



ATTENDANCE POLICY 2023

Underdale High School

Research shows that attendance at school all day and every day positively affects learning, wellbeing, employment and life outcomes for children and young people. Learning is cumulative and it is disrupted if students often miss school. [According to international studies](#) this can result in negatively affecting academic outcomes, increased risk of social isolation from the school, community and peers, increased likelihood of dropping out of school sooner, poorer long term mental health and social functioning and increased likelihood of being involved in criminal activity or requiring social assistance. According to the [Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership](#), 25% (1 in 4) Australian students were absent for more than 10% of school time, or 20 or more days. These students are missing at least a month of school during the school year.

School attendance and the law

Attendance at school is compulsory. The Education and Children's Services Act 2019 states that all children must attend school from 6 until they turn 17. This could be in a school or an approved learning program.

Parents or legal guardians (carers) can be prosecuted if they do not make sure their child goes to school. This can mean being fined or getting a criminal conviction.

The department's attendance policy

The South Australian Department for Education's [Attendance Policy](#) guides the responsibilities of the whole school community to make sure that children and young people attend school. This includes school staff, parents, carers and students.

Schools work with their community to develop positive attendance habits. This starts from the earliest years. They do this when they provide a safe, inclusive and culturally respectful environment. They use effective and consistent local practices to monitor and manage absences.

Students at risk from missing school

Students can be away from school for many reasons. Schools use categories to identify children and young people at risk. We make sure that appropriate follow-up and support is provided.

- **Habitual non-attendance:** a student has 5 to 9 days absent in a term for any reason.
- **Chronic non-attendance:** a student has 10 or more days absent in a term for any reason.





How we implement the department's attendance policy

At Underdale High School our attendance practices align with the department's attendance policy.

We support student attendance when we:

- promote the importance of education from the earliest years of life and throughout school
- assess patterns of non-attendance and develop ways to address this
- actively engage and include all children, young people and their families
- provide support to address the barriers to attendance, learning and wellbeing
- monitor attendance to make sure progress is documented and supports are in place
- evaluate the need for further or ongoing support and referral for additional support.

We use data to create our attendance improvement plans. This is in partnership with our community. Our plan includes the actions we will take to make sure all students can attend school.

Underdale High School's attendance expectations

School starts at 8.35am each day and finishes at 3.10pm.

Monday's start time is 9:45am.

A parent or carer must provide an explanation if their child is late or must leave early. All students must give this to student services when they sign in or out.

Attendance responsibilities

Everyone has a role to make sure students attend school all day, every day.

Students

- Attend school every day the school is open unless they are ill or have an approved exemption.
- Arrive at school and to all lessons and activities on time.
- Participate positively in all learning activities.
- Sign in/out at student services if they:
 - o arrive late or leave early
 - o leave school due to illness (a parent will be contacted for approval).

Note: a student's age and circumstances affect the level of responsibility. Year 11's and 12's can apply for Independent Study.





Parents and carers

- Make sure their child attends school every day the school is open, unless they are ill or have an approved exemption.
- Be responsible for their child's travel to and from school.
- Make sure their child arrives at school on time, between 8.05am and 8.35am.
- Provide their child's school with up-to-date contact details.
- Provide a reason to the school if their child is absent, late or leaving early. The same day if possible.
- Provide a medical certificate or written explanation if their child is ill for 3 or more days in a row.
- Make appointments outside of school hours if possible. For example, dentists or National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) providers.
- Make appointments with NDIS providers outside of school hours.
- Monitor their child's attendance and classwork. Help their child to meet deadlines and catch up if needed.

Teachers

- Make sure all parents and carers are aware of attendance expectations, policies and procedures.
- Accurately record each absence, late arrival or early departure with the appropriate code.
- Contact parents or carers if there is no explanation for an absence, or a pattern of absences.
- Document contact with parents and carers about absences, including attempts to contact.
- Request a medical certificate from parents or carers if needed.
- Make notifications about chronic non-attendance (via the Child Abuse Report Line – [CARL](#)) guided by Responding to Abuse and Neglect – Education and Care ([RAN](#)) training and the [Mandatory Reporting Guide](#).
 - eCarl – for students not in care or 17 years and under.
 - Ring CARL – for students who are in care.
- Contact the parent or carer on the day their child is absent by text message.





Year Level Leaders and Wellbeing Leaders

- Make notifications about chronic non-attendance (via the Child Abuse Report Line – [CARL](#)) guided by Responding to Abuse and Neglect – Education and Care ([RAN](#)) training and the [Mandatory Reporting Guide](#) .
 - o eCarl – for students not in care or 17 years and under.
 - o Ring CARL – for students who are in care.
- Consult with the local Student Support Services (after third letter of absence OR 3 weeks of student not being sighted at school).
 - o Social Work Duty Line: 1300 620 673

For example, Social Work Truancy evidence can include;

- Notes recorded on DAYMAP regarding contact with caregivers.
- Attendance Improvement Plan
- Mandatory Reports

Wellbeing Team

- Conducts home visits in weeks 3, 6, 9

Student Services

- Prints attendance map for each homegroup, weekly.
- Sends formal letters of absence with students timetable of unexplained absences to parents/caregivers and records on DAYMAP
- Following up with HG teachers in regard to attendance.

Authorisation of exemptions

In some circumstances, the principal has authority to approve an exemption from school. This can be for up to 1 month. It can also be for up to 12 months for a family holiday.

Before asking for an exemption, families should talk to a site leader. Students must attend school until an exemption is approved.

Our school requires an exemption for absences more than 3 school days in a row. This does not include illness.

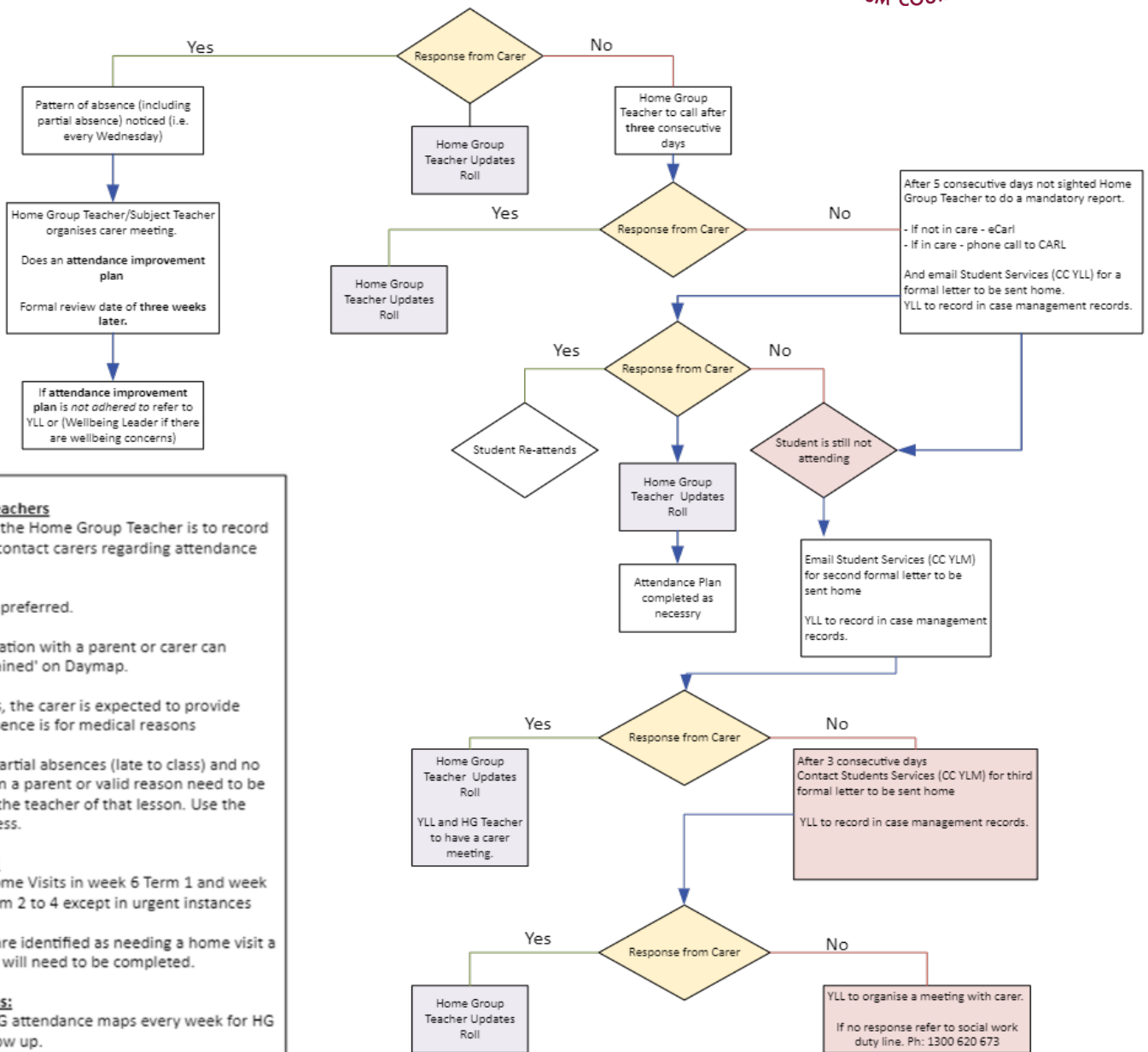
Parents or carers must apply in writing. The principal will advise them in writing of their decision. A copy is kept in the student record folder. Forms are available from the front office.

Exemptions of more than 1 month (excluding holidays) must be approved by the department's central office.

Note: Exemptions are counted as student absences from school.



Student Absent --> Text sent from marking roll on DAYMAP (check with DAYMAP for late)



PLEASE NOTE:

Home Group Teachers

In all instances, the Home Group Teacher is to record all attempts to contact carers regarding attendance concerns.

Phone Calls are preferred.

Only communication with a parent or carer can change 'unexplained' on Daymap.

After three days, the carer is expected to provide certificate if absence is for medical reasons

Students with partial absences (late to class) and no notification from a parent or valid reason need to be followed up by the teacher of that lesson. Use the behaviour process.

Wellbeing/YLM

Will conduct Home Visits in week 6 Term 1 and week 3, 6 and 9 in term 2 to 4 except in urgent instances

Once students are identified as needing a home visit a risk assessment will need to be completed.

Student Services:

Will print out HG attendance maps every week for HG teachers to follow up.

Year 11/12's

Can sign in in lesson 2 or sign out at lunch provided; Traffic Light and Grade data suggests they are on average at a B grade/Exceeding Expectations.

They have completed the independent study application and been approved.

If this has been approved - students MUST sign in/sign out as "home study" at student services.

They must attend Home Group.

Please refer to the attendance policy for further details.

Chronic Partial Attendance

1. Meeting with family and caregiver
2. Attendance Improvement Plan (subject teacher can do this, supported by the learning area leader if it's a pattern of behaviour within their subject).
3. If the student does not show improvement refer to YLL (YLL to refer to SWDL)

If there are wellbeing concerns:
Refer to a wellbeing leader who will do a *site safety plan / also known as safety and risk plan.*