Rationale:

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

Daily school attendance is important for all children and young people to succeed in education and to ensure they don't fall behind both socially and developmentally. Children and young people who regularly attend school and complete Year 12 or an equivalent qualification have better health outcomes, better employment outcomes, and higher incomes across their lives. It is important that children develop habits of regular attendance at an early age.

School participation is important as it 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, which set them up for further learning and participation in their community.
Conversely, limited school participation is associated with a greater chance of dropping out of school, disruptive and delinquent behaviour and may lead to a cycle of rebellion against authority. These outcomes have later implications for employment, a range of health risk behaviours (drug and alcohol abuse), homelessness, poverty, welfare dependence, and involvement in the justice system.

Parents/guardians must enrol a child of compulsory school age at a registered school and ensure the child attends school at all times when the school is open for instruction.

Aims:
To maximise student learning opportunities and performance by ensuring that children required to attend school do so regularly, and without unnecessary or unexplained absences.

Implementation:

Parent/carer Responsibilities
- Students are expected to attend the school in which they are enrolled, during normal school hours every day of each term, unless there is an approved exemption, the student is registered for home schooling or has only a partial enrolment.
- For absences where there is no exemption in place, the parent/guardian must provide an explanation on each occasion to the school. The school will determine if the explanation provided is a reasonable excuse for the purposes of the parent meeting their responsibilities under the Education and Training Reform Act 2006.
- Parents/carers have a responsibility to ensure that their children attend school regularly, and are only absent if ill or if absolutely necessary.
- Parents/carers have a responsibility to provide a written note to the school explaining why an absence has occurred. Teachers sending absence slips home, the day following an absence, if there is no note.
- Absence explanations considered reasonable by the school include illness, accident, an unforeseen event or an unavoidable cause, a religious or cultural event/obligation as a result of a genuinely held belief of the child or a parent of the child.
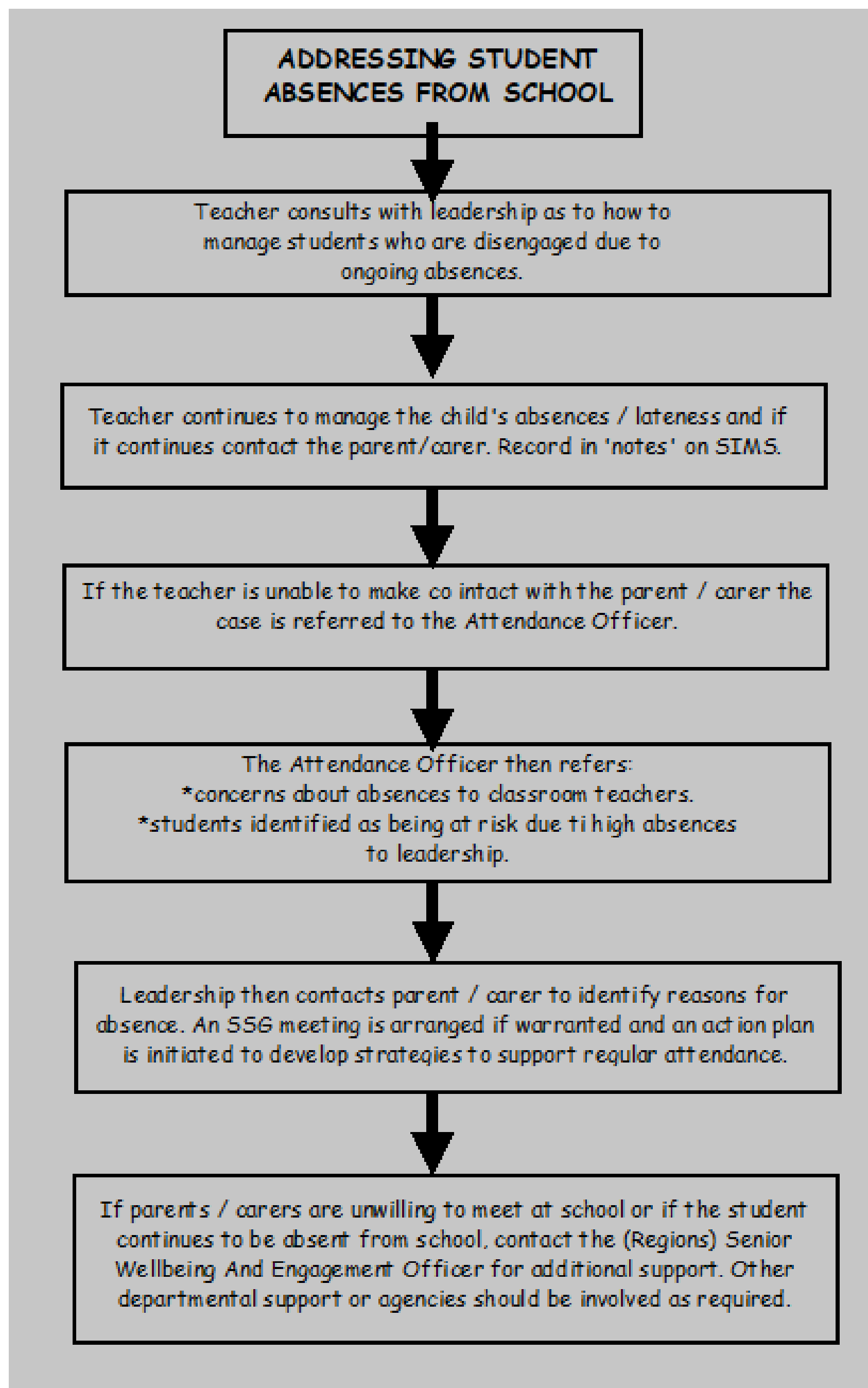
Recording of School Attendance :

· Primary schools must record student attendance twice per day and record, in writing, the reason given for each absence.

· The school uses a Student Information Management System (SIMS) to record attendance data twice daily – at the start of the school day (am) and at the end of second break (pm).

· Student attendance data is imported into our CASES21 database monthly for Departmental review.

· The Attendance Officer has the responsibility of ensuring that whole school attendance data is accurately recorded and collated each week. The Officer will also identify students at risk.

· Aggregated student attendance data is reported to the Department of Education and Training and the wider community each year as part of the annual report.

· Student attendance and absence figures will appear on student half year and end of year reports.

Monitoring & Supporting Attendance :

- Students arriving after 9.00am are required to report to the office and will be signed in at reception. Students will be given a late pass that they must show their classroom teacher.
- Students needing to leave before 3:20pm must be signed out on the electronic device at the office by a parent or approved carer, with a valid reason recorded. An Early Sign-out Slip will be generated which the parent/carer must present to the class teacher when collecting their child/ren.
- Class teachers will monitor student absences and are expected to:
  - Mark attendance using the correct codes and record any absence reasons on SIMS under 'Notes'
  - Send home Absence Explanation Slips the next day when a child is absent without explanation.
  - Collate absence notes and send down to the front office for recording once a week.
  - Record all attempts to make contact and any relevant information on SIMS under 'Notes'.
- A decision will be made with leadership in consultation with the class teacher as to how to manage ongoing absences. This could include students who are absent for two or more consecutive days or where there is found to be clear patterns of disengagement.
- Classroom teachers may refer concerns around a student's absences to the Attendance Officer if they are unable to make contact with parents/carers or if the child's attendance does not improve.
- The Attendance Officer will meet with the Leadership Team to refer attendance concerns and determine the most appropriate person and method to address this with the family.
- Leadership will contact parents /carers of students with high levels of unexplained or unapproved absences, with the view to developing and implementing strategies to minimise absences. This may require an SSG meeting and the formulation of an Attendance Plan.
- The school will provide support to students and parents/carers to encourage attendance at school.
- When school intervention fails, Leadership will refer the matter to the (Regional) Senior Wellbeing and Engagement Officer for additional support and convening of a formal attendance conference.

· Attendance Monitoring Flowchart:

ADDRESSING STUDENT ABSENCES FROM SCHOOL

Teacher consults with leadership as to how to manage students who are disengaged due to ongoing absences.

Teacher continues to manage the child's absences / lateness and if it continues contact the parent/carer. Record in 'notes' on SIMS.

If the teacher is unable to make contact with the parent / carer the case is referred to the Attendance Officer.

The Attendance Officer then refers:
*concerns about absences to classroom teachers.
*students identified as being at risk due ti high absences to leadership.

Leadership then contacts parent / carer to identify reasons for absence. An SSG meeting is arranged if warranted and an action plan is initiated to develop strategies to support regular attendance.

If parents / carers are unwilling to meet at school or if the student continues to be absent from school, contact the (Regions) Senior Wellbeing And Engagement Officer for additional support. Other departmental support or agencies should be involved as required.

Evaluation:

This policy will be reviewed as part of the school's three-year review cycle.

This policy was last ratified by School Council on :	May 2020