

Truancy and Lateness Policy

1. Rationale

Baldivis Secondary College is committed to providing a safe, supportive, and engaging learning environment for all students.

We recognise that regular attendance is essential for students to achieve their academic, social, and emotional potential.

Irregular attendance not only results in less time in class learning, but also creates longer-term disconnects in students' study patterns that are hard for teachers to bridge.

Unsurprisingly, there's a close link between students' attendance and many other educational and related outcomes – including the likelihood of dropping out of school, unemployment, and engagement with the justice system.

We also acknowledge that some students may face barriers to attendance, such as trauma, disability, mental health, family or personal issues, or lack of motivation. Therefore, we adopt a positive behaviour support approach to address the underlying causes of truancy and lateness and to promote attendance.

Our truancy and lateness policy is based on the following principles:

- Collaboration
- Incentives and sanctions
- Family involvement
- Student support
- Assessment and evaluation
- Tiered approach

This policy outlines the procedures and expectations for students who are absent from class without a valid reason.

It is intended to complement the Attendance Policy, which covers the general attendance requirements and responsibilities for all staff, students, and parents. Therefore, this policy should be read in **conjunction with the Attendance Policy**.

2. Truancy

2.1 Definition

- Truancy is a deliberate absence initiated by a student without the knowledge or consent of their parents/guardians and/or college staff.
- Truancy occurs when a student misses a scheduled lesson or activity, regardless of whether or not they remain on school grounds, or when they return to school after an unauthorised departure.
- Truancy is regarded as a serious matter as it involves deliberate intent.
- Truancy is assumed to have occurred when a student has attended school in the morning and then, without signing out of the college, has not attended some or all of their classes or scheduled activity.

3. Lateness

3.1 Definition

- To be advised

4. Collaboration:

Dealing with truancy and lateness is a complex issue that requires a holistic approach.

We work in partnership with students, families, staff, and community agencies to identify and address the factors that contribute to truancy and lateness.

We communicate regularly and respectfully with all stakeholders and seek their input and feedback on attendance strategies.

5. Incentives and sanctions:

5.1 Incentives

We use a range of positive incentives to recognise and reward students who attend regularly or improve their attendance. These may include verbal praise, certificates, prizes, privileges, or special events.

5.2 Sanctions

We also use appropriate sanctions for students who do not comply with the attendance expectations. These may include detention, loss of privileges, parent meetings or referrals to external services. We apply sanctions in a fair, consistent, and respectful manner, considering the individual circumstances of each student.

6. Family involvement:

We value the role of families in supporting their children's attendance and learning. We encourage families to communicate with the school about any issues that may affect their children's attendance.

We provide families with information and resources on the importance of attendance and the consequences of truancy and lateness. We also involve families in developing and implementing attendance plans for their children.

7. Student support:

We create a positive school culture that fosters a sense of belonging, respect, and wellbeing for all students.

We provide a relevant, engaging and differentiated curriculum that caters to the diverse needs and interests of our students. We also offer a range of academic, social, and emotional supports for students who are at risk of disengagement. These may include mentoring, counselling, tutoring, peer support or alternative programs.

8. Assessment and evaluation:

We monitor and record student attendance data using the school's electronic system. We analyse the data regularly to identify patterns, trends, and areas of concern. We use the data to inform our decision making and planning for attendance improvement strategies. We also evaluate the effectiveness of our strategies using qualitative and quantitative measures and adjust as needed.

We expect all students to attend school every day unless they have a valid reason for absence, such as illness, medical appointment, family emergency or cultural obligation. We require parents or guardians to notify the school of any absences by phone, email or note as soon as possible.

We follow up on any unexplained or prolonged absences by contacting the parents or guardians and offering support if needed.

8. Tiered Approach

We aim to prevent truancy and lateness by identifying and intervening early with students who are showing signs of poor attendance or disengagement. We use a tiered approach to intervention based on the level of need and risk of each student. The tiers are:

Tier 1: Universal intervention for all students.

This includes promoting attendance through school-wide initiatives, such as assemblies, newsletters, posters, or campaigns; providing incentives and sanctions; communicating with families; and providing a supportive learning environment.

Tier 2: Targeted intervention for students have moderate attendance issues.

This includes conducting individual assessments to determine the causes and impacts of truancy and lateness; developing and implementing attendance plans with the involvement of students, families, and staff; providing additional academic, social, or emotional supports; and referring to external services if needed.

Tier 3: Intensive intervention for students who have chronic or severe attendance issues.

This includes conducting comprehensive assessments to identify the complex and multiple factors that contribute to truancy and lateness; developing and implementing individualised behaviour support plans with the involvement of students, families, staff, and external agencies; providing intensive academic, social, or emotional supports; and collaborating with external services if required.

9. Review

We review our truancy and lateness policy annually to ensure that it reflects best practice and evidence using a positive behaviour support lens. We seek feedback from students, families, staff and community partners on our policy and practices. We also report on our attendance outcomes to the school board and the Department of Education.

By implementing this policy, we believe we can reduce truancy and lateness and improve attendance for all our students at Baldivis Secondary College.

10. Flow Charts

10.1 Absent from Class Flow Chart

see Appendix 1

10.2 Late to Class Flow Chart

see Appendix 2

11. How is Truancy Determined?

Following the completion of the WUL, the **relevant Attendance Officer** will determine which students were **legitimately absent from class with permission**, and which students were not.

Students **absent from class without a legitimate reason** recorded will be assumed to have 'truanted' and the absence will be recorded as:

- 'OT' for 'On-site Truant' - – student has not left school grounds.
- 'T' for Truant – student has left school grounds.

The **relevant Attendance Officer** will advise both the class teacher/s and the relevant Year Coordinator.

12. How is Lateness Determined?

12.1 Late to Class

Under development - TBA.

12.2 Late to Class

Under development - TBA.

13. Resources

12.1 The Student Attendance Toolkit (SAT)

The Student Attendance Toolkit (SAT) contains resources designed to build knowledge, develop skills, and strengthen current practices to support student attendance.

- The Student Attendance Toolkit (SAT)
<https://ecm.det.wa.edu.au/connect/resolver/view/SATK12T001/latest/index.html>

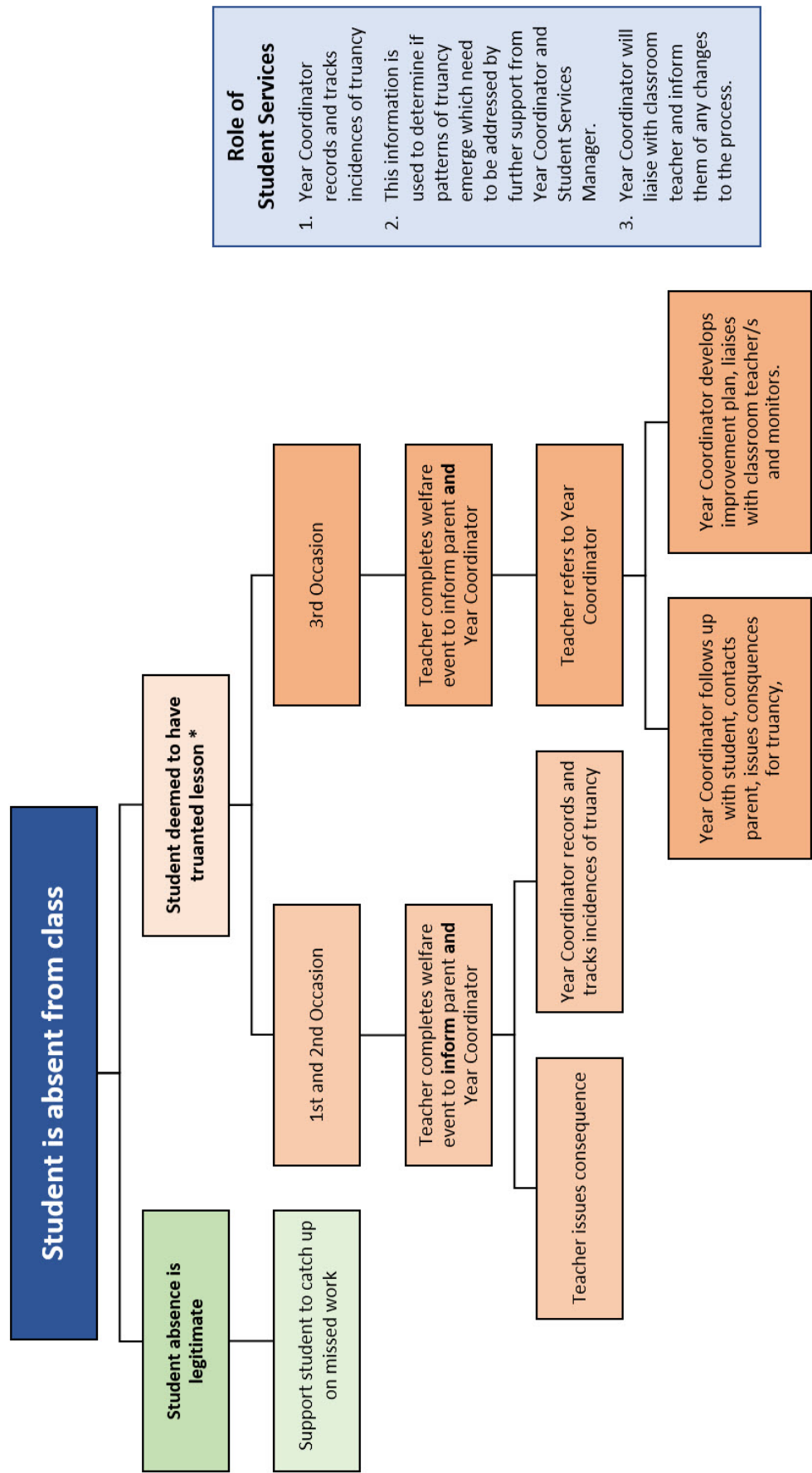
12.2 Department of Education Policies and Procedures

- Attendance Policy
<https://www.education.wa.edu.au/web/policies/-/student-attendance-in-public-schools-policy>
- Attendance Procedures
<https://www.education.wa.edu.au/o/article/pdf/web/policies/-/student-attendance-in-public-schools-procedures>
- Duty of Care Policy
<https://www.education.wa.edu.au/web/policies/-/duty-of-care-for-public-school-students-policy>
- Students at Educational Risk Policy
<https://www.education.wa.edu.au/web/policies/-/students-at-educational-risk-in-public-schools-policy-1>

12.3 Department of Education Resources

- Attendance Identification Matrix -
<https://apps.det.wa.edu.au/docserver/?key=CN6yadQ3H14EWEWP7ZzCV2>
- Attendance Flow Chart
<https://apps.det.wa.edu.au/docserver/?key=FB1EyyVar8YrJa3x8svCxm>

Appendix 1: Truancy Flow Chart



* How is Truancy Determined?

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Appendix 2: Late to Class Flow Chart

