



St Joseph's believes there is a need to engage students and establish positive attendance behaviours in the early years of schooling; to support student attendance at transition points and to raise parent and community awareness of the fact that, where academic achievement is concerned, every day counts. There is a mutual obligation of schools, parents, and communities to develop strategies that link directly to the local causes of student absence.

Sources of Authority: CEWA Community Policy
Executive Directive – Student Safety, Wellbeing and Behaviour

Scope

- This procedure applies to all members of the St Joseph's Catholic School community.

Principles

- St Joseph's Catholic School community is central to the Church's mission of bringing the Good News of Jesus Christ to all. Attendance not only affects academic achievement but also each child's moral and spiritual development.
- At the heart of all our decisions is the dignity of each child. Students need to be given every opportunity to be affirmed in their dignity and worth, confirmed in their personhood and assisted to grow to their full potential.
- Attendance is supported through strong relationships and effective communication between families, school, and parish.
- As each person is unique, each approach to attendance should also be unique to ensure it matches the student's needs.
- While St Joseph's Catholic School has policy and strategy, parents remain an important part of all attendance interventions.
- We seek to provide access to Catholic education, especially for the marginalized and disadvantaged. Attendance issues are over-represented in disadvantaged and marginalized groups. Consequently, targeted effort and attention are required to address attendance for these groups to ensure they have equitable participation.
- St Joseph's Catholic School has a responsibility to record student attendance and respond to instances of irregular attendance. This includes implementing appropriate strategies to address the unique needs of every child.
- Legal guardians of children have a legal obligation, set out in the School Education Act 1999, to ensure a child is enrolled at and attends school.

Attendance Procedures

St Joseph's currently use SEQTA for all attendance, pastoral care notes, and reporting. All staff can access this via stjosephs.ta.cathednet.wa.edu.au

Attendance Marking

- All children absent must be entered on to the electronic roll in SEQTA twice per day i.e., by 9.00am and 1.30pm.
- A child's parents or another 'responsible person' must provide an acceptable explanation for any absence to the principal. This must be in the form of a written note, which must be provided to the classroom teacher by the parents when the child returns to school. This is kept in the absentee note file.
- If no written note explaining absence is received, teacher to send home SEQTA Absentee Note proforma requesting a reasonable explanation for the child's absence.

Attendance Categories

- | | |
|----------------------|--|
| • Present | Child is in class |
| • Absent Unexplained | Child not in class. No notification received from legal guardian |
| • Approved Absence | Child not in class. Notification has been received regarding absence |
| • Covid | Legal Guardian has provided evidence of a positive Covid-19 result |

Administration

- Student attendance is monitored twice daily, at 9.15am and at 1.45pm. A phone call will be made to teachers where a roll has not been marked. Incorrect rolls will be corrected by the teacher responsible for the class.
- If a student is absent, and without an explanation, an SMS is sent by the Administration Officer at approximately 9.30am. A telephone call is made to the parent/guardian to confirm the child's whereabouts if a response to the SMS is not received by 10.30am.
- An incorrect SMS sent, caused by incorrect roll marking, will be made known to the Assistant Principal. The teacher will follow up by telephoning the child's parent/guardian.
- Regular absences are reported to the leadership team and are followed-up with the parents or guardians concerned, in collaboration with the classroom teacher. (See Student Non-Attendance Flowchart)
- A written explanation is required for all absences and, if not forthcoming, a proforma is sent home for parents to complete. This is generated through SEQTA on a regular basis by an Assistant Principal.

Principal can require a student to not attend for health reasons

- The Principal can require a student to not attend school or a school-based activity for health reasons in accordance with s. 27(1B) of the School Education Act 1999 (WA).
 - The Chief Health Officer may give a direction under the Public Health Act 2016 (WA) to not permit a child to attend school or participate in an educational programme of the school if they are infectious, contagious, or otherwise harmful to the health of persons who are at the school or participating in an educational programme of the school.
- The Principal must notify the parent(s) or 'responsible person' in writing if they require a student to not attend.

Late Arrivals

- A student is considered to have arrived late at any time after the 8.40am bell.
- All students arriving late must sign in at the Office and given a late slip. This slip must be presented to the teacher when arriving in class. If they do not have this slip, they must be directed to the Office to sign in. The Administration Officer will adjust SEQTA accordingly.
- If teachers observe a pattern of late arrivals, they must contact the parent/guardian.

Early Departures

- A student is considered leaving early any time before 3.00pm.
- All students leaving early must be signed out through the Office. A 'Free to Go' form will be given to the parent/guardian, and this needs to be handed to the teacher and placed in the Absentee File.

Access to SEQTA not available

- If the school internet is offline, teachers should complete the roll on a hard copy of the class list. Once SEQTA is back online, this information should be updated.
- When a relief teacher is in the classroom, a hard copy of the class list will be provided by the Office. Relief teachers will ensure that this is sent to the Office before 9.00am for input.

Non-Attendance Procedures

For extended absences of one week or longer, the Principal is notified of the student absence by the parent through the 'Extended Leave Absence' form.

St Joseph's School follows a 3-tier response to re-engaging students who have been absent from classes for extended periods of time:

Tier 1: Prevention

To prevent absenteeism, we aim to promote attendance at school by developing a positive school culture, student's social skills, and a safe and stimulating environment.

Tier 2: (When a student's absence falls below 90% or continued lateness is identified as a concern)

To support students with emerging issues with poor attendance through monitoring and follow up in order to re-engage students back in school before non-attendance patterns become ingrained.

Consultation Phase:

- Teacher to contact parent face to face or over the phone
- If there is no change within one week: Nudge letter (1) to be sent home
- If there is no change within two weeks: Nudge letter (2) to be sent home
- A 'Parent Contact' form is completed
- The School Chaplain meets with student to discuss concerns
- Principal and Assistant Principal meets with parents to discuss concerns
- Non-attendance team (Principal, Assistant Principals, Chaplain, Class Teacher) complete 'Cause of Student Non-Attendance Checklist' (See appendix A)

Tier 3: Attendance is not restored

Directed at those students who are not attending, truanting, or refusing school. This may require a number of approaches and will include consultation with the student, legal guardian, teachers, school chaplain and Leadership Team.

- In the case of a student being absent from school without a reasonable explanation, or when the absentee rate falls below 80% in a semester, teachers will follow the Student Non-Attendance Flowchart below. (See appendix B)
- Following consultation with the student, parents/legal guardian, teachers, Leadership Team, a documented plan may be put in place.

Case Conference

- Principal will consult with CEWA School Psychology Team, relevant external agencies, key teachers, parents and student
- An Individual Attendance Plan is developed (includes reward system and sanctions)
- Attendance plan is implemented with daily/weekly/fortnightly monitoring
- Plan is followed up daily/weekly/fortnightly to determine if attendance has improved
- Possible home visits from school chaplain
- If attendance has not improved after agreed time, the Principal will call meeting with parent. During this meeting, it will be explained that if attendance does not improve to an acceptable level of 90% or more, the case will be reported to CEWA.

Attendance Panel

If attendance is still below the expected standard despite multiple and varied attempts to support the student, the case is referred to CEWA for the creation of an attendance panel. A delegate from the 'Teaching and Learning' team and 'School Psychology' team will join the Principal, parents and key staff at this meeting to explore, discuss and/or review the following:

- Reason/s for failure to comply with attendance requirements including any social, cultural, lingual, economic, geographic or learning difficulties involved
- Review plans and check that all options have been exhausted – further strategies explored
- Discuss alternative placements for student
- Possible referral of student to Department of Education Tracking System and/or referral to the Department of Child Protection and Family Services



St Joseph's Catholic Primary School

Causes of Student Non-Attendance Checklist

Surname:				
First Name				
Year and Age Group:				
Class Teacher:				
Aboriginal:	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	EAL/D	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	
STUDENT			YES	NO
1.	Has the student had an opportunity to express their needs with a trusted adult?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
2.	Are there academic issues?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	If yes, has any assessments been completed?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Does any additional assessment need to be completed?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Is there an IEP?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
3.	Does the student have good physical health?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
4.	Have any safety concerns been identified? (teasing, bullying, racism)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
5.	Are there any mental health issues? (anxiety, depression)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
6.	Does the student have a diagnosis? (ADD/ASD)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	If yes, is their adequate differentiation for the diagnosis?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
HOME			YES	NO
7.	Have parents been contacted to include them as partners in attendance and identify needs?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
8.	Are there any issues with resourcing (books, shoes, uniform, equipment such as pencils, pens)?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
9.	Are there any issues within the home environment (domestic violence, maltreatment) where the student needs support?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
10.	Are parents supporting school attendance?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
11.	Are parents providing students with a "fun" home environment if they do not attend?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
12.	Has there been a family event that has been the catalyst for non-attendance? (death, sickness, redundancy)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
SCHOOL			YES	NO
13.	Are teachers providing scaffolded learning experiences?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
14.	Do teachers provide extension for gifted students?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
15.	Are there alternative learning pathways for students with academic challenges?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
16.	Does the school promote respect and safety through policy and actions?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
17.	Does the school monitor attendance and follow up on non-attendance?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
18.	Does the student have positive relationships with teachers in the school?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
19.	Does the school manage behaviour adequately?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	



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Tier 2 – Supporting Students with High Levels of Non-attendance

Tier 3 is directed to those students who are not attending, truanting, or refusing school. Although there are many different behaviours that characterise students who refuse school, they can often fall into one or more of the reasons listed below. Some students, however, may refuse school for multiple reasons and therefore will require a combination of approaches and additional time than those who refuse for one reason alone as they are likely to have been out of school for a longer period of time.

FUNCTION	LOOKS LIKE	STRATEGIES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoiding school related stressors • <i>Something at school makes the student feel mad, sad, scared, or upset.</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Difficulty concentrating due to distress, excessive crying or tearfulness, feigned illness, tense, physical complaints, general nervousness, separation anxiety. 	<p>CASE MANAGER:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assess the student and family needs to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ determine if outside agency or specialist support is needed ◦ refer to appropriate services • Consistent, planned exposure to school • Address safety concerns (e.g. bullying) • Address academic/learning concerns (e.g., differentiated curriculum, accommodations, supports etc.) • Address social dynamic issues • Develop student support plan • Assist with morning drop-off and/or hand-over • Ensure continued positive and regular contact with the family • Prompt follow-up with the family for each absence <p>TEACHER(S):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Calm, welcoming, and positive approaches are best • Ensure a sense of predictability and consistency • Consider a buddy system if appropriate and pair with a suitable student in any group situation • Avoid discussions or questions about school absences. • Know the student support plan <p>PARENTS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure health/medical concerns have been investigated. • Parents may require support with some of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ establishing AM/PM routines ◦ giving effective instructions and directions ◦ how to recognise effort and progress ◦ strategies to manage avoidance behaviours ◦ general parenting skills <p>STUDENTS:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Psychoeducation around understanding and managing anxiety. • Gradual exposure to school. • Involved in developing the support plan.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoiding social situations and/or activities • <i>Feeling judged, evaluated, or, being put in front of an audience or peers makes the student feel excessively shy/anxious.</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Similar to profile above ("Avoiding school related stressors") • May also include test anxiety, public speaking fears, shyness, limited social skills. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • STUDENTS: • Similar to profile above ("Avoiding school related stressors") • Teaching social skills and problem-solving skills • Graded exposure to tasks or situations causing anxiety • Role-play practice

FUNCTION	LOOKS LIKE	STRATEGES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To get attention from or spend more time with significant others. To seek out attention from significant others. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reassurance seeking, leaving school grounds to get home, wanting parents to be at school with them, constantly questioning the teacher, tantrums, separation anxiety. Student may be more concerned about being separated from parent and less about school. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CASE MANAGER: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assist family to access additional support (if required) Assist with morning drop-off and/or hand-over TEACHER(S): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Calm, welcoming, and positive approaches are best Ensure a sense of predictability and consistency Avoid discussions or questions about school absences Know the student support plan PARENTS: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parents may require support with the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> establishing AM/PM routines giving effective instructions and directions how to recognise effort and progress strategies to manage avoidance behaviours general parenting skills establishing consequences for non-attendance
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To spend more time out of school as it is more fun or stimulating. It is more fun to be outside of school than in it. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sleeping late, watching TV, internet use, socialising with friends; skipping classes, part, or whole days. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CASE MANAGER: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish a school-based mentor (e.g. counsellor, teacher, or case manager) who can support the student (e.g., PBIS Check In/Check Out, Check & Connect strategies) Real time monitoring of attendance and follow-up if/when required Problem-solving and contract agreement Communicating importance of school attendance PARENTS: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Positively acknowledge and reward attendance Reduce or remove the rewarding activities/items Consequences for non-attendance Encouraging and supporting good sleep hygiene (access professional support if required)

OTHER CAUSES OF NON-ATTENDANCE:

These categories will require individualised approaches to address the needs of the student and their family. Strategies may not necessarily require a focus on improving school attendance.

REASONS	LOOKS LIKE	STRATEGIES
Medical	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chronic physical or mental health conditions (e.g., cancer, severe asthma, anxiety, depression) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work collaboratively with the family and health specialists Seek consultation with CEWA SWD Consultant and/or Psychology team Adjust education plan as required School-based mentor
School withdrawal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Students who are deliberately taken out of school by their parents (e.g., family holidays, cultural reasons) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communicate importance of school attendance and impact on academic achievement. Encourage families to notify in advance any planned school absence (where possible) Use a student absence learning plan for students who are absent from school for an extended period of time Aboriginal Teacher Assistant maintain communication with family to ensure support needs identified and prompt return to school is encouraged
Social or family conditions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Transport difficulties, parenting difficulties, homelessness, avoiding abuse, caring for a parent. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify barriers and potential solutions to non-attendance Assist family to link in with support services Consult with CEWA Child Safe Team if there is a child safety concern Notify Department of Family and Child Protection if there is a child safety concern
Truancy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Student is absent from school without parent knowledge. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Follow case management process School-based mentor Check & Connect (see: PBIS) Explore suitability of education setting (e.g., CARE school, TAFE) Consider parent's capacity to influence and control the student's behaviour



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Checklist for Managing Tier 3 Non-Attendance

Surname:					
First Name:					
Year and Age Group					
Class Teacher:					
Aboriginal:		YES	<input type="checkbox"/>	NO	<input type="checkbox"/>
EAL/D (if yes, state language)		YES	<input type="checkbox"/>	NO	<input type="checkbox"/>
Current support services: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Youth Worker/School Based Community Liaison Officer home visit(s) Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> • Psychiatrist Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> • Psychologist Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> • Other (state) 					
Attendance data:					

Complete the steps below:

(Note: not all will be relevant, and the order will depend on rate of non-attendance and context)

PROCESSES		DATE
1.	Phone parents to notify them of absences and seek cause	
2.	Meet with student to discuss concerns regarding attendance and to identify any issues that need addressing	
3.	Letter(s) to parents to provide a formalised record and reminder of attendance issues	
4.	Arrange meeting with parents/caregivers and student to discuss attendance (may include pastoral care leader, chaplain, school psychologist, counsellor) During meeting, develop an individual attendance plan and implement plan	
5.	Follow up on plan – has attendance improved?	
6.	Arrange home visits: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher and/or other staff home visit(s) • AIEO home visit(s) • Administration home visit(s) 	
7.	Check fidelity of plan: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student involved in plan • Attendance reward system consistently applied • Sanctions are in place • Teacher mentoring is occurring • Students are mentored by a peer 	
8.	Consultation with CEWA psychology service	
9.	Consultation with alternative education programs, training options, employment programs	

Any other actions taken:

Next Steps:

This plan has been reviewed on the following dates:

DATE	BY WHOM?



St Joseph's Catholic Primary School

Primary Student Attendance Improvement Plan

An Attendance Improvement Plan can be implemented to support a student whose attendance is of concern. This should be developed with the student (so they have ownership over the plan) and the parents/carers and any support workers. This template can be modified to suit the needs of your student and the context of your school.

It may also be useful to bring a copy of the [School is better when you're here – primary school students](#) as a resource to support your discussion.

Surname:

YEAR/FORM:	DATE OF MEETING:
Attendees at meeting:	
Objectives of meeting: <i>e.g. to support the student in improving their school attendance and to ensure she/he continues to achieve academically and feels socially connected to her/his peers.</i>	
Background – attendance data: <i>e.g. Over the past month/term the student has missed xx days of school.</i>	
<i>Analyse the student data and investigate relationship to such factors as day of the week, time of day, class/subject/year level, timetable, gender/cultural groups, family obligations/commitments/issues.</i>	
The following areas are strengths & interests of the student:	
<i>Outline strengths and interests so that the plan can use these as a means of engaging the student.</i>	
The reasons the student finds it hard to get to school:	
Student's attendance goal for the next three weeks: Week 1 - Week 2 - Week 3 -	
The student will take the following actions to achieve their goal: <i>Amongst other things consider:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Packing their bag the night before • Joining a lunchtime club • Other 	

Other factors to consider:

- The important role relationships play in increasing connectedness/engagement
- Identify a supportive staff member who can check in with the student
- A reward system or a way of acknowledging the student's efforts to improve their attendance
- Student visits to first aid as a way of avoiding class or going home
- Participation in specialist classes like PE that the student may be avoiding
- Any student concerns around using the school toilets or change rooms
- Building social connections and ensuring the student feels safe in the yard
- Comprehensive learning assessments and additional supports or adjustments if required
- Additional family support via community services

Staff will take the following actions to help the student achieve these goals:

Amongst other things consider:

- *A daily reward system and a weekly rewards system (see below)*
- *Home visits*
- *Adjustments to curriculum e.g. concentrating on core or favourite subjects for a period of time, modifying conditions of tests, providing additional scaffolds, a temporary reduction in homework*
- *A staged return or temporary part time attendance*
- *A letter sent home at the end of the three weeks with attendance summary/congratulatory letter when attendance achieved*
- *Referrals to SSSO or community agencies/supports*
- *Identifying a school-based support person*
- *Recess & lunchtime activities/clubs*

Student's parents will take the following actions to help the student achieve these goals:

Amongst other things, consider:

- *Setting homebased rewards*
- *Morning and bedtime routines*
- *Technology in the bedroom*
- *Communication with the school*
- *Accessing support from community agencies*
- *Support with homework*
- *A visit to the family GP for a check-up*

Implementation start date:

Review date:



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Primary Student Attendance Rewards Chart – Sample

This program is to be used as a reward for [Student]'s success in improving their attendance. Each day [Student] is to bring the chart to [Mentor]. If by Friday she/he achieves 3 stickers, she/he will receive a sticker the achieved box and will get a reward. If she/he achieves 9/15 days she/he will receive a super-award. Increase the goal posts as attendance improves. If the plan has not been achieved, reconvene the Attendance support group meeting and consider further supports.

WEEK 1 - MY GOAL IS TO ATTEND 3 DAYS						
	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Achieved
Sticker						
Positive experience at school						
What did mum/dad enjoy hearing about?						
I am working towards the following goals						
At home		At school				Achieved
Weekly goal: (e.g. 15 minutes on the computer at home)		Weekly goal: (e.g. 15 minutes on the computer)				
Super goal: (e.g. A trip to the zoo)		Super goal: (e.g. one on one basketball time)				

WEEK 2 - MY GOAL IS TO ATTEND 3 DAYS						
	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Achieved
Sticker						
Positive experience at school						
What did mum/dad enjoy hearing about?						
I am working towards the following goals						
At home		At school				Achieved
Weekly goal:		Weekly goal:				
Super goal:		Super goal:				

WEEK 3 - MY GOAL IS TO ATTEND 3 DAYS						
	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Achieved
Sticker						
Positive experience at school						
What did mum/dad enjoy hearing about?						
I am working towards the following goals						
At home		At school				Achieved
Weekly goal:		Weekly goal:				
Super goal:		Super goal:				

Student Non-Attendance Flow Chart

