Schools and to incorporate Exemptions Policy |
| 4.1 | November 2017 | Updated 2.2 and 2.3 based on poor school attendance and advice received from Geoff Brisby regarding following up attendance. |
| 4.2 | May 2018 | Minor amendment Attendance Procedures 2.3.2 |
| 5.0 | March 2019 | Updated to CEN Hub Policy |

This policy and its associated documents are prepared by CEN Hub (NSW & ACT), for use by member schools. Procedures and supporting documentation should be customised to reflect those of the individual school.

Do not alter policy statements without consultation with the CEO of CEN Hub.



VISION STATEMENT

A Christ centred learning community exploring and impacting on God's world

MISSION STATEMENT

To assist parents in the nurture of their children, by providing a Christ-centred, biblically grounded, culturally engaging and academically rigorous education that instils hope and equips children to live for God's glory

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Important related documents:

Child Protection Policy

Enrolment Policy

Student Welfare Policy

Behaviour Management Policy

Student Code of Conduct

Secondary Assessment Policy

Relevant legislation:

Education Act 1990

Australian Education Act 2013 (Section 77(2)(f))

Australian Education Regulation 2013 (paragraphs 56(c) + (d))

References:

DET Exemption From School procedures: Learning & Engagement Directorate 2015

NESA, Registered and Accredited Non-Government Schools(RANGS) Manual, January 2019
(latest version on NESA website)

DET School Attendance Legal Action Guidelines

ACARA

1 INTRODUCTION

The NSW Education Act (1990) (Sections 22 + 24), requires schools to ensure that individual students meet certain attendance standards.

This includes mandatory attendance (Sections 21B, B(2), B(3)) for students between 6 and 17 years of age, on all designated school days, unless exemptions are applicable.

All students must complete Year 10, after which, and until they turn 17, they must be:

- In school, or registered for home schooling; or
- In approved education or training such as TAFE, apprenticeship etc; or
- In full time paid employment (av. 25 hour p/w); or
- In a combination of work, education and /or training.

Students in Stage 6 must attend school in order to fulfil course requirements and accreditation for the Higher School Certificate.

Registers of Enrolment, and Daily Attendance, of all students at the school must be maintained. The primary goal of the school's attendance procedures is the well-being and quality education of all students.

2 CHRISTIAN RATIONALE

Richmond Christian College exists to partner with parents in educating their children. The school undertakes this role with great respect, understanding that this responsibility and authority also comes from God.

Whilst regular attendance at school is essential to assist students to maximise their potential; the school has a duty of care for students during school hours. The register of attendance is an important tool to ensure the whereabouts and safety of all students enrolled at the school, and to give an account to their parents. It allows the school to pursue its program of complete education, appropriate welfare and discipline for the student, and pastoral care that may extend to the family.

Encouraging regular attendance is a core school responsibility. Procedures for the accurate record of daily attendance, and follow-up of absences, assist the school to fulfill its responsibilities to students and their families, to the state government, and to God.

Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters, since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving. Colossians 3:23-24

3 PURPOSE OF THIS DOCUMENT

This document sets out the policy and procedures of Richmond Christian College (RCC) to: monitor student attendance; enable the school to exercise its duty of care and pastoral obligations towards students; and fulfil its legal responsibilities.

4 TABLE OF RESPONSIBILITIES

| Responsibilities | Evidence of Compliance |
|--|---|
| Principal | |
| Maintain a Register of Enrolments | School Pro Administrative System |
| Maintain an Attendance Register in a form approved by the Minister, documenting absences; kept available for inspection | Hard copy Class Rolls; School Pro records |
| Ensure procedures for a safe environment and pastoral care for students | Policies – WHS; Welfare; Behaviour Management; Attendance; Child Protection |
| Ensure procedures which: | This document |
| - Monitor daily attendance | Class rolls; notes; Certificates of Leave |
| - Identify and follow up absences | School Pro; Enrolment Pack; parent information nights; newsletters; website; Student Code of Conduct |
| - Inform staff; students and parents of attendance requirements | Staff Handbook; PD week; faculty meetings |
| - Inform school staff of attendance requirements | |
| - Follow procedural fairness guidelines in all circumstances | |
| Ensure procedures for exercising the Minister’s delegation under Section 25 of the Education Act to grant leave of absence; and maintain records | Filed notes; School Pro Filed copies of Leave Applications; Certificates; reason for declining leave |
| Provide clear information to parents/ students regarding attendance requirements + consequences of unsatisfactory attendance | Enrolment agreement; procedures of this policy |
| Inform School Liaison Officer of attendance problems/ issues | School Pro |
| Overview of attendance registers; administrative procedures; Staff training | Class rolls; School Pro; procedural review; Staff meetings |
| Maintenance of records | School Pro |
| Board | |
| Review reports and attendance patterns | Board reports |
| Administration Officer | |
| Follow up unexplained absences | Unexplained Absences List; Individual student reports; |
| Report patterns of significant absences | Significant Absences List; |
| Heads of School | |
| Preparation of attendance action plans | Attendance Action Plans |
| Enforce current procedures; Follow up welfare | School Pro records; secure confidential files on Google Drive |
| Staff training | CPL calendar; staff meetings |
| Contact parents for student welfare & missed schoolwork 3 rd day | School Pro; HOS file on Google Drive |
| Collaborate Return to School plans | Notes re: parent meetings; Return to School Plan; RtS Register |
| Teachers | |
| Daily attendance rolls; | Class rolls; School Pro |
| Pastoral care of students | Teacher records; School Pro comments |
| Communication with parents re: child’s education & well-being | Parent-teacher meetings; reports; file notes |
| Front Office Staff | |
| Maintain rolls & update School Pro records; receive notes + App notifications; communicate to staff | Attendance records; notes from parents; School Pro |
| ‘3 Day Rule’ call parents after 2d student absence | School Pro comments |

School Counsellor

Pastoral care of students

Counsellor records

Parents

Ensure their school-aged child attends school

Enrolment Terms of Agreement

Explain absence of child within 7 days

Filed notes; School Pro

Apply in advance for Certificate of Exemption for any exceptional leave

Website; filed records; School Pro

5 DEFINITIONS

ACARA – Australian Curriculum, Assessment & Reporting Authority

DET – Department of Education & Training

Parent/s – any person having the custody or care of a child

6 POLICY

The school will:

- (a) Maintain an accurate Register of Enrolment.
- (b) Maintain a Register of Daily Attendance.
- (c) Maintain procedures to record attendance and absences accurately.
- (d) Maintain procedures for the exercise of the Minister's delegation (Section 25 of Education Act 1990) to grant leave.
- (e) Maintain procedures to ensure that students enrolled at RCC attend school as they are able.
- (f) Maintain procedures for a safe environment and pastoral care for students; and for students to be supported in learning and pastoral care in absences.

7 PROCEDURES

7.1 Register of Enrolment

- (a) The school will maintain a Register of Enrolments (School Pro Administrative System) that includes for each student:
- Name, age and address
 - Name and contact telephone number of parent(s)/guardian(s)
 - Date of enrolment and, where appropriate, the date of leaving the school and the student's destination
 - For students older than 6 years of age, previous school or pre-enrolment situation
 - Where the destination school of a student below 17 years of age is unknown, a record that the Department of Education (attendance@det.nsw.edu.au) has been notified of the student's name, date of birth, last known address, last date of attendance, parents' names and contact details, indication of possible destination, other applicable information that may assist officers to locate the student, and any known WHS risks associated with contacting the parents or student
- (b) The Register of Enrolments will be retained for a minimum of 7 years after the last data entry (NESA) before archiving.

School Pro system retains records indefinitely and is backed up to the cloud. (See Enrolment Policy)

7.2 Attendance

- (a) The school's requirements and expectations for attendance are communicated to parents and students at enrolment; and reinforced regularly through Parent Information Nights and Parent-Teacher Meetings, other communications and via the RCC Student Code of Conduct.
- (b) The daily attendance/ absence of students will be monitored by an electronic class roll, indicated in accordance with the NSW Attendance Register Symbols:
- Absences
 - Reason for absence
 - Documentation from parent to substantiate reason for absence, which includes: child's name/ class; date of absence; reason for absence; parent signature
- (c) Information from the class roll, and absence notes, is entered into School Pro.
- (d) Attendance will be marked at events such as sport carnivals, excursions and off-site activities, and will be transcribed into School Pro
- (e) Attendance and late arrivals (Kinder – Year 12) are recorded on student reports.

- (f) The Head of School or Principal shall inform School Office staff of suspensions and expulsions.
- (g) Class rolls and documentation will be retained for 7 years after the last entry was made. Retained on School Pro system indefinitely; backed up to the cloud.
- (h) The Attendance Register must be available for inspection during school hours by a Board inspector or by any authorised person, who may require the principal of the school to furnish a copy of the register or any part of it.
- (i) Attendance is reported each year in the school's Annual Report.

7.3 Class Rolls

- (a) Hard copy rolls K - Year 6 are identified by class number and teacher's name.
- (b) Rolls are marked each morning in class/ homeroom using the exception method (marking absences only), either in hard copy or electronic form.
- (c) A student returns the Absent Slip to the School Office.
- (d) Daily attendance information (absences) is transferred by School Office staff from the Absent Slips to the School Pro Attendance module, using NSW Attendance Register Codes.
- (e) For unexplained absences, a text message is sent to parents of the student:

"Richmond Christian College: FYI (student name) has not arrived at school today. Please send a note, with a justified reason, within seven days of returning to school. This will ensure they do not incur an unexplained or unjustified absence on their permanent record. Have a great day! (Please do not respond to this text, contact the school for more information)"

7.4 Notes From Parents

- (a) Notes may be delivered via the school's 'Skoolbag App'; and are copied to student records.
- (b) Hard copy notes are filed in the student's file
- (c) Complaints should be directed to the Head of School.
- (d) If the note indicates that an extended leave form is required, School Office staff will contact the parents to arrange completion of the appropriate form.
- (e) If a parent informs office staff of anticipated absence other than medical, a leave form should be given, or posted, and the HOS and Principal informed of the families intentions, for follow up.

7.5 Late Arrivals (after 8.50am Secondary; 9.00am Primary)

- (a) Students late to school must report to the School Office to sign in. Students will receive a "Signed in at the Office" pink slip to give to their class/homeroom teacher.
- (b) If the parent/caregiver is with the student, both parent and student come to the office and the parent signs the student in.
- (c) If the student's parent or caregiver does not come into the office, the student signs themselves in and a letter must be provided by the parent stating the reason for the late arrival. If no letter is present with the student the office will call the parent immediately seeking a reason.
- (d) School Pro records, are amended to record the late arrival.

7.6 Early Departures

- (a) Students must be picked up by a parent or authorised adult. The identity of unknown people should be checked by School Office staff before releasing the student into the care of that person.
- (b) Students departing early must be signed out at the School Office. The Administration Officer will phone the classroom to ask the student to come to the School Office.
- (c) Stage 6 students are permitted early departure without reason if they have signed and returned the specific parent/guardian permission slip allowing them to enter and exit the school grounds during non-face-to-face teaching time.
- (d) If parents notify the school of another adult picking up their child, the School Office staff shall phone the student's class to inform the student.
- (e) If a student appears anxious about the identity of an adult arriving to pick them up, the School Office staff should ask the child to wait in another room, and inform the Principal or another Executive staff member of the circumstances.

7.7 Absences

- (a) Parents are obliged to provide the School with a satisfactory explanation of all student absences indicating the date of, and reason for the absence via phone (documented call time and reason taken by School Office staff and emailed to parents), email, letter or the Skoolbag app.
- (b) Absence due to medical reasons or unforeseen need for one to two days may be reported by a note on the student's return.
- (c) For absences longer than two days the school must be notified on or before the third day via phone, email, letter or the Skoolbag app.
- (d) '3 Day Rule' - When a student is absent more than 2 consecutive days with no notice, the Administration Officer will contact the parents by phone to seek an explanation and advise the respective Head of School

- (e) When a note of absence from the parent is returned:
 - to class, the teacher will send the note to the School Office
 - to the School Office, either directly or by the class teacher, office staff will amend the School Pro record.
- (f) When an absent note from the parent is not returned within seven days of the student returning to school, an unexplained absence will be recorded on the student's attendance record.
- (g) A daily report of absentees and late arrivals is generated from School Pro and kept in the School Office.
- (h) Notes are filed in the student's file
- (i) Number of days absent and late arrival are indicated on student reports.
- (j) If truancy is suspected in cases of unexplained absences, and parents are unable to be contacted, a letter may be sent from the school in an unmarked envelope.
- (k) Staff should refer any comments or observations about attendance or absences to the appropriate Head of School.

See Chart - Follow Up of Student Absence

7.8 Assessments - Stages 5 and 6

- (a) A medical certificate must be provided for a student who is absent from school the day before a formal Assessment Task is to be handed in.
- (b) A medical certificate must be provided for a student who is absent on the day a formal Assessment Task is to be handed in, unless the Assessment Task has been submitted previously. (See Secondary Assessment Policy)

7.9 Unsatisfactory Attendance

- (a) Unsatisfactory attendance may include frequent absences, or a pattern of lateness or absences, even if notification is provided.
- (b) The Principal oversees proceedings in cases of unsatisfactory attendance in respect of student welfare/ pastoral care and continuing enrolment issues.

The Heads of School and teachers follow up absences in respect of pastoral care and missed schoolwork.

The Administration Officer follows up absences to complete administration requirements; and will notify the Principal of a student's pattern of frequent absences.

The School Counsellor may be included in follow up of welfare issues.
- (c) SchoolPro will generate and email a Significant Absences List weekly, reporting student days absent or late arrival to School Office staff and

Principal. Any students with significant absences (below 90% attendance) are reviewed by the Principal and Heads of School for action if necessary.

- (d) If a student has a pattern of unexplained absences, or a pattern of unacceptable school or class attendance even with an explanation from parents, the Administration Officer, will notify the Head of School, who will liaise with homeroom teachers. Learning support teachers may also be consulted to address the needs of students.
- (e) When a student is nearing 10%, 20% and 30% continual lack of attendance, a letter is sent home by the Principal, in conjunction with the HOS, informing the parents of their obligations, their students current attendance rate, the ramifications for their student's education and a request for a meeting to remedy the situation.

At each meeting with the parents/caregivers an Attendance Improvement Plan will be formulated which will outline agreed actions and the persons responsible (eg the student, the parent/s and the school), with the intention of restoring the student's attendance to a satisfactory level. The Principal will seek advice and assistance in this process from the AIS Student Services Team if required.

- (f) Should a pattern of non-attendance cause staff to have concerns for a student's welfare, they will notify the Principal of their concerns who will follow the Child Protection protocols. (Also: Requirements under the *Keep Them Safe* legislation)
- (g) The school may negotiate a Return to School Plan with Parents to assist the regular attendance of their child/ren at school.
- (h) The school may request assistance from the Home School Liaison Officer (HSLO) and DET to resolve poor school attendance. (See also: DET Provision for School Attendance Legal Action)
- (i) Chapter 16A of the Children and Young People (Care and Protection) Act 1998 permits sharing of information concerning the safety, welfare and well-being of children and young people.

7.10 Return to School Plan

Absenteeism of more than 10 days (20%) of a term may indicate the need for a Return to School plan for a student; an individualised, flexible attendance plan with the aim of returning the student to full attendance. (See Welfare Policy) The goal is to assist all students to attend every day and achieve the appropriate learning outcomes.

- (a) The Head of School shall be notified of absences of 5 days or longer. A Return to School plan may be facilitated in consultation with the parents and child, and any other stakeholders, to provide appropriate learning tasks.
- (b) The Head of School shall maintain a Register of Return to School plans for follow up.
- (c) The Head of School shall inform School Office staff of a student commencing a Return to School plan, or pursuing a flexible timetable.
- (d) If there is a risk of RoSA outcomes not being met, the Principal shall be informed.

- (e) In the event of no improvement to attendance, the Principal and Head of School shall meet with parents to discuss the student's continuing enrolment. FACS will be notified where necessary.
- (f) Where communication with the parents/ guardians fails:
 - i. a formal letter shall be sent asking them to contact the school;
 - ii. if no response within seven (7) days, a letter shall be sent requesting parents/ guardians to make an appointment to discuss the situation with the Principal, including the consequence of Termination of Enrolment if there is no response;
 - iii. if no response within seven (7) days, a letter of Termination of Enrolment shall be sent and FACS notified.
- (g) All meetings and decisions shall be documented.

7.11 Exemptions from Attendance

- (a) The Principal may grant Exemption from Attendance, or part day exemptions, for up to 100 days in a 12 month period; or an exemption to leave school (Exemption from Enrolment) following the completion of Year 9 to undertake an apprenticeship or traineeship.
- (b) The process for considering an application for exemption is:
 - Parent acquires the 'Application for Exemption From Attendance at School' form from the school office, and returns the completed form to the school
 - Principal reviews the application against the criteria in the DET guidelines
 - Certificate of Exemption awarded (if the application is supported), and original given to parent
 - Copy of the application, certificate and Minister's delegation kept on the student's file
- (c) Should the approval not be granted, notice will be given in writing in time for the parent to appeal the decision in writing and/ or in person according to the principles of procedural fairness which are followed in all similar matters.

7.12 Application for Leave

Families are encouraged to holiday or travel during school vacations. Holidays taken by students outside of school vacation periods are indicated as absences.

- (a) Families must complete an Application for Leave for absences within school terms.
- (b) If the Principal grants leave, the code 'L' is marked in the roll. If a certificate is not issued, 'A' is recorded in the roll.

If an absence >50days is proposed, the student may be eligible to enrol in Distance Education School

7.13 Reporting Student Attendance (DET)

Schools are required to report enrolment and attendance data for Semester 1 and Term 3.

Student attendance data will have to be collected and reported according to the annual standards outlined by ACARA.

Assistance for non-government schools is found in the SSP Student Attendance (STATS) Collection guidelines.

7.14 Reporting to the Board

The Principal reports on unexplained absences, and the percentage of returned notes and forms to the school Board, to monitor improved patterns of attendance.

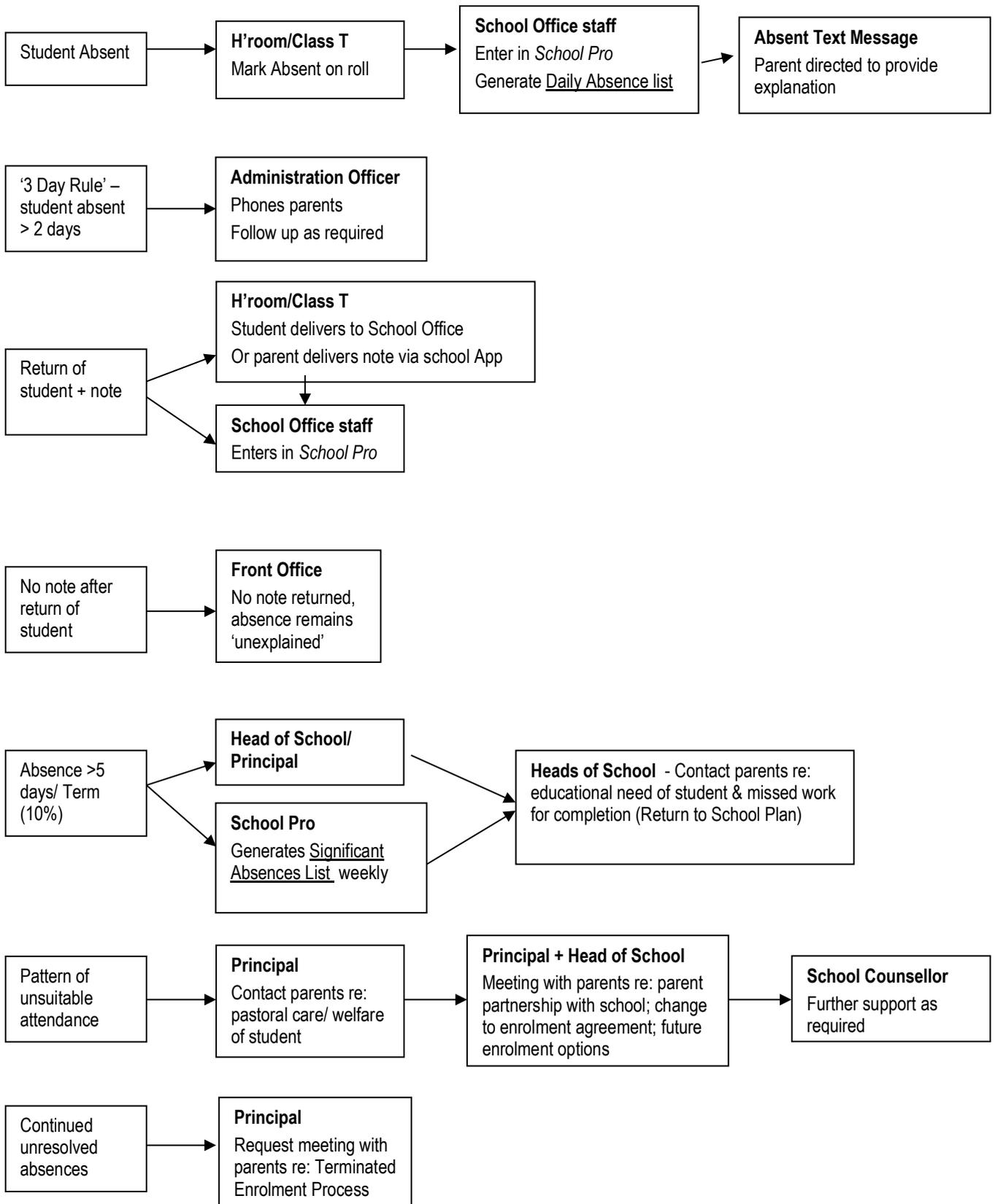
7.15 Maintenance of Records

School Attendance Record requirements:

| Document | Retention Period |
|--|---|
| Enrolment Register | Retain permanently (min. 5y before archiving) <i>School Pro</i> automatically retains records permanently. |
| Attendance Register (Roll) – Manual or Electronic | Retain for a minimum period of seven (7) years after the last entry was made. Store the registers (rolls) in a secure store for the specified timeframe. |
| Notes and records of verbal explanations of absence from parents | Retain for seven (7) calendar years. |
| Records for Certificates of Exemption from Attendance and Enrolment | Retain for seven (7) calendar years. |
| The student's record card detailing the number of absences each year | Retain for seven (7) calendar years after the student has left. |
| In the case where a student has an accident necessitating an accident report | All attendance records should be retained until the year student is 25 years old. |
| Return to School plans & documented meetings | Retain until the year student is 25 years old. |

7.16 Chart: Follow Up of Student Absence (following page)

Follow up of Student Absences



8 EVIDENCE OF COMPLIANCE

| Refs | EVIDENCE | FILE LOCATION |
|--|--|---------------|
| RANGS 3.6.2 | Register of Enrolments: - Name, age, address - Name, contact phone- parents - Date enrol/ depart (destination) - Prev school (if applic) - Destination unknown, student <17y - Immunisation evidence | |
| RANGS 3.6.2 | Attendance Register: - Rolls - database | |
| DET Codes | Absences: (common codes) | |
| | - A unexplained | |
| | - L leave + Certificate of Leave | |
| | - M + exemption form | |
| | - S + note | |
| | - B + approved school business | |
| | - Pa partial + late/ early note | |
| | - E suspended + ref | |
| | Procedures: | |
| RANGS 3.8 | - daily attendance | |
| | - identify absences | |
| RANGS 3.3.1.1 3.3.1.2 3.3.1.3 | - follow up unexplained absences: - Head of School processes - Administration Officer processes - student files | |
| | - notify parents poor attendance | |
| | - school reports | |
| | - Return to School Plan | |
| | - RtS Register | |
| | - Minister's Delegation (Section 25, Ed Act) | |
| RANGS 3.10.1 | Attendance data in Annual Report | |

Forms:

Application for Exemption from Attendance at School

Certificate for Exemption from Attendance at School under Section 25 of the *Education Act 1990*

Application for Exemption of Enrolment at School

Application for Extended Leave

Application for Extended Leave - Travel

Student Destination Unknown Notification

9 APPENDIX - NSW ATTENDANCE REGISTER CODES 2015

| Symbol | Meaning |
|---|--|
| Note: The symbol X is to be used for the first and last day that the student attended for each term. | |
| Symbols to be used where students are absent from school | |
| a | The student was absent on that day. |
| Pa | The student was late or was absent for part of a day. The time of arrival or departure must be recorded. |
| A | The student's absence is unexplained or unjustified. This symbol must be used if no explanation has been provided by parents within seven days of the occurrence of an absence or the explanation is not accepted by the principal It is at the principal's discretion to accept or not accept the explanation provided. |
| B | The student is absent from the school on official school business. This symbol is recorded where the principal approves the student leaving the school site to undertake, for example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - work experience - school sport (regional and state carnivals) - school excursions - student exchange |
| E | The student was suspended from school |
| F | The student is participating in a flexible timetable and not present because they are not required to be at school. This could include participation in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - HSC Pathways Program - Best Start Assessments - Trial or HSC examinations - VET courses |
| H ¹ | The student is enrolled in a school and is required or approved to be attending an alternative educational setting on a sessional or full time basis. The symbol is recorded where a student accesses education settings separate to their mainstream school such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - tutorial centre and programs - behaviour schools - juvenile justice - hospital schools - distance education |
| L | An explanation of the absence is provided which has been accepted by the principal. This may be due to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - misadventure or unforeseen event - participation in special events not related to the school - domestic necessity such as serious illness of an immediate family member - attendance at funerals - travel in Australia and overseas - recognised religious festivals or ceremonial occasions. |
| M | The student was exempted from attending school and a Certificate of Exemption has been issued by a delegated officer. |
| S | The student's absence is due to sickness or as the result of a medical or paramedical appointment. In these cases: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - a medical certificate is provided or - the absence was due to sickness and the principal accepts this explanation. Principals may request a medical certificate in addition to explanations if the explanation is doubted, or the student has a history of unsatisfactory attendance. |

1. Note: In most cases this code will only be used by DET schools, with the exception of students from non-government schools attending hospital schools.

2. Note: For Independent Schools use "F" not "H" for students attending external tutorial centres and programs that are school authorised.