Attendance Improvement Policy

Version 6, 1/2/2021

Background

The Department for Education (DfE) is committed to giving every child every chance to have the best start in life. The department supports the learning and life opportunities of all children and young people, and seeks to help make them strong, creative and resilient learners. The Department's Attendance policy guides the responsibilities of the whole school community to make sure children and young people attend school. This includes school staff, parents, carers and students.

Success in learning is characterised by regular attendance and engagement in schooling and can be a predictor of future patterns that lead to higher levels of achievement and improved health, relationships and employment outcomes.

Policy statement

Open Access College Attendance Policy aligns with the ***Well-being Framework for Learning and Life*** which recognises the important interrelationships between children and young people's wellbeing and learning outcomes. A wellbeing approach to attendance supports families to recognise the importance of education while addressing barriers to active participation. A shared responsibility for creating a safe, caring and equitable environment ensures all parents and carers are aware of attendance expectations, policies and procedures.

Frequent contact between teacher and student assists in the development of positive interpersonal relationships a prerequisite to an effective teaching-learning connection and influence to improved participation and learning outcomes for students.

Students 16 years and below must attend school, and students aged between 16-17 years must participate in full-time school or in an approved learning programme.
- The primary responsibility for meeting this legal requirement of attendance rests with the parent/caregiver.
- The primary responsibility for monitoring and following up daily attendance at lessons rests with the subject teacher.
- All students are expected to attend school unless genuinely ill or serious family circumstances prevent it.
- Early intervention for students at risk of developing irregular patterns of attendance is critical in their reversal.
  - 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.

Attendance improvement strategies:

Open Access College will strive to employ early intervention strategies and ongoing communication with families as key to improving attendance.
- ensuring a safe learning environment where that promotes behaviour that benefits others and students feel a sense of belonging and connectedness

- delivery of an inclusive curriculum with differentiated learning activities (including explicit learning goals and attainment levels for units of work) that supports and actively engages each learner.
- in-college support from the Student Wellbeing Team and Leadership Team
- home visits by staff members accompanied by another person e.g. Student Wellbeing Leader, Aboriginal Education Teacher, Social Worker, Psychologist, Youth Worker, Aboriginal Community Education Officer
- involvement of Student Support Services Social Worker Truancy and Aboriginal Education Services for known chronic non-attenders
- use Daymap to record attendance and associated communication
- patterns of attendance are monitored and evaluated to ensure risks are identified with supports and interventions in place and progress monitored
- daily contacting of families using the text messaging system for unexplained absences
- discussions between teachers and families about the need for regular attendance
- contacting families in writing, by class teacher via e-mail including the Student Wellbeing Leader and Assistant Principal Wellbeing, for students who have unexplained absences of three or more consecutive days (R – 10 students) or three or more consecutive lessons Stage 1 & 2 students)
- newsletter articles focussing on issues relating to attendance
- make notifications about chronic non-attendance (via the Child Abuse Report Line – CARL) guided by Responding to Abuse and Neglect — Education and Care (RAN-EC) training and the Mandatory Reporting Guide .

Responsibilities

Principal

- ensure policy and processes are in place and followed by teaching staff.

Assistant Principal Student Wellbeing

- oversees attendance process
- data analysis used effectively to inform the Attendance Improvement Plan and Attendance Policy and that they are developed, implemented, monitored and reviewed
- ensure weekly reports in Power BI of absentees are used to review absentees.

Student Wellbeing Leaders

- work with parent/caregivers to reinforce importance student's regular attendance, beginning at enrolment appointment
- review weekly Power BI attendance reports and case manage identified students
- refer students under compulsion with unsatisfactory attendance to Student Support Services Social Worker Truancy or Social Work Duty Line, Aboriginal Inclusion Officer
- move students to a holding class (ZZZ) when required

Aboriginal Education team

- support Student Wellbeing Leaders and teachers to monitor ATSI student attendance including contact parents/carers where attendance is of concern
- support Student Wellbeing Leaders and teachers with attendance strategies and interventions for ATSI students

Teachers

- college procedures, including parent/caregiver notification used to follow up non-attendance
- document, in Daymap, contact with parents or caregivers regarding absences, including attempts to contact and an explanation for student absence
- refer ongoing non-attendance to Student Wellbeing Leaders
- request a medical certificate from parents/caregivers when needed and upload as an attachment to Daymap.

Student Services SSO

- notification by phone or student.absence@openaccess.edu.au email regarding student absence is recorded by entering the appropriate code into the class list in Daymap
- monitor SMS message replies in Daymap (each morning) and adjust the absent code in the class list in Daymap
- communicate via "All Staff" note to the student summary page and email the note (within Daymap) to notify teachers of changes
- provide a weekly report of absentees via Power BI to Student Wellbeing Team.

Students

- attend all scheduled lessons
- participate positively and engage in learning
- over the age of 18 ensure teachers are informed of absence prior to a lesson
- over age of 18 provision of a medical certificate is required(where attendance due to illness is for three or more consecutive lessons).

Parents/Carers/Supervisors

- ensure their students attend all scheduled lessons (age of compulsion and under 18) as per enrolment expectations
- support student engagement in learning by establishing regular structures and routines
- provide an explanation whenever their student is absent
- respond to SMS text messaging the next day where absence is unexplained
- provide a medical certificate where absence due to illness is for three or more consecutive days (R – 10 students) or three or more consecutive lessons (Stage 1 & 2 students) is required
- apply for an exemption where a planned absence cannot be arranged during school holidays
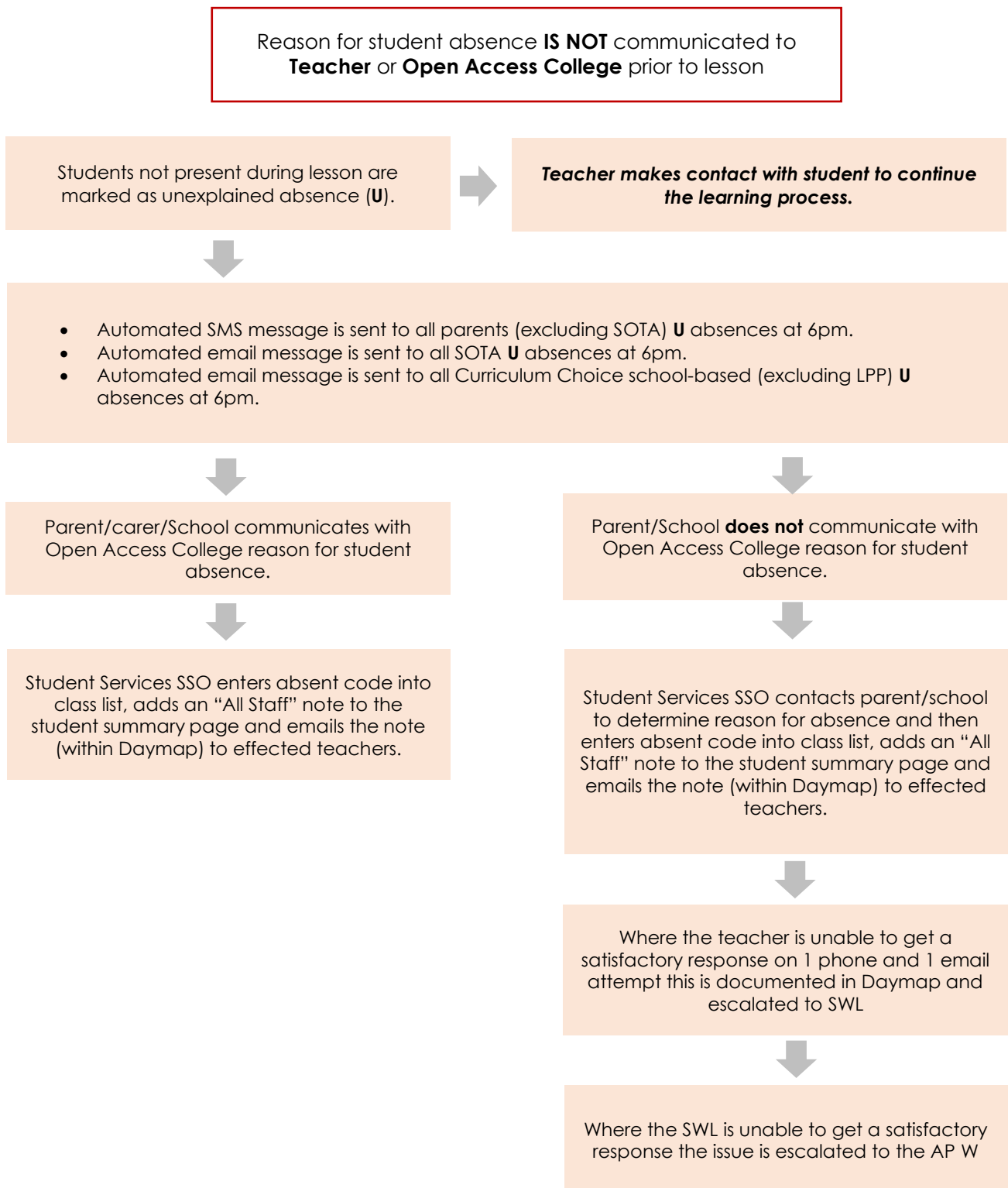
Attendance Codes   **Appendix 1**

Code	Explanation	Example
U	Unexplained [**NOTE:** Once one student in a class has been marked present and the class roll is saved all unmarked students will default to U]	No explanation offered / inappropriate explanation e.g. I slept in I went surfing
X	An explained absence (medical, family, etc.) that is **counted as an absence** for the purpose of attendance rates in Daymap and for site statistics. *An appropriate note must be added to Daymap to clarify extended absences for medical, family reasons.*	Medical appointment Feeling ill IT issues
C	Medical Certificate Only use when we receive the certificate. *If parent says they have one, use 'I' code until certificate is received. Save certificates in Daymap attachments.*	Illness where a medical certificate has been supplied for the duration of the condition. Review once expired if student has not returned to class.
I	Illness without a certificate For absences of more than a week a medical certificate is required (as agreed in enrolment expectations)	Parent/carer for those under 17 or students over 17 indicate reason is illness.
F	Family Family, social, cultural reasons	Family reasons
G	An explained absence (off-site program) that is **not counted as an absence** for the purpose of attendance rates in Daymap or for site statistics. *An appropriate note must be added to Daymap to explain the reason for using the G code (i.e. student overseas, school sports day, etc.).*	School Sports Day/Camp Overseas student
ANR	**Administration use only** Attendance not recorded. This code **does not count** as an absence for the purpose of attendance rates in Daymap or for site statistics.	Classes cancelled for a student free day.
Z	**Long term non-attendance** Student Wellbeing Leader use only	Student transferred to ZZZ class for extended health or attendance issues.

Attendance Flow Chart 1

Reason for student absence **IS** communicated prior to lesson

Parent/School communicates student absence to **Teacher** prior to lesson time.

Parent/School communicates student absence to **Open Access College** prior to lesson time.

Teacher enters absent code into class list, adds an "All Staff" note to the student summary page (within Daymap).

Student Services SSO enters absent code into class list, adds an "All Staff" note to the student summary page and emails the note (within Daymap) to effected teachers.

Teacher makes contact with student to continue the learning process.

Attendance Flow Chart 2

Reason for student absence **IS NOT** communicated to **Teacher** or **Open Access College** prior to lesson

Students not present during lesson are marked as unexplained absence (**U**).

→ *Teacher makes contact with student to continue the learning process.*

- Automated SMS message is sent to all parents (excluding SOTA) **U** absences at 6pm.
- Automated email message is sent to all SOTA **U** absences at 6pm.
- Automated email message is sent to all Curriculum Choice school-based (excluding LPP) **U** absences at 6pm.

Parent/carer/School communicates with Open Access College reason for student absence.

Parent/School **does not** communicate with Open Access College reason for student absence.

Student Services SSO enters absent code into class list, adds an "All Staff" note to the student summary page and emails the note (within Daymap) to effected teachers.

Student Services SSO contacts parent/school to determine reason for absence and then enters absent code into class list, adds an "All Staff" note to the student summary page and emails the note (within Daymap) to effected teachers.

Where the teacher is unable to get a satisfactory response on 1 phone and 1 email attempt this is documented in Daymap and escalated to SWL

Where the SWL is unable to get a satisfactory response the issue is escalated to the AP W

This version created: 1 February 2021

To be reviewed: 2022

Review to be managed by: AP responsible for student absences