

**Eastern Goldfields Education Support Centre
Student Attendance Policy**



Rationale

Eastern Goldfields Education Support Centre aims to provide a safe, supportive and engaging learning environment, where our students, staff and parents feel a sense of pride and belonging. We believe in working with parents and caregivers to support and improve student attendance.

Helping students establish and maintain positive 'attendance careers' is a critical element for them to achieve success at school. Early intervention in most instances brings about improvement.

A student's attendance may be identified as a concern if:

- the number and frequency of absences is high (student is attending below 90% of the time);
- individual student circumstances require personalised strategies.

This document outlines our whole school attendance processes; including intervention in circumstances where students develop patterns of persistent absences.

Promoting and celebrating attendance

Our teachers provide rich and engaging learning experiences for all students, tailored to their individual needs and interests. Students, staff and families form strong relationships to ensure that everyone feels welcomed, valued and successful at school.

Regular school attendance (of over 90%) is recognised by the presentation of certificates to individual students each term, and students with improved attendance receive a letter of congratulations from the principal. Whole class attendance is acknowledged with an award at each assembly for the classroom with the lowest unauthorised absence rate (as not to punish classes who have students absent for valid reasons).

Monitoring student attendance

At Eastern Goldfields Education Support Centre, we deliver an attendance monitoring and intervention system that provides consistent and effective identification of all students with persistent absences.

Our attendance processes are publicised and understood by all staff, parents and students. Student attendance is accurately recorded and rigorously monitored. Parents are advised of all absences via text message each morning, and subsequently contacted by a phone call from the teacher and/or principal to discuss attendance concerns. Individual and whole school assessment data is analysed to identify patterns of attendance and students at educational risk.

Persistent absences

If a student's attendance falls below an acceptable level or patterns of absences change (e.g. they become increasingly late), school staff will contact parents to investigate the reasons why the student is not attending school.

Students with complex needs

Medical needs and disability

All enrolled students, including those with chronic long term illness are given the opportunity to access appropriate educational programs and maintain connections with their school community.

Students who are frequently absent due to disability, physical or mental illness will require special consideration. In such cases, parents and appropriate school support services are engaged to ensure students have the opportunity to complete requirements of an appropriate educational program, including assessment tasks.

School refusal

School refusal describes students who experience difficulties with student attendance because of severe emotional distress. Students may be absent from school entirely, attend school initially but leave during the day, enter school with severe behaviour problems (e.g. clinging, crying, tantrums, refusal to move, running away) or remain at school but in an extremely distressed state.

School refusal is indicated in situations where the following points are evident:

- Emotional distress
- Parents aware of the absence
- Absence of antisocial behaviour
- Usually stays at home during school hours
- Child usually willing to do schoolwork

Interventions for school refusal include parental involvement and exposure to school. *The longer the child stays out of school, the more difficult it is to facilitate a return.* School refusal is a complex problem and may require the involvement of additional support, such as the school psychology service to develop a plan to re-engage the student.

Working with families

Our teachers work hard to foster relationships with students and parents. We take the time to attempt communication with families in a range of supportive ways including the sending of text messages, phone calls from the teacher and/or principal, newsletters, letters home, face-to-face conversations and home visits (by badged attendance officers).

Parents are required, by law, to provide an explanation for all student absences, either verbally or in writing.

What is low attendance?

- 90% + is regular attendance
- 80-90% is indicated student risk
- 60-80% is moderate student risk
- below 60% is severe student risk

Regular attendance is critical for students to achieve optimal learning at school. Missing school adds up:

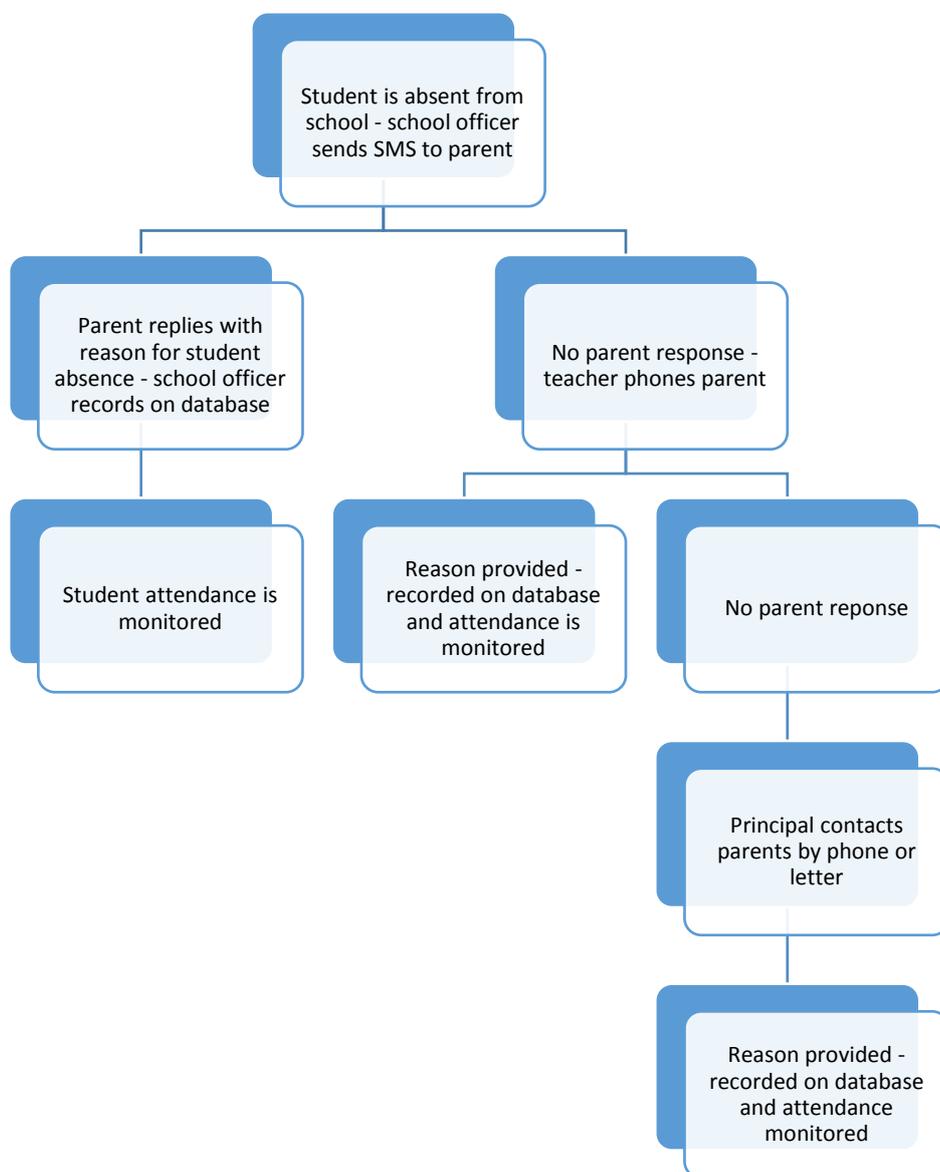
If a child misses an average of five days a term (years 1 to 10), they miss approximately **one year** of school!

If a child misses one day a week (from years 1 to 10), they will miss almost **two years** of school!

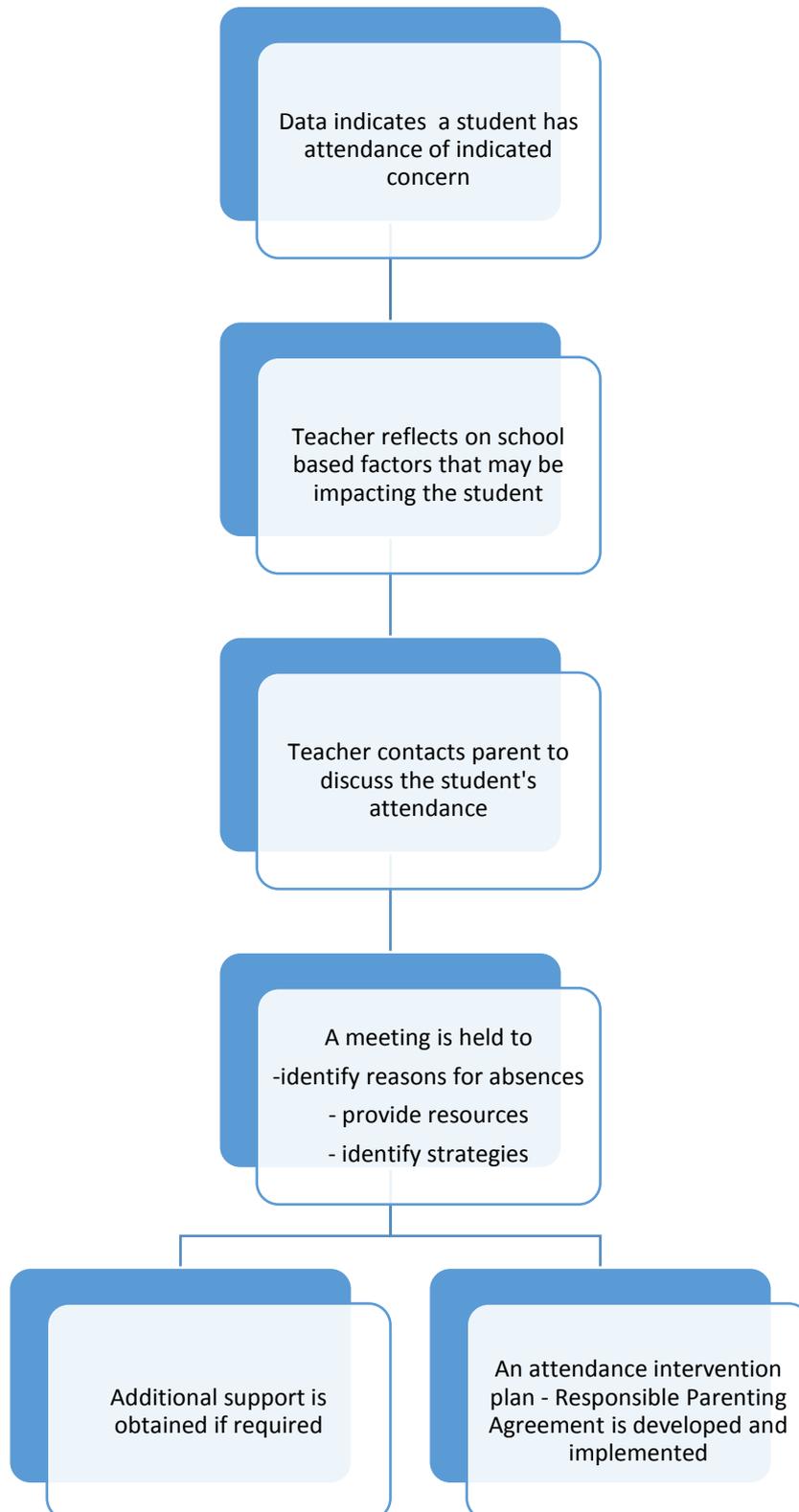
If a child misses two days a week (from years 1 to 10), they will miss almost **four years** of school!

Attendance process flow chart

Day to day management of attendance



Identification of attendance concern - 80-90%



Continued concerning attendance (moderate or severe risk) or inability to engage parents

