

POLICY: ATTENDANCE

Rationale

- Research indicates a strong link between poor attendance and underachievement.
- The Board of Trustees is required by the Education Act 1989 to ensure the enrolment and attendance of students at our school. Parents/Caregivers are responsible to ensure that their children are enrolled in and attending school.

Purposes

1. To ensure that all students regularly attend school.
2. To ensure that students are aware of the benefits of regular attendance at school.
3. To ensure effective follow up of students who do not attend school regularly.

Guidelines

1. Attendance will be monitored by daily, period by period checks.
2. The school will keep appropriate written records of attendance/absences, home visits, letters sent, explanations given, relating to individual attendance/absence.
3. To encourage regular attendance, staff will take all reasonable steps to ensure that school programmes are designed to meet the needs of students.
4. Staff will take all reasonable steps to ensure that students who are unavoidably absent from school are provided with school work when appropriate.
5. Students who have been absent from school will be informed of their responsibilities regarding missed school work. Parents/caregivers will be encouraged to assist their daughters/sons with catching up on missed school work and with re-adjusting to school.
6. Truancy is defined as any unexplained absence from school, either periods or day absences.
7. Truancy will be assessed by the Dean, senior staff, Guidance Counsellor, who will then liaise with the student and his/her family/caregivers.
8. Other services may become involved with a student's attendance/absence.
9. Families of students truanting will be advised of their responsibility and the school's responsibilities.
10. After three days of continual absence the House Tutor is to commence an investigation.
11. The school will employ an Attendance Officer in order to support staff with the monitoring and follow up of student absence.

REVIEW: This policy will be reviewed according to the Board of Trustees' triennial Programme of self –review 2018

DATE CONFIRMED: 30 June 2015

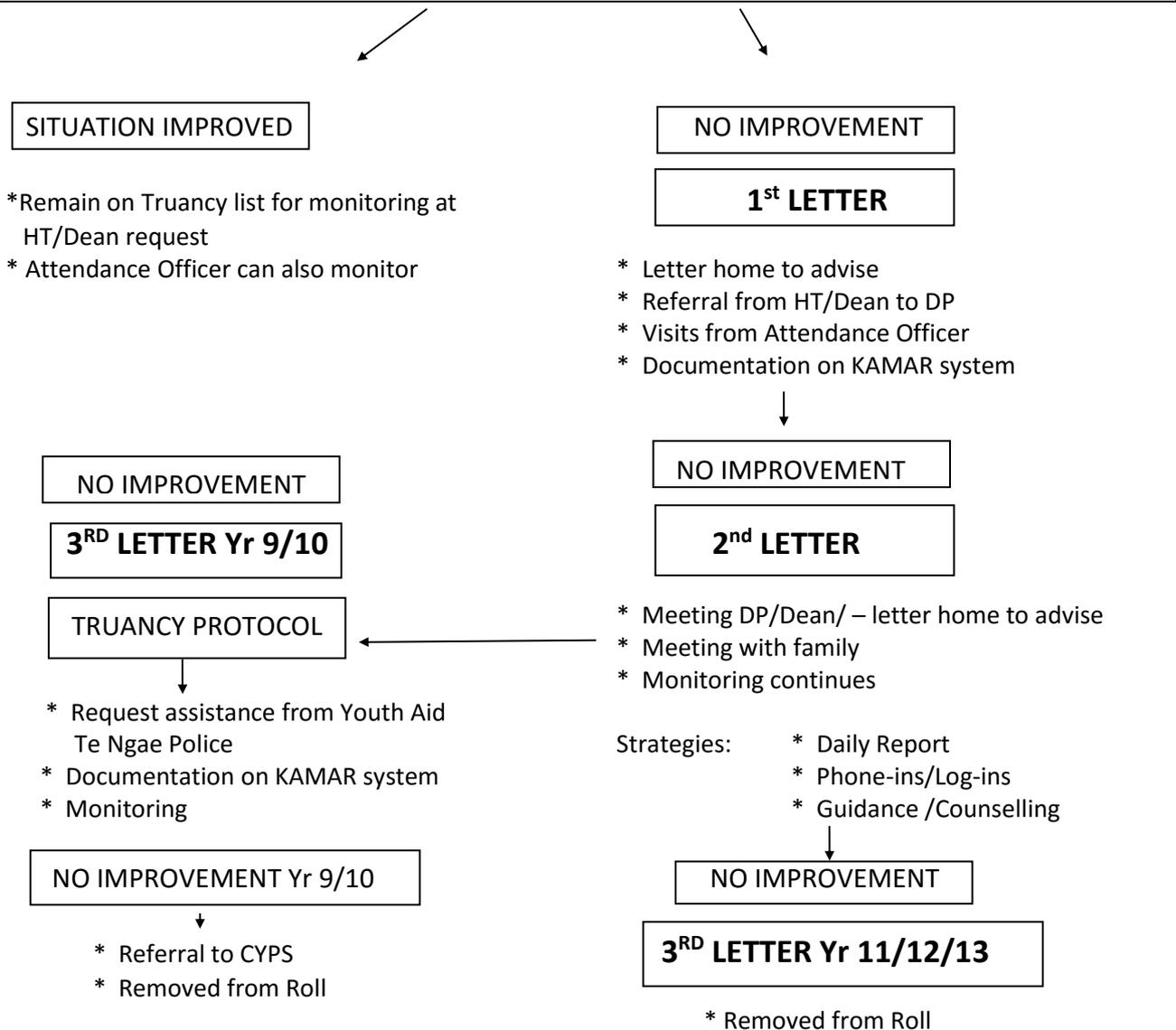
ATTENDANCE / TRUANCY MANAGEMENT PLAN

1. INCIDENCE OF TRUANCY / POOR ATTENDANCE / UNEXPLAINED ABSENCE

- Initial investigation by House Tutor
- Referral to HOH if necessary
- Contact with home if appropriate by Attendance Officer
- Documentation on KAMAR system

- Strategies
 - make up time
 - Daily Report / Attendance Contract – DEAN/H Tutor
 - Counselling
 - Guidance
 - HOD
 - Dean/ House Tutor
 - Outside Agencies if appropriate

2. SCHOOL REVIEW



Guidelines for Using eARs at Rotorua Lakes High School

RECORDING ATTENDANCE

1. During House Group at the start of the day House Group Tutors will record student attendance and absences in Kamar. Relievers and staff for whom Kamar is unavailable on occasion will record House Group attendance on a pre-printed House Group List which they will send to the School Office by a runner at the end of House Group.
2. At the end of House Group the attendance officer/data operator (from this point on referred to as 'Office') will enter the data from the pre-printed House Group Lists into Kamar for those few staff who are unable to access Kamar.
3. Updated house group lists will be provided to staff by the office for the first two weeks of the year when rolls are fluctuating.
4. The Attendance Officer will print attendance reports for each house group early in Period 1 and these will be used as the Emergency Rolls in case of a school wide emergency.
5. The Attendance Officer will check attendance reports during Periods 1 and 2 and contact the families of absent students using text, phone or absence manager as appropriate.
6. Student attendance for every teaching session will be recorded in Kamar by class teachers (or the Office on behalf of the relievers) as soon as possible and at least by lunchtime and end of day. Teachers of Periods 1 and 2 shall make all reasonable attempts to enter attendance before the end of these periods to allow the Attendance Officer to accurately determine which students are absent and take appropriate steps to follow up the absentees.
7. Each period, relievers and those few teachers without access to Kamar, will record the names of all absentees on a pre-printed class roll. This paper-based class roll will be entered into Kamar by the teacher as soon as practicable but by the end of the day at the latest OR returned by the staff concerned to the Office at the end of the day. It is strongly suggested that teachers (such as PE staff) who are frequently outside of their regular classroom use the Kamar App for this purpose.
8. The paper-based attendance rolls will be entered into Kamar by the Office as soon as practicable.
9. House Group Tutors will look at the attendance of their House Group each morning and follow up on absences, request notes, alter attendance codes according to the Attendance Codes 2011, and refer to the Deans, Attendance Office and SMT as appropriate. House Group Tutors may request an attendance summary from the Office if they are unable to access Kamar in their teaching space unexpectedly.
10. To refer to the Deans, House Group tutors will be required to use the message tab in their House Group attendance screen in Kamar and select the appropriate code for the Dean they are referring to. This is a consequence of vertical House Groups.
11. The DP will support staff to meet attendance recording guidelines.

ABSENCE CODE

12. All absences will initially be recorded as '?' by the Teachers or the Office, unless they have received prior notification of the absence, in which case they will use the appropriate code following the Attendance Codes 2015.

UNEXPLAINED ABSENCE

13. When a student is marked absent and that absence hasn't been explained beforehand, the Office will contact a parent/caregiver by phone. If an explanation is received by the Office, Kamar will be updated with the appropriate attendance codes (Attendance Codes 2011).
14. If the Office has been unable to find a reason for a student's absence the House Groups Tutor will follow up with, and subsequently record, the reason for the absence in Kamar, using the appropriate codes (Attendance Codes 2011).

IMPENDING ABSENCE

15. Whenever possible, parents/caregivers will be encouraged to advise the school of an impending absence ahead of time. When this is not possible, then parents/caregivers will be asked to notify the school as soon as possible after the event (e.g. by phone on the day of a student's illness, or by note on the first day when the student returns to school).
16. If parents/caregivers advise the school of an impending absence of five school days or more, and request work to be provided for the student, then the Dean will collect work from the student's subject teachers and arrange for it to be sent to the student. Work will not normally be provided for absent students under any other circumstances.
17. In addition to a verbal explanation from a parent/caregiver over the phone in response to the Office's call, the following methods of explaining student absences, either before or after the event, will be accepted from parents/caregivers:
 - a phone call
 - a face-to-face explanation
 - a note, or a text message to the school's 'absence' phone line,
 - an email message to school
 - a certificate from a health professional or other person of standing in the community (as defined by the Principal)

NOTE: Parents should be requested to provide:

- i. the student's name and House Group class
- ii. the date of and reason for the absence
- iii. a certificate from

CAREGIVER CONTACT

18. If the absence remains unexplained when the student returns to school, the House Groups Tutor will seek to obtain an absence note through the student. If that is unsuccessful after **three days**, the House Groups Tutor **will attempt to contact the parents/caregivers by phone**. Caregiver contact needs to be logged.
19. The House Group Tutor may also refer the attendance issue to the Attendance Officer and/or Dean as appropriate using the attendance tab in their Kamar attendance screen and typing the teacher code for the relevant Dean.
20. If no satisfactory explanation for an absence has been received by the school **within a week** of the student's return to school, then the House Group Tutor will record in Kamar that the absence was **truancy**. (If a satisfactory explanation is subsequently received, then the coding of the absence will be changed in Kamar by the House Group Tutor or Attendance Officer).
21. It is strongly recommended that House Group Tutors keep a contact log (via Kamar or using the paper log). This would be needed as part of the evidence necessary for phone reimbursement claims.

UNJUSTIFIED ABSENCE

22. Examples of Justified and Unjustified absence scenarios are listed in Appendix 1 and are based on Ministry guidelines. The full list of Ministry codes is in Attendance Codes 2015 (attached).
23. When an absence of a Year 9 student or student new to the school is deemed to be 'unjustified', the Attendance Officer will contact the parents/caregivers, either by phone or by sending a note home (evidence of the receipt of which will be required in writing). The aim of this contact is to alert parents/caregivers to the fact that the absence falls outside what is acceptable to the school and that any repetition of this will require further action by the school.

ESCALATION POINTS

24. If a student has six half days of 'unjustified' absence in the course of a school term, the House Group Tutor will counsel the student about this, advising of the likely consequences if this behaviour continues. The House Group Tutor may also choose to refer the student to the Guidance Counsellor or to the Dean of the Year Level.
25. If a student has a seventh half day of 'unjustified' absence in the course of a school term, the House Groups Tutor will refer the matter to the Dean of the Year Level, who will interview the student and then contact the parents/caregivers in order to arrange a meeting with them.
26. If a student is referred to the Dean for 'unjustified' absences in two consecutive school terms, the Dean will consult the Principal who will consider referring the matter to the District Truancy Service.

STATISTICS

27. Twice each term the DP will review the school's attendance/absence statistics. Where there is a concern, the DP will discuss it with the relevant class teacher, Dean or HOD, with a view to agreeing on a strategy to deal with the concern.
28. The DP will also generate a 'hot-list' of the top ten truants at each year level. This will be given to the Deans so that they can target these students with a view to improving their attendance. Strategies for these persistent truants are likely to be inter-disciplinary and involve the Attendance Officer and consideration of the wider issues facing the student and their family.
29. The DP will also analyse the data in terms of gender, ethnicity, year levels, etc and will draw to the attention of the Principal any negative patterns that may emerge, together with a proposed strategy on how to address them. At the end of Terms 1 and 3 the DP will provide the Principal with a statistical analysis so that the Principal can report to the Board on student attendance.

PERFECT ATTENDANCE

30. Reports will clearly identify both subject and overall attendance.
31. The DP will analyse attendance data each term and identify students with 95% and 100% attendance. These statistics will be including in the newsletter and students with perfect and near perfect attendance listed. When the end-of-year reports are sent out, those students with a perfect attendance record for the whole year will receive a letter recording this fact and signed by the Principal. They will also be nominated for the Rotorua District Council Mayoral attendance awards.

ENROLMENT PACK

32. Attendance requirements and absence protocols will be given to parents/caregivers as part of the school's Enrolment Pack. This information will also be placed on the school's website and a reminder notice will be put in the school Newsletter at least once a year. If generic problems arise from time to time over student absences, then a further notice about the issue(s) will be put in the school Newsletter. The DP will be responsible for the dissemination of this information.

ROLL RETURNS & AUDIT

33. In order to comply with the requirements of a roll return and any subsequent audit, all class teachers will complete paper returns for specified days around 1 March, 1 June, 1 July and 1 September (ie for the two school days prior to the date in question, on that date, and for the two school days immediately after that date). On these days pre-printed class lists will be used for every period and signed by the class teacher. They will be collected each period by a runner and taken to the Office, who will input the information into Kamar, as usual, and who will also check that those class teachers inputting their own information into Kamar have entered it correctly and completely. The DP will then retain all the signed hard copy sheets for these days until the roll audit has taken place.

PRINCIPAL'S DISCRETION

34. In the case of a student who is engaged in learning that is taking place not under the direct supervision of the school, the Principal will use his/her discretion to decide as to whether the student will be marked as present or absent from school. Each case will be taken on its merits. When the House Groups Tutor becomes aware that this situation has arisen and requires a ruling from the Principal, (s)he will make application to the Principal; the Principal will make a decision, and inform the House Group Tutor in writing, who will retain it on file.

ANNUAL TARGETS

35. Using the previous year's attendance statistics as a benchmark, the Principal will set annual targets for attendance when each year's Annual Plan is drawn up.

APPENDIX 1 – JUSTIFIED AND UNJUSTIFIED ABSENCE SCENARIOS

Justified Absences	Unjustified Absences
<p>Unwell (M) In hospital (M) Doctor or dentist appointment (D) The car broke down (J) Unable to reach school due to weather or road conditions (J) Exceptional family circumstance (J) A close family member is very sick / hospitalised / dying and I was looking after them (J) My dog got run over (J) Bereavement (J) Tangi (J) At a representative sporting event (J) Representing school at cultural event (J) Overseas trip approved by Principal (J, usually cultural or sporting representation) Overseas posting of immediate family member (O) Exam or study leave (X)</p> <p>Note: The following codes mean the student is recorded as present for attendance purposes but is absent from their timetabled class.</p> <p>In the sickbay (S) In another class or practice with permission (N) Swimming sports / Tabloids / Athletics (N) Camp or school offsite activity (Q) Work experience or Gateway (W) At the Deans (I) With the DP / Principal (I) With a sports coach / Kapa Haka co-ordinator etc (I) Helping set up a school event (I) In Deans or SMT corridor or removed to another teacher’s class (R) Study where the student is known to be onsite (V) Attending an offsite course organised by the school (F)</p>	<p>Note or phone call from family for a trivial absence reason (E) I had to finish an assignment / art board (E) I was in the library (E) I was studying for a test in ... (E) I went to another class (E) Mum needed me to look after a sibling (E) My grandfather was ill (E) Note: in some circumstances this may be more appropriately coded as J, use professional judgement We went to see relatives in (E) We had a holiday in NZ or overseas (E) Mum texted (E) Mum took me to buy school shoes (E) Mum needed me to drop a sister to her school (L in House Group E, in a teaching period) Someone was going to bash me (E) I forgot my lunch (E) Getting a haircut / tattoo / pedicure (E) Went home to get my PE Uniform / Cooking ingredients / a note etc (E) No reason provided (T) I stayed home (T) I slept in (T) I hate Biology (T) We had a test (T) I was with friends (T) I went to the shops (T) I went to the sick bay or Dean with a mate (T) Note: J if sent by teacher to accompany</p> <p>Note: there is considerable discretion involved in deciding whether to use E or T and staff are encouraged to consider whether the absence is reasonable from the students perspective despite being unjustified in terms of the Ministry of Education.</p>

NOTE: The codes I and S should ideally be entered by the staff member concerned at the time of the student’s absence.