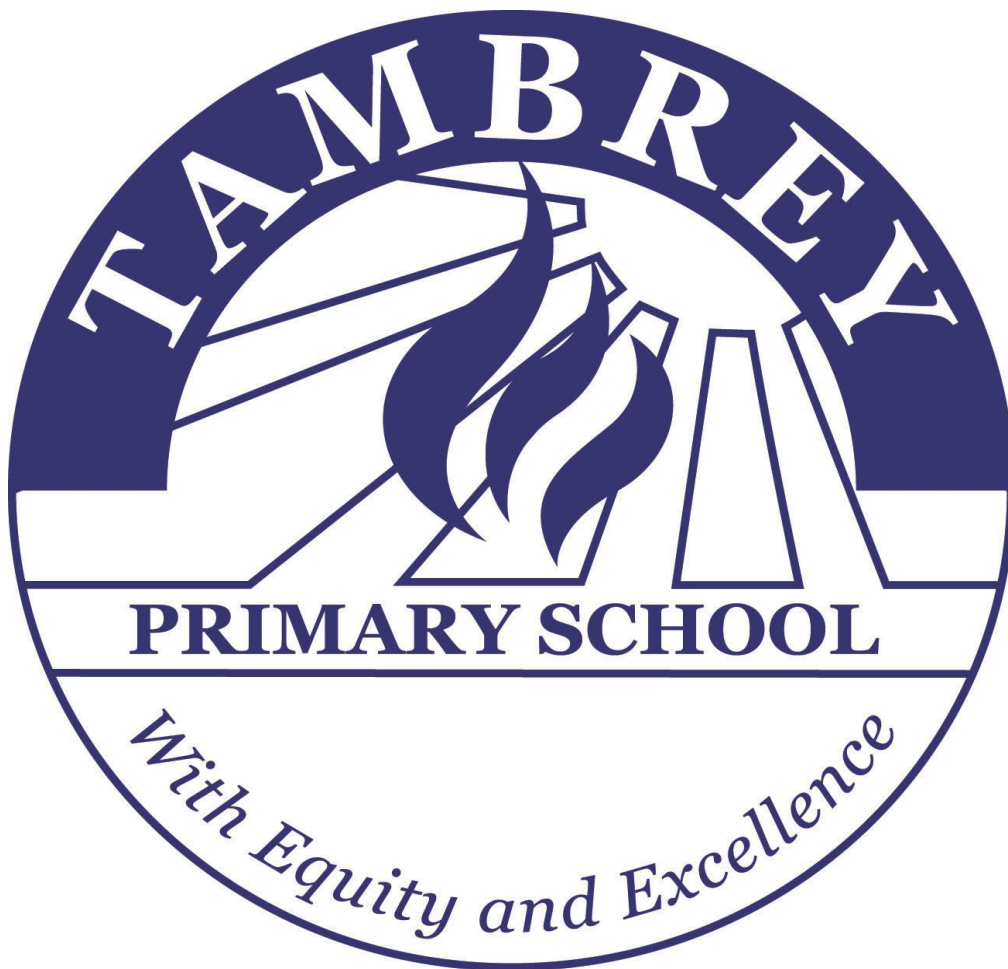


STUDENT ATTENDANCE

EFFECTIVE: AUGUST 2013



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1 POLICY STATEMENT

Tambrey Primary School monitors the attendance of all students enrolled in the school, identifies students with attendance issues and implements appropriate measures to restore regular attendance.

2 BACKGROUND

Where a student is enrolled in a public or private school, the *School Education Act 1999* (the Act) requires that the student attends the school on site or an educational program of the school elsewhere as directed by the principal.

The parents of a child who is enrolled at Tambrey Primary School are responsible under the Act for ensuring their child is attending on a daily basis, providing an acceptable explanation for any absence to the principal or her nominee.

The principal is responsible for creating and maintaining a safe and positive learning environment which promotes engagement and participation, and for the management of regular school attendance.

Consistent attendance and participation at school are essential factors in achieving social and academic learning outcomes. Schools that develop supportive learning environments and an engaging and relevant curriculum create conditions conducive to regular school attendance.

3 SCOPE

This policy applies to staff of Tambrey Primary School. It also provides direction to parents about their responsibilities under the Act. Responsibilities are summarised in **Appendix A: Attendance Responsibilities**.

4 RECORDING AND MONITORING ATTENDANCE

Teachers will:

- complete electronic roll daily;
- continue to remind students to bring in an explanation for their absence;
- adjust entries in the Student Information System (SIS) when parents or responsible people respond to letters sent and provide an explanation for absences;
- refer the matter to the principal or nominee where the explanation for the absence is considered unreasonable;
- fill in the Attendance Charts when weekly attendance numbers are received; and
- ensure all relevant information is recorded using **Appendix B: Attendance Intervention Record**.

The principal or her nominee will:

- monitor the attendance of all students with a focus on those in the 'at-risk' range (i.e. <90%);

- issue parents leaving the school with their children during school time (and students who have been granted permission to leave the school unaccompanied by a responsible adult) with a leave pass;
- monitor lateness, enter data in SIS and send letters to parents requesting greater punctuality;
- record all interventions using **Appendix B: Attendance Intervention Record**; and
- ensure the student is recorded as:
 - present for a half day when the student has attended at least two hours of instruction;
 - attending if they are on a school-approved activity;
 - an authorised absence during the period of suspension;
 - an authorised absence if they are absent due to cultural/religious events.

Guidelines

- *Legislation does not require parents to provide an explanation for their child's absence in writing, therefore all explanations received via methods such as SMS, phone call, email, in person, etc must be recorded in SIS*
- *If parents provide a reason for the absence to the front office, it will be entered into SIS by the front office and the teacher notified.*
- *Students who arrive late or leave early but still attend two hours of instruction are recorded as attending a half day.*
- *All students enrolled in the school are required to have their attendance recorded, irrespective of where the educational program is delivered. This includes students who may be attending either part-time or full-time programs offsite as part of an educational program under a Section 24 Arrangement.*
- *The STIMS website contains a full description of SIS Lesson Attendance codes at www.det.wa.gov.au/education/sis/lessonattendance.htm*
- *Authorised absences for religious observance or cultural reasons are best negotiated prior to the absence to avoid repetitive follow-up on the school's behalf and to support planning for the student.*
- *Leave passes allow students to be readily recognised by police and other agencies when legitimately off school site during school hours (see Guidelines for the use of Standardised Leave Passes in the student attendance section of www.det.wa.edu.au/studentsupport/behaviourandwellbeing).*

4.1 RETENTION OF RECORDS

Teachers will ensure all correspondence and planning regarding attendance is placed in student attendance files.

The principal or nominee will retain attendance records in accordance with the *School Education Regulations 2000 (Regulations)* and the *Retention and Disposal Schedule for Department of Education School, College and Campus Records*.

Guidelines

Relevant documentation to retain includes:

- *absentee notes that are not part of the student's file for two years from the date of receipt, including details recorded by the school when a parent provides the school with a verbal reason;*
- *attendance records for students in each year level for seven years; and*
- *unsatisfactory student attendance reports, including written notes and records of verbal explanations of absences, psychological reports, records of interviews with students and significant records relating to individual students until the student is 25 years of age (7 years after a mature (>18 years) student has left school).*

- *All written correspondence to parents should be sent on school letterhead paper. Once signed, copies of correspondence must be put in the student's attendance file.*

5 PROCEDURES

5.1 WHOLE SCHOOL APPROACH

The principal or nominee will:

- ensure documented plans for Aboriginal students are developed as per **Appendix C: Documented plans for Aboriginal Students**; and
- refer students using **Appendix D: Request to Place Student on the Whereabouts Unknown List**.

Guidelines

- *Each five weeks the principal or nominee will provide class teachers with percentage attendance results for their class.*
- **Appendix D** should be completed by the principal or nominee when:
 - *a student cannot be located within a reasonable amount of time (usually 15 school days), and is deemed as missing;*
 - *attempts to locate a student have failed through efforts to contact parents, peers and relevant interagency groups; and*
 - *the school has not received advice that the student has enrolled at another school or moved interstate; and*
 - *contact has been made with the student tracking coordinator to determine whether the student has enrolled in another public school. Any absences are recorded by the principal or nominee until they are advised by the student tracking coordinator to remove the student from the current roll.*

Listed below are a number of attendance strategies that are employed at Tambrey Primary School. These strategies are implemented to encourage regular attendance of all students.

Strategy	Process	By Whom
Phone Calls	Students who are away without a reported reason will be called by telephone to verify the reason for the absence.	Attendance Officer or Class Teacher
SMS	An SMS will be sent to students who are away each day unless a reason has already been given	Electronic
Home Visits	Students who can not be contacted by phone or have still not returned to school after a reasonable time will be visited at home. Appendix I: Home Visit Letter will be left with the parent or placed in the letterbox.	Attendance Officer, Chaplain, Admin, Teacher

5.2 MANAGEMENT OF NON-ATTENDANCE

If a student is absent for more than three days without a reason, teachers will:

- contact the parent directly;
- inform the school-based attendance officer via email.

Guideline

- *Contact should be made where the non-attendance is consecutive or cumulative.*

The principal or her nominee will:

- send letters to parents requesting an explanation for unexplained absences each fortnight;
- make contact with parents when a student's attendance drops below 90% as illustrated in **Appendix E: Attendance Flowchart** and record the response on **Appendix B: Attendance Intervention Record** in attendance file; and
- manage the caseload of the school-based attendance officer

5.2.1 REMINDER LETTERS

Where students have been identified with attendance <90%, the principal or nominee will:

- send **Appendix F: 1st Reminder Letter** to parents to remind them about their obligations under the Act, with an offer of support;
- review student attendance in the middle and end of each term;
- send **Appendix G: 2nd Reminder Letter** if attendance improves, celebrating improvements with further targets identified if necessary; and
- continue to monitor student attendance.

Guidelines

- *In most instances, where an acceptable explanation for the absence has been provided, further action is not required.*
- *The principal may request a medical certificate for prolonged absences due to sickness or injury. In the instance of long term/severe medical conditions impacting on the student's attendance, the principal or nominee need not investigate further if documentary evidence has been provided outlining the nature of the illness and the expected duration of the absence.*
- *The principal will use all available resources in the support of students and parents, including (where appropriate) school-based attendance officer, Aboriginal Islander education officer, school psychologist, social worker and chaplain.*

5.2.2 CASE CONFERENCE

If attendance does not improve, the principal or nominee will:

- request the parent attends a meeting to discuss concerns and plan for improvement using **Appendix H: Request to Attend Case Conference**; and
- arrange for a phone call and/or home visit to ensure the letter was received and understood and confirm the time, date and venue of the meeting.

At the case conference, the principal or nominee will

- a) reinforce unacceptability of poor attendance;
- b) outline obligatory requirement of school to address absences;
- c) inform parent of their legal responsibilities to ensure attendance and make them aware of the latest research into the adverse effects of poor attendance on students and their future success in society;
- d) seek to clarify any issues within the school, home or student that might be contributing to the student's non-attendance using **Appendix H: Focus questions for parents/caregivers**;

- e) inform parent of support options available at the school and in the wider community and arrange referral if necessary;
- f) develop a plan for improvement (Individual Attendance Plan – IAP) in consultation with the parent incorporating strategies and support services;
- g) inform parents of the possible consequences of continued non-compliance (i.e. consideration of prosecution under the Act); and
- h) use **Appendix L: Case Conference Record & Individual Attendance Plan** to document the meeting and outcomes, providing copies to all parties.

Guidelines

- *If parent does not attend the meeting, a phone call will be made trying to establish the location of the parent.*
- *Where appropriate, both parents should be invited to the meeting.*
- *Mindful of the cultural background and literacy levels of parents, any written communication to parents will be explained face to face or verbally if required.*
- *The meeting will still take place if parent does not attend and an IAP will be written.*
- *If a parent/guardian does not attend the principal or nominee will write to them, addressing the above points.*
- *The principal or nominee may seek the assistance of relevant network or regional officers as appropriate.*

5.3 IMPLEMENTATION OF INDIVIDUAL ATTENDANCE PLAN

The principal and/or nominee will ensure the agreed actions in the IAP from the first case conference are implemented.

5.4 FORMAL MEETING

If attendance does not improve, the principal or nominee will:

- request the parent attends a formal meeting using **Appendix M: Request to Attend Formal Meeting**;
- attach a copy of the IAP from the first case conference; and
- arrange for a phone call and/or home visit to ensure the letter was received and understood and confirm the time, date and venue of the meeting.

At the formal meeting, the principal or nominee will:

- reiterate points a) through g) above, and
- use **Appendix L: Case Conference Record & Individual Attendance Plan** to document the meeting and outcomes, providing copies to all parties.

Guidelines

- *If parent does not attend the meeting, a phone call will be made trying to establish the location of the parent.*
- *The meeting will still take place if parent does not attend and an IAP will be written.*
- *If a parent/guardian does not attend the principal or nominee will write to them, addressing the above points.*
- *The principal or nominee may seek the assistance of relevant network or regional officers as appropriate.*

5.5 IMPLEMENTATION OF SECOND INDIVIDUAL ATTENDANCE PLAN

The principal and/or nominee will ensure the agreed actions in the IAP from the second case conference are implemented.

5.6 CONSIDERATION OF PROSECUTION

The principal may consider referring the matter for prosecution where:

- student attendance does not improve;
- approval has not been given for participation in a program away from the school site (*Section 24 Arrangement*);
- reasonable explanations for absences have not been provided;
- parental engagement is not forthcoming; and
- all reasonably practicable steps have been taken.

Where the principal is considering referring the matter for prosecution, the principal will:

- advise the parent that they are considering referring the matter for prosecution; and
- afford the parent with an opportunity to explain why the case should not be referred.

Guidelines

- *If a student shows signs of improved attendance but then declines, intervention will recommence at the most appropriate stage.*
- *The Department's Enrolment policy contains more information about S24 Arrangements.*
- *The principal may consider that an alternative strategy such as a Responsible Parenting Agreement or Order may be appropriate. In these instances, advice may be sought from an appropriate network or regional officer.*
- *The principal may consult with a colleague or the Regional Executive Director regarding the case.*

5.7 REFERRAL FOR PROSECUTION

If referring the matter for prosecution, the principal will:

- advise the Regional Executive Director;
- inform the parents using **Appendix N: Advice to Parent of Referral for Consideration of Prosecution**;
- refer to *Prosecution of Parents – Guidelines for Independent Public Schools*;
 - forward all required paperwork to the Manager, Attendance, Student Services Directorate;
 - liaise with the Student Services Directorate, the Regional Executive Director and the Legal Services Branch as required; and
 - certify that all reasonable practicable steps have been taken.

Guideline

Prosecution of Parents – Guidelines for Independent Public Schools contains further information about steps required to prosecute parents for non-attendance offences under the School Education Act 1999.

6 REPORTING AND DISCLOSURE OF ATTENDANCE DATA

The principal will comply with requests from the regional office and Central Office to provide information on student attendance.

Guidelines

- *Requests for school attendance data (for example, participation in the Attendance Audit) should include the attendance data of every student enrolled.*
- *Network or regional officers may provide advice regarding requests for individual or group attendance data from an external agency.*

7 RELATED DOCUMENTS

7.1 RELEVANT LEGISLATION OR AUTHORITY

Parental Support and Responsibility Act 2008

School Education Act 1999

School Education Regulations 2000

7.2 RELATED DEPARTMENT POLICIES

Behaviour Management in Schools

Enrolment

7.3 OTHER DOCUMENTS

Improving Attendance: A Resource Package for Schools

Student Tracking System Guidelines

Standardised Leave Pass Guidelines

Guidelines for Implementing Documented Plans in Public Schools

Prosecution of Parents –Guidelines for Independent Public Schools

8 DEFINITIONS

8.1 AUTHORISED ABSENCE

An absence where the reason provided by the parent or Department is considered to be legitimate and deemed acceptable by the principal or nominee.

8.2 CHILDREN WHOSE WHEREABOUTS ARE UNKNOWN (CWU) LIST

A list, usually referred to as the CWU List, containing the names of children who are missing from schools and educational programs in Western Australia. This list is distributed to administrators in private schools and some agencies by agreement.

8.3 EMPLOYEE

Any person who is currently employed under the *School Education Act 1999* or the *Public Sector Management Act 1994*.

8.4 PARENT

A person who at law has responsibility:

- a) for the long-term care, welfare and development of the child; or
- b) for the day to day care, welfare and development of the child.

8.5 RESPONSIBLE PERSON

A person:

- who is a parent of the student;
- who, in the case of a student who has turned 18 or is a prescribed child, the student; or
- who is an adult, responsible for the child and whose details have been provided on enrolment.

8.6 RESPONSIBLE PARENTING AGREEMENT

A formal written agreement between a parent and an authorised officer in one of the Departments of Education, Child Protection or Corrective Services. Parents may be asked to enter into a Responsible Parenting Agreement where the child is under 15 years of age and demonstrating anti-social or offending behaviour, not attending school where there is no reasonable cause for the absence or is at risk of developing such behaviours. Agreements document support to be provided by the Department (and/or other agencies) and actions to be undertaken by parents.

8.7 RESPONSIBLE PARENTING ORDER

A Responsible Parenting Order compels a parent(s) to take up the support offered by agencies and to meet their responsibilities in exercising appropriate control over their child's anti-social, offending or truanting behaviour. A Regional Executive Director may endorse a principal's recommendation to the Director General that an application for an order be made in respect of the child, where every effort to engage the parent voluntarily has failed and it is considered that it will make a positive difference to the child's behaviour.

8.8 UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE

Unauthorised absences encompass truancy, those not considered acceptable by the principal, nominee or the Department or where an explanation has not been provided by the parent.

9 CONTACT INFORMATION

Enquiries should be directed to:

Deputy Principal
 Tambrey Primary School
 Tambrey WA 6714
 Phone: **9144 2020**.
 Pippa.lovel@education.wa.edu.au

APPENDIX A ATTENDANCE RESPONSIBILITIES

A.1 PARENT

The Act requires parents to:

- ensure children attend school unless there is a good reason for being away;
- inform the classroom teacher or the front office of the reason for the child's absence. This can be done in person, by phone, by SMS, a note or email as soon as possible and within 3 days of the child being away;
- provide a medical certificate to confirm the child's illness if asked by the principal.

Guideline

The Act defines 'parent' as being the parent 'at law'.

In addition to the parent, a responsible person may also provide an explanation for student absence.

A.2 TEACHERS

Tambrey teachers will:

- complete electronic roll daily;
- contact the parent directly or inform the school-based attendance officer via email if a student is absent for more than three days without a reason;
- continue to remind students to bring in an explanation for their absence;
- adjust entries in SIS when parents or responsible people respond to letters sent and provide an explanation for absences;
- put copies of all correspondence student attendance files;
- fill in the Attendance Charts when weekly attendance data is received, organising class reward as appropriate;
- refer the matter to the principal or nominee where the explanation for the absence is considered unreasonable; and
- ensure all information is recorded using **Appendix B: Attendance Intervention Record**.

Guidelines

- *Legislation does not require parents to provide an explanation for their child's absence in writing, therefore all explanations received via methods such as SMS, phone call, email, in person, etc must be recorded in SIS*
- *If parents provide a reason for the absence to the front office, it will be entered into SIS by the front office and the teacher notified.*
- *Only students with no unexplained absences may participate in the class reward.*

A.3 PRINCIPAL AND/OR NOMINEE

The principal and/or nominee will:

- monitor the attendance of all students with a focus on those in the 'at-risk' range (i.e. <90%);
- issue parents leaving the school with their children during school time (and students who have been granted permission to leave the school unaccompanied by a responsible adult) with a leave pass;
- monitor lateness, enter data in SIS and send letters to parents requesting greater punctuality;
- send letters to parents requesting an explanation for unexplained absences each fortnight;
- make contact with parents when a student's attendance drops below 90% as illustrated in **Appendix E: Attendance Flowchart**;
- send reminder letters reminding parents of attendance requirements (**Appendix F: 1st Reminder Letter** and **Appendix G: 2nd Reminder Letter**);
- arrange case conferences for attendance issues as required, using **Appendix I: Case Conference Request**;
- manage the caseload of the school-based attendance officer;
- provide cover at recess/lunch for extra playtime earned when school record for lowest number of absences is beaten;
- recorded all interventions using **Appendix B: Attendance Intervention Record**; and
- refer students whose whereabouts are unknown to the Student Tracking Officer using **Appendix D: Request to Place Student on the Whereabouts Unknown List**.

Guidelines

- *Each five weeks the principal or nominee will provide class teachers with percentage attendance results for their class.*
- *All written correspondence to parents should be sent on school letterhead paper. Once signed, copies of correspondence must be put in the student's attendance file.*

APPENDIX B ATTENDANCE INTERVENTION RECORD

Surname:
First Name:
Year:

	% Attendance	Comments (e.g. % authorised vs unauthorised, particular patterns of non-attendance, etc)
Term1		
Term 2		
Term 3		
Term 4		
Overall		

APPENDIX C DOCUMENTED PLANS FOR ABORIGINAL STUDENTS

The Australian Government commitments in *New Directions: An Equal Start in Life for Indigenous Students* (May 2007) and budget announcements in May 2008 indicate that every Aboriginal student in Years 1 to 10 will have an individual learning plan as one of the strategies to help close the educational gap between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students.

Regular attendance at school is a critical element in improving students' literacy and numeracy skills. This in turn impacts on the development of skills and knowledge that improve pathways to work, career choices and financial independence. From Term 1 2010 all Aboriginal students with an attendance rate below 80 per cent are required to have a documented plan to address barriers to attendance, respond to identified educational needs and improve attendance.

There are four phases for implementation in schools:

- Phase 1 - currently in place: all Aboriginal students performing below minimum standards and receiving support from the Aboriginal Tutorial Assistance Scheme (ATAS), and students enrolled in *Follow the Dream* require documented plans.
- Phase 2 - expected to start in Term 1 2010: all Aboriginal students with an attendance rate below 80 per cent require a documented plan.
- Phase 3 - from Term 1 2012: all Aboriginal students with an attendance rate below 90 per cent require a documented plan.
- Phase 4 – still under discussion: all Aboriginal students will require a documented plan.

All schools are expected to set targets for Aboriginal students, including attendance targets, and implement strategies to address these targets as part of their core business. The use of documented plans will help to improve the educational outcomes of Aboriginal students at risk.

A documented plan does not necessarily need to address all aspects of a student's educational program, only those aspects that require an individual approach. Schools may develop whole school strategies and write group plans where appropriate.

APPENDIX D REQUEST TO PLACE STUDENT ON THE WHEREABOUTS UNKNOWN LIST

- For further information, please contact the student tracking coordinator on
- Fax this form to or email to student.tracking@det.wa.edu.au
- Students must not be removed from the Current enrolment register without the authority of the student tracking coordinator.

Student information

Full name of student:			
Parent/caregiver name:			
Date of birth:		Gender:	Male/Female
Date of enrolment:		Aboriginal:	Yes / No
Last date of attendance:		Year level:	

School information

Name of person making request:	
Position:	
Email address:	
School code:	
Date of request:	

Steps taken to locate student

Letters home <input type="checkbox"/>	Emergency telephone numbers contacted <input type="checkbox"/>	Relatives or peer group queried <input type="checkbox"/>
Phone calls home <input type="checkbox"/>	Transfer documentation Checked <input type="checkbox"/>	Relevant agencies (if involved) contacted <input type="checkbox"/>
Home visit <input type="checkbox"/>	Previous school information checked <input type="checkbox"/>	Other

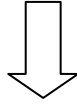
Case management notes

Please record enquiries already made and any anecdotal information which may assist in the location of the student.

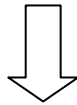
APPENDIX E ATTENDANCE PROCESS OVERVIEW

These steps will follow through unless/until attendance improves

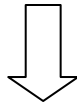
Step 1: Students identified at risk for attendance



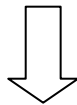
Step 2: Letter sent home/offer of support



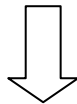
Step 3: Student placed on attendance list



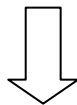
Step 4: Second letter sent home/offer of support



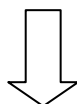
Step 5: Case Conference Letter



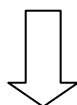
Step 6: Case Conference One



Step 7: Case Conference Two



Step 8: Referral to Central Office



Step 9: Court

APPENDIX F FIRST LETTER LESS THAN 90%

[Insert Date Here]

Dear _____

RE: _____

Our records for Term [Insert Term Here], [Insert Year Here] indicate that your child's average attendance over the course of the term is %.

All children enrolled in school are expected to attend on a regular basis which is 90% or higher as determined by the Education Department. As a parent or carer it is your responsibility to support the development of regular patterns of school attendance for your child. This can be achieved by making sure your child attends school on all school days and is on time every day.

Going to school every day is not just important for your child's education – it's the law. It is important that you:

- provide us with an explanation as soon as possible if your child is away;
- arrange for a medical certificate to explain absences if we ask for one;
- contact us if you are having difficulty getting your child to school;
- where possible arrange doctor and dentist appointments out of school hours;
- arrange personal shopping trips with your child or birthday celebrations out of school hours; and
- do not allow your child to stay at home for minor reasons.

As a school we are committed to improving the quality of education we deliver to every child. We need your child to attend school regularly unless they are unwell or there is another acceptable reason for the absence.

I appreciate that many of you receiving this letter will have already provided good reasons for your child being away. This letter is a reminder about the importance of regular attendance. Even if the reasons are valid, missing too much school has an effect on your child's learning and we should work together to ensure your child catches up on lessons missed.

If your child is missing school without a good reason, we will monitor the situation closely. We may ask to meet with you to look at the reasons why your child is away, what help you might need and plan for improvement.

Tambrey Primary School and the Department of Education set targets for school attendance. We have an expectation of regular attendance for all students and look forward to working together with you to meet these targets.

We have a number of support services operating from the school for parents and students. If you would like to know more please ask for further information from the Principal or Deputy.

A fact sheet about the importance of school attendance is overleaf for your information. If you have any questions or would like further information or assistance, please do not hesitate to contact the school on and ask to speak with us.

Yours sincerely

Pippa Lovel
Deputy Principal

FACTS ABOUT SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

Is regular attendance at school important?

- Yes – from the first day of Kindy and Pre-Primary. If your child misses the basic skills in primary school, he or she can experience difficulties with learning.
- Regular attendance is essential to make sure learning is not disrupted and provides building blocks for the future.
- Schools help children to develop important social skills, such as friendship building, teamwork, communication skills and a healthy self-esteem.

What can I expect from the school?

- Monitoring of student attendance and reviews of progress.
- The school will follow up unexplained absences.
- Strategies to help you as a parent or carer encourage your child to go to school.

What help can I get if my child refuses to go to school or is truanting?

The school may offer a range of support options:

- teacher working with the student or providing a mentor
- home visits to identify the problem and help work it through
- strategies to help you encourage your child to go to school
- develop an incentive program to encourage your child to attend school
- links with community agencies and help to contact other Department of Education officers for support.

Do I have to send my child every day?

Yes, all students are expected to attend school unless:

- the child is too sick to leave the house or has an infectious disease such as chicken pox, mumps or measles
- the child has an injury preventing movement around school
- the child is going with his/her parents or carers on a family holiday that cannot be arranged during school holidays. This should be discussed with the principal first
- the principal is provided with any genuine and acceptable reason for the child being away
- a medical or dental appointment could not be made out of school hours (whenever possible, appointments should be made out of school hours).

Do I have to tell the school if my child has been away?

Yes. On the day your child is away or on their return, you can write a note or talk to the teacher or school. You are also encouraged to contact the school in advance if your child is going to be away. If your child has seen a medical practitioner (e.g. doctor, dentist) a note or appointment card from the practitioner will help explain the absence.

Did you know?

- Missing one day a week of school from Year 1 to Year 11 is the same as missing two years and one term of schooling.
- Frequent absences make it difficult for teachers who have to continually re-teach information and skills.
- Being half an hour late to school each day from Year 1 to Year 10 is equivalent to missing one year and one-and-a-half terms of schooling.
- Patterns of attendance/absence are set up in the early years of schooling.
- Girls are absent more often than boys.
- Poor attendance makes it difficult for students to form good relationships with their peers.

- Students who are frequently absent from school are more likely to end up homeless or in the justice system.
- Aboriginal students are absent twice as much as non-Aboriginal students.

APPENDIX G SECOND LETTER LESS THAN 90%

[Insert Date Here]

Dear _____

RE: _____

Our records indicate that your child's average attendance over the course of the term has not improved since our last letter and is still less than 90%. Your child's actual attendance for Term [Insert Term Here] is _____ %.

All children enrolled in school are expected to attend on a regular basis. As a parent or carer it is your responsibility to support the development of regular patterns of school attendance for your child. This can be achieved by making sure your child attends school on all school days and is on time every day.

As a school we are committed to improving the quality of education we deliver to every child. We need your child to attend school regularly unless they are unwell or there is another acceptable reason for the absence.

At present, your child is missing a lot of school and we are monitoring the situation closely. We may ask to meet with you to look at the reasons why your child is away, what help you might need and plan for improvement.

Tambrey Primary School and the Department of Education set targets for school attendance. We have an expectation of regular attendance for all students and look forward to working together with you to meet these targets.

We have a number of support services operating from the school for parents and students. If you would like to know more please ask for further information from the Principal, Deputy Pippa Lovel or the School Based Community Liaison Officer.

A fact sheet about the importance of school attendance is overleaf for your information. If you have any questions or would like further information or assistance, please do not hesitate to contact the school on ph **9144 2020**. and ask to speak with us.

Yours sincerely

Pippa Lovel
Deputy Principal

APPENDIX H FOCUS QUESTIONS FOR PARENTS

Focus questions may be helpful during either a home visit, parent interview or case conference to discuss reasons for non-attendance and plan for improvement.

- a) What are some of the reasons that lead _____ to miss school?
- b) Are there specific issues at school? Does he/she have any specific learning needs that aren't being met? Does he/she feel safe at school? What are her/his relationships like with his/her teachers?
- c) Are there issues outside of school that make it difficult for _____ to get to school? Are there times when it is better or worse than others? What happens then?
- d) What has been tried? Has anything been successful/resulted in some improvement?
- e) What contact with the school do you have when _____ is absent? Do you contact them/do they contact you? Who from the school makes the contact? How effective/supportive is this?
- f) What does the school do well in supporting you/_____?
- g) Do you have any ideas about what might help to improve _____ attendance?
- h) What role might the school be able to play in this?
- i) How could the school better support you and _____ around his/her connection/engagement/attendance at school?
- j) Is there anything else you would like the school to know?

From *Improving Attendance: a resource package for schools* (reproduced with permission from the South Australian Department for Education and Children's Services).

APPENDIX I REQUEST TO ATTEND CASE CONFERENCE

Name
Address
Address

Date:

Dear:

RE:

All children enrolled in school are expected to attend on a regular basis. As a parent or carer it is your responsibility to support the development of regular patterns of school attendance for your child. This can be achieved by making sure your child attends school on all school days and is on time every day.

I have previously written to you on two separate occasions regarding school attendance and this is now my third correspondence. Going to school every day is not just important for your child's education – it's the law. As your child/children have been absent without an acceptable explanation or an alternative program of study negotiated. I would like to arrange a meeting with you to discuss how this situation may be improved. This is also an opportunity for you to talk about any issues that might be preventing your child/children from attending school regularly.

I have arranged a meeting at _____ on _____ at
Tambrey Primary School.

Please let me know as soon as possible if you would prefer to meet at another location or if you would like to bring along someone to help or support you. The school can also arrange transport if required.

If for any reason you are unable to attend could you please contact the school to arrange an alternative date and time. It is important that we work together to improve _____ attendance.

You can contact me on ph **9144 2020**.

Yours sincerely

Pippa Lovel
Deputy Principal

APPENDIX J NOTIFICATION OF HOME VISIT

Dear Parent

We visited your home today to discuss _____ attendance.

Please contact Tambrey Primary School on **91442020** as soon as possible and ask to speak to the Principal, Kym Benson, Deputy Principal, Ms Pippa Lovel or the front office.

If your child is returning to school tomorrow please send a note explaining the absence or speak with someone from the school.

For future absences please remember you need to call or text the school to explain the absence as soon as possible.

Phone: 91442020

We have a number of support services operating from the school for parents and students. If you would like to know more please ask for further information from the Principal, Deputy or Kerry Mallard the School Based Community Liaison Officer.

Thank you for your support in this matter. A fact sheet about the importance of school attendance is overleaf for your information.

Yours sincerely

Ms Pippa Lovel

Date: _____

APPENDIX K CASE CONFERENCE TEMPLATE NOTES

[insert parent name]
[Address]
[SUBURB WA POSTCODE]

Dear [insert parent name]

RE: [insert student or students' names here]

Please find enclosed a copy of the case conference notes and two copies of the Individual Attendance Plan that was developed on [insert date of meeting].

[edit as appropriate] Thank you for coming to the meeting and for your input and ideas. By working together in this way we have a greater chance of success.

OR

[edit as appropriate] I am disappointed that you were unable to make the meeting. It is important to us that we work together to improve school attendance and hear from you about things we can do to assist you. Some strategies were discussed in your absence, including some recommendations designed to help you. These are documented in the attached plan. We look forward to an improvement in attendance.

If you have any questions about the plan or want to discuss any of the strategies, please contact the school. Please sign one copy of the plan and return it to the school. The other is for your records.

If school attendance does not improve or the agreed actions are not carried out, you may be asked to come to a formal meeting at the school to develop further interventions and support strategies.

Yours sincerely

Pippa Lovel
DEPUTY PRINCIPAL
[insert date]

Review date:

APPENDIX M REQUEST TO ATTEND FORMAL MEETING

[insert parent name]
 [Address]
 [SUBURB WA POSTCODE]

Dear [insert parent name]

I am writing regarding the attendance of your son/daughter, [insert student name] at school.

The *School Education Act 1999* (Act) requires parents to ensure that children of compulsory school age attend school on each day that the school is open for instruction. If children are absent from school, a parent or responsible person must provide the school with an acceptable explanation within three days of the absence.

Parents who fail to ensure that their children attend school regularly or who fail to provide satisfactory explanations for absences may be committing a serious offence. The maximum penalty is \$1 000 for each offence.

You have previously been advised that [student name]'s attendance is a matter of concern. We have tried to work with you and implemented a range of strategies to encourage [student name]'s regular attendance at school without success.

Strategies attempted include the following:

[insert a list of strategies offered or attempted here]

I have recently reviewed [student name]'s pattern of attendance and it is clear that absences without a good reason being provided are still at an unacceptable level. A summary of absences is attached for your reference. It is critical that we work together to resolve this issue and I have arranged a formal meeting at the school to review the situation and plan for improvement.

The meeting has been arranged for [insert time, day and date of meeting].

Please let me know as soon as possible if you would prefer to meet at another location or if you would like to bring along someone to help or support you. The school can also arrange transport if required.

It is very important that you attend and participate in the formal meeting. If you do not engage in a plan to improve [student name]'s attendance and further absences occur without reasonable explanation, I may consider referring the matter to the Department's solicitors for consideration of legal action.

If for any reason you are unable to attend could you please contact the school to arrange an alternative date and time. It is important that we work together to improve [insert student or students' names here] attendance.

Yours sincerely

Kym Benson
 Principal [insert date]

Attach. [attach SIS Lesson Attendance report documenting unauthorised absences]

APPENDIX N ADVICE TO PARENT OF REFERRAL FOR CONSIDERATION OF PROSECUTION

[insert parent name]
[Address]
[SUBURB WA POSTCODE]

Dear [insert parent name]

RE: NON-ATENDANCE OF [STUDENT NAME], DOB: [INSERT DATE OF BIRTH]

I am writing regarding the attendance of your son/daughter, [student name] at school.

I wrote to you recently regarding [student name]'s poor attendance and your legal obligations under the *School Education Act 1999* to ensure that he/she attends school regularly and that you provide me with acceptable explanations for absences.

Together with my staff, I have tried to work with you and implemented a range of strategies to encourage [student name]'s regular attendance at school without success.

You have previously been advised that parents who fail to ensure that their children attend school regularly or who fail to provide satisfactory explanations for absences may be guilty of an offence. The maximum penalty is \$1 000 for each offence.

To assist you in ensuring [student name] attends school regularly and to avoid legal action, you were asked to attend a formal meeting and commit to strategies to improve school attendance.

[Student name]'s attendance continues to be an issue and despite many offers of assistance, you have not worked with us sufficiently to improve the situation.

I am now referring this matter to the Department of Education's solicitors to consider legal action.

Please contact me urgently on telephone **9144 2020** by [insert suitable date] to discuss this situation and how we may avoid your prosecution.

Yours sincerely

KYM BENSON
PRINCIPAL
[insert date]