

STUDENT HEALTH, SAFETY, WELLBEING AND ENGAGEMENT

Attendance Policy

RATIONALE

It is recognised that absenteeism impacts on children's achievement levels and social development. Even a small number of absences within a year can mean that a child misses important social experiences and key learning opportunities that can continue to have an impact across their schooling life and beyond. Springvale Rise Primary School aims to create a safe and collaborative culture that promotes 100% school attendance, whereby students are motivated to attend school every day, and on time, to achieve their personal best.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to:

- ensure all children of compulsory school age are enrolled and attend Springvale Rise Primary School every day the school is open for instruction
- ensure students, staff and parents have a shared understanding of the importance of attending school
- explain to school staff and parents the key practices and procedures Springvale Rise Primary School has in place to
 - support, monitor and maintain student attendance
 - record, monitor and follow up student absences and unexplained late arrivals and early departures.

SCOPE

This policy applies to all students at Springvale Rise Primary School.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the Department of Education and Training's [School Attendance Guidelines](#). It does not replace or change the obligations of Springvale Rise Primary School, parents and School Attendance Officers under legislation or the School Attendance Guidelines.

DEFINITION

Parent – includes a guardian and every person who has parental responsibility for the child, including parental responsibility under the *Family Law Act 1975* (Cth) and any person with whom a child normally or regularly resides.

POLICY

Schooling is compulsory for children and young people aged from 6 to 17 years (unless an exemption from attendance or enrolment has been granted).

Daily attendance is important for all children and young people to succeed in education and to ensure they do not fall behind both socially and developmentally. School participation maximises life opportunities for children and young people by providing them with education and support networks. School helps people to develop important skills, knowledge and values that set them up for further learning and participation in their community.

Students are expected to attend Springvale Rise Primary School during normal school hours, from 9:00am to 3:30pm, every day of each term unless:

- there is an approved exemption from school attendance for the student
- the student has a dual enrolment with another school and has only a partial enrolment in Springvale Rise Primary School, or
- the student is registered for home schooling and has only a partial enrolment in Springvale Rise Primary School for particular activities.

Both the school and parents have an important role to play in supporting students to attend school every day.

Springvale Rise Primary School believes that all students should attend school all day, every day when the school is open for instruction. The school is committed to working with its school community to encourage and support 100% school attendance and building a culture whereby:

- Students are committed to attend school every day, arrive on time and be prepared to learn. Our students are encouraged to approach a teacher and seek assistance if there are any issues that are affecting their attendance.
- Springvale Rise Primary School parents are committed to ensuring their child/children attend school on time every day when instruction is offered, to communicate openly with the school and provide valid explanations for any absence.
- Parents will communicate with the relevant staff at Springvale Rise Primary School about any issues affecting their child's attendance and work in partnership with the school to address any concerns.
- Parents will provide a reasonable explanation for their child's absence from school and endeavour to schedule family holidays, appointments and other activities outside of school hours.
- Our school will identify individual students or cohorts who are vulnerable and whose attendance is at risk and/or declining and will work with these students and their parents to improve their attendance through a range of interventions and supports.

Supporting and promoting attendance

Springvale Rise Primary School's *Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy* supports student attendance.

Our school also promotes student attendance by providing:

- Daily Breakfast Club- from 8:30am
- Awards- weekly, termly and yearly awards to encourage and celebrate attendance and students' achieving their best
- Lunchtime Clubs
- Food support- including lunchtime sandwiches and food relief for families
- Attendance Plans, Behaviour Support Plans, Student Support Groups, Individual Education Plans, Social Skills Groups, Speech Therapy, Counselling, Welfare and Leadership Support
- An Afterschool program through TheirCare

Recording attendance

Springvale Rise Primary School must record student attendance twice per day. This is necessary to:

- meet legislative requirements
- discharge Springvale Rise Primary School's duty of care for all students.

Attendance will be recorded by the classroom teacher/specialist teacher at the start of the school day by 9:10am and after lunch by 2:35pm using Compass.

If students are in attendance, at a school approved activity, the teacher in charge of the activity will record them as being present.

A CRT, or a teacher that does not have access to Compass, will mark a hard copy of the roll, and then, straight away, send the marked roll to the school office where the office staff will enter the grade's attendance information into Compass.

Recording absences

For absences where there is no exemption in place, a parent must provide an explanation on each occasion to the school.

Parents should notify Springvale Rise Primary School of absences, late arrivals and early departures by:

- Contacting the office, if it is a planned absence, on or before the day of the absence by:
 - Phoning the office or visiting the office in person
 - Advising the classroom teacher of the planned absence. The classroom teacher will then advise the office of any information to ensure this is entered on Compass.
 - Sending a note with the child, which will be sent to the office
- Contacting the office, if it is an unplanned absence, on the day of the absence or as soon as practical after, by:
 - Phoning the school
 - Visiting the office in person. The classroom teacher will direct parents to the office to inform them should parents tell them first, or the classroom teacher will email the office staff promptly
 - Entering the absence on the Parent Portal of Compass
 - Sending in a note with their child. The classroom teacher will send all notes received to the office via the blue cash bag.

Late arrivals:

Students who arrive after 9:10am, must enter the school through the school office with their parent and be entered on the Compass Kiosk by an office staff member. If a student arrives to the office without a parent, an office staff member will call the parent to confirm the reason for the late arrival. The student will receive a late pass which they will provide to their classroom teacher. A student who arrives to class without a late slip, will be redirected by the teacher to the office to receive a slip.

Early departure:

A student who needs to leave school prior to 3:30pm must be exited on the Compass Kiosk at the office by a parent. The parent will be required to sign their child out at the school office prior to collecting their child. Once a child had been signed out, the parent will be given an early departure slip to take to their child's grade whereby a teacher will release that child into the parent's care. Alternatively, the child will be called up to the office via loudspeaker.

If a student is absent on a particular day and the school has not been previously notified by a parent, or the absence is otherwise unexplained, Springvale Rise Primary School will notify the parents by an automated Compass generated SMS at 10:15am. **Parents are encouraged to contact the school as soon as possible to provide a reason for their child's absence.**

Springvale Rise Primary School will keep a record of the reason given for each absence, late arrival, and early departure. The principal (or their delegate) will determine if the explanation provided is a **reasonable excuse** for the purposes of the parent meeting their responsibilities under the *Education Training Reform Act 2006* and the School Attendance Guidelines.

If Springvale Rise Primary School considers that the parent has provided a **reasonable excuse** for their child's absence the absence will be marked as '**approved absence**'.

Approved absences may include, for example:

- medical and dental appointments, where out of hours appointments are not possible or appropriate
- bereavement or attendance at the funeral of a relative or friend of the student, including a student required to attend Sorry Business
- school refusal, if a plan is in place with the parent to address causes and support the student's return to school
- cultural observance if the parent/carer notifies the school in advance
- family holidays where the parent notifies the school in advance.

If an absence is regularly provided as 'Illness/Medical' then a medical certificate may be required by the school.

If a student will be having an extended absences i.e. family holiday, the office should be notified by the parent/guardian.

If the school determines that no reasonable excuse has been provided, the absence will be marked as '**unexplained absence**' or '**parent choice unauthorised**'.

Parents will be notified if an absence has not been excused at the end of each month via a letter sent home by the office, which will require the parent to provide an explanation and their signature.

If no explanation is provided by the parent the absence will remain as an '**unexplained absence**' on the student's Compass file.

Managing Consecutive Absences

Where absences are of concern due to their nature or frequency Springvale Rise Primary School take the following course of action (see also the flowchart in Appendix 1):

Step 1	Parent is notified via Compass automated SMS at 10:15am of each day the student is absent.
Step 2	If a parent does not contact the school on or before the third consecutive day of an absence, a phone call will be made to the parent by the classroom teacher. The result of the phone call, including attempted phone calls and left voice messages, will be recorded on Compass and both the Sub-School Team Leader (SSTL) and Wellbeing Leader will be notified in the communication chain.
Step 3	If a student remains absent without explanation or contact from the parent, the SSTL will follow up by continuing to phone the parent and/or contacting the emergency contacts listed everyday. The result of the phone call, including attempted phone calls and left voice messages, will be recorded on Compass and both the classroom teacher and the Wellbeing Leader will be notified in the communication chain.
Step 4	If a parent does not make contact after one week and the child remains absent, a home visit will be arranged by the SSTL, who will visit the child's home with either the Wellbeing Leader or the Assistant Principal. The outcome of the home visit will be recorded on Compass and the Classroom Teacher, Wellbeing Leader and Principal Team will be notified in the communication chain.

Step 5	If the home visit is unsuccessful, the Welfare Leader will issue an attendance letter. A copy of the letter will be recorded on Compass and the Classroom Teacher, SSTL and Principal Team will be notified in the communication chain.
Step 6	If the student remains absent and the parent does not make contact the Principal will notify the Department of Education attendance officer. The Principal will document the action taken on Compass and the Classroom Teacher, SSTL and Principal Team will be notified in the communication chain. <i>See 'Referral to School Attendance Officer' below for further details.</i>
Step 7	A referral will be made to the Department of Education Health and Wellbeing Officer and/or other services if a parent does not contact the school.

Managing patterned Absences, Late Arrivals, and early departures

Springvale Rise acknowledges that patterns of absences, late arrivals and early departures are also of concern, understanding that this can have a detrimental impact on a student's success at school. A pattern of absences may include, but is not limited to:

- A student being absent every time it rains
- A student being late every Monday morning
- A student being absent 1-2 days per week
- A student being late every time they stay with a particular parent
- A student being absent towards the end of a fortnightly pay-cycle

Springvale Rise Primary School will take the following course of action to support students whose absences put them at risk of falling below 80% attendance for the school year. While every situation is different, this equates to approximately 5 occurrences per term (see also the flowchart in Appendix 2):

Step 1	Parent is notified via Compass automated SMS at 10:15am of each day the student is absent.
Step 2	Once a patterned absence is observed and a student becomes at risk of falling below 80% attendance, the classroom teacher will make a phone call to the student's parent, to check in and discuss their concerns and see if the school can do anything to support the parent/child. The result of the phone call, including attempted phone calls and left voice messages, will be recorded on Compass by the Classroom teacher and both the SSTL and Wellbeing Leader will be notified in the communication chain.
Step 3	If the pattern continues within the week following, the classroom teacher will notify the SSTL, who will then organise an Attendance SSG Meeting. The SSTL will provide the parent with a printout copy of the attendance record on Compass for their child (or its equivalent). The SSTL will also provide information of the learning that has been missed and the consequences (short term and long term) that this has. The result of the meeting, including SSG meeting minutes, attempted phone calls, left voice messages and attempted meetings, will be recorded/uploaded on Compass by the SSTL and both the Classroom teacher and Wellbeing Leader will be notified in the communication chain.

Step 4	If the pattern continues within the week following, the classroom teacher will notify the SSTL. The SSTL, together with the Classroom and Wellbeing Leader will organise another SSG meeting with the parent. If possible, the child should also attend. An Attendance Plan will be developed during the meeting. The result of the meeting, including a copy of the meeting minutes and Attendance Plan as well as attempted phone calls, left voice messages and attempted meetings, will be recorded/uploaded on Compass by the SSTL and the Classroom teacher, Wellbeing Leader and Assistant Principal will be notified in the communication chain. The Attendance Plan is to be uploaded on Compass.
Step 5	If the Attendance Plan is unsuccessful, the SSTL will monitor the student's attendance every day and review the plan regularly with the parent, liaising with the Wellbeing Leader to provide additional support to the family. The SSTL will inform both the Assistant Principal and Principal if no improvements are made. An SSG meeting may be organised in order to review the attendance plan, chaired by the Assistant Principal. Alternatively, the Principal may decide on any further course of action.

Providing Additional Support

Springvale Rise Primary School understands that from time to time that some students will need additional supports and assistance, and in collaboration with the student and their family, will endeavour to provide this support when it is required. Springvale Rise Primary School will work collaboratively with parents, the student, and other professionals, where appropriate, to develop strategies to improve attendance, including:

- establishing an Attendance Student Support Group
- implementing a Return to School Plan
- implementing an Attendance Improvement Plan
- implementing an Individual Education Plan
- implementing a Student Absence Learning Plan for students who will be absent for an extended period
- arranging for assistance from relevant student wellbeing staff/Leadership team and/or community services.

*(*templates available on Compass)*

Referral to School Attendance Officer

If Springvale Rise Primary School decides that it has exhausted strategies for addressing a student's unsatisfactory attendance, we may, in accordance with the School Attendance Guidelines refer the non-attendance to a School Attendance Officer in the South East Regional Office for further action.

If, after multiple attempts to make contact with a parent, it becomes apparent that a student will not be returning to the school, the principal may make a referral to a School Attendance Officer if:

- the student has been absent from school on at least five full days in the previous 12 months where:
 - the parent has not provided a reasonable excuse for these absences; and
 - measures to improve the student's attendance have been undertaken and have been unsuccessful
- the student's whereabouts are unknown and:
 - the student has been absent for 10 consecutive school days; or
 - no alternative education destination can be found for the student.

MORE INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

- [School Attendance Guidelines](#)

SPRINGVALE RISE PRIMARY SCHOOL

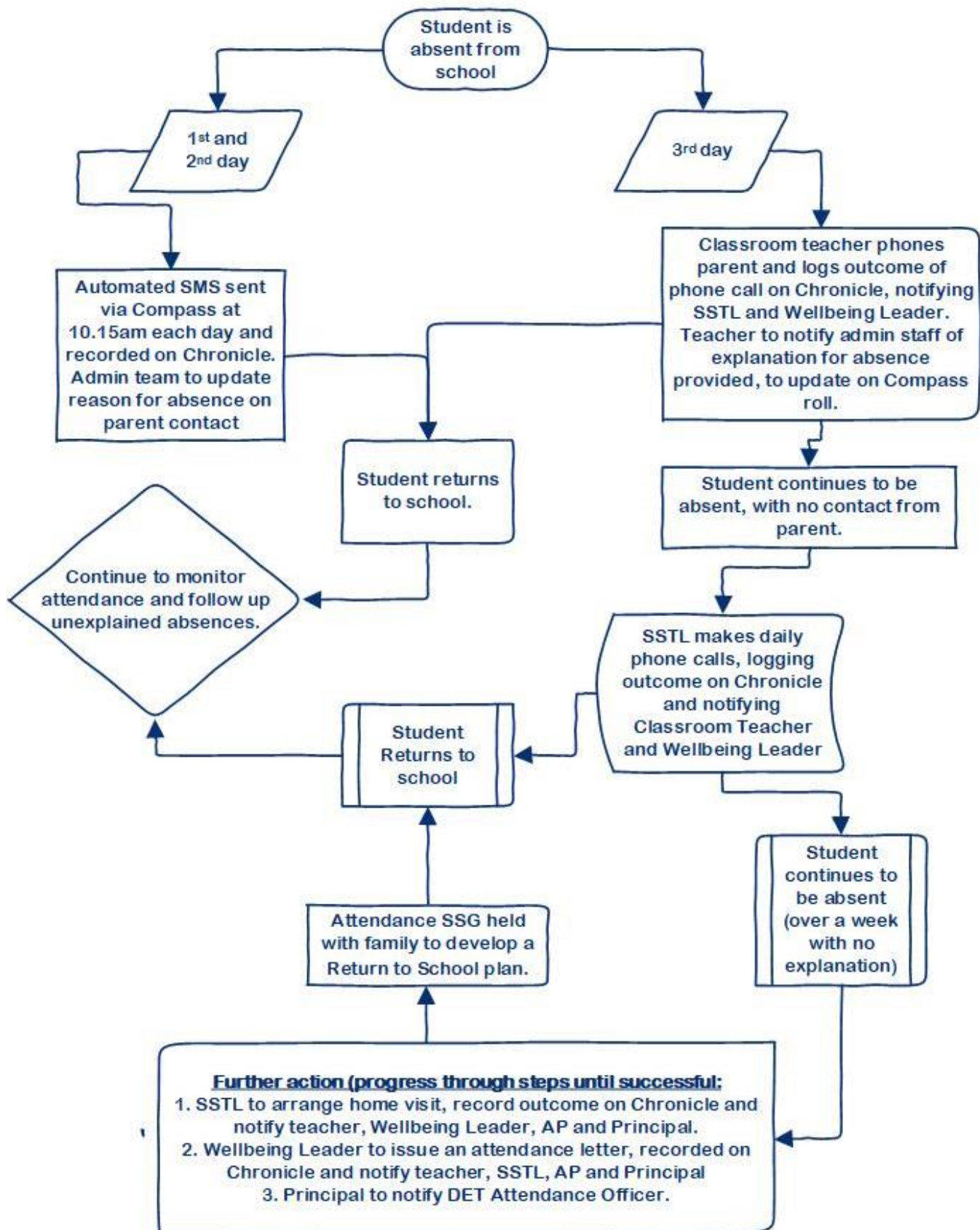


- [Education and Training Reform Act](#)
- [Education and Training Reform Regulations 2017](#)
- [DET Student Engagement Policy Requirements](#)
- School Policy and Advisory Guide: [Attendance](#)

REVIEW CYCLE

This policy was last updated in March 2021 and is scheduled for review in 2024, or if guidelines change.

APPENDIX 1: PROCEDURE TO MANAGE CONSECUTIVE ABSENCES



APPENDIX 2: PROCEDURE TO MANAGE PATTERNS OF ABSENCES, LATE ARRIVALS AND EARLY DEPARTURES

