

STUDENT ENGAGEMENT POLICY

Rationale

A positive school culture that is fair and respectful to all is a fundamental element in promoting student engagement. Quality child-centred teaching and learning programs engage students, enabling them to learn and develop healthy attitudes to themselves and their learning.

Students who attend school regularly have the greatest opportunities to learn and to develop a positive attitude to learning. Student engagement is a key factor in promoting student attendance.

This policy sets out the school's position on student engagement, student attendance and student behaviour.

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The implementation of the Student Engagement Policy is a shared responsibility between school, home and the school community. This policy is divided into the following sections that outline the way in which the Malvern Central School community seeks to achieve the purpose of this policy.

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1. Definition

Student engagement can be defined as three interrelated components:

1. **Behavioural engagement** refers to students' participation in education, including the academic, social and extracurricular activities of the school.
2. **Emotional engagement** encompasses students' emotional reactions in the classroom and in the school and measures a student's sense of belonging or connectedness to the school.
3. **Cognitive engagement** relates to each student's investment in learning and their intrinsic motivation and self-regulation.

2. Aims

- To engage all students in learning.
- To meet the developmental needs of all students.

- To foster a positive school culture based on respectful relationships between all members of the school community.
- To provide students with a safe learning environment, where the risk of harm is minimised and students feel physically and emotionally secure.
- To foster high standards of behaviour based on the school values of Respect, Integrity, Community, Innovation and Perseverance
- To have each student attend school every day, except in cases of illness or other exceptional circumstances.
- To provide support for individuals who are at risk of disengaging, not attending or developing inappropriate behaviours.
- To provide support for students who are adversely affected by the inappropriate behaviour of other students.

3. School Profile

Malvern Central School is located in Malvern, in the City of Stonnington. Established in 1875, the School has built its own unique identity in the local and wider community. The school has two campuses:

- Park Street – Foundation to Year 2; and
- Spring Road: Year 3 – Year 6.

The Malvern Gardens are located between the two campuses enabling our students and teachers to access an expanded space for learning, play and physical education. There are currently 420 students enrolled, predominantly from an English speaking background. However, our School is enjoying an increasingly diverse school community.

The School is organised into straight year levels and is contemporary in its approach to educating our students who learn in an environment that is conducive to preparing them for a rapidly changing world that demands technological capacity and intelligence, heightened interpersonal skills, significant emotional intelligence, resiliency and strong literacy and numeracy skills. Teacher quality is crucial for optimal student outcomes and so our energies are directed towards coaching and capacity building of our teaching staff.

All learning spaces have a range of digital devices including interactive whiteboards, notebook computers, desktop computers and iPads. The School also offers a range of engaging activities to its students including camps from Year 2 to Year 6, excursions and in-school activities, a school theatre production, a coding club, a chess club, dancing and a learn to swim program.

The school draws on principles from the research and study of Positive Education which is an approach to teaching the Personal and Social Capability of the Victorian Curriculum. This is essential in enabling students to understand themselves and others, and manage their relationships, lives, work and learning more effectively.

Student voice is promoted through a Junior School Council, bringing together student representatives from years 3-6 who apply and are selected through a very strict process.

Malvern Central School supports a proactive and restorative approach to assisting students to make appropriate choices about their behavior. A Peer Mediator program consisting of Year 4- 6 students is also an initiative to allow students to be trained in a Leadership role and assist in the wellbeing of fellow students. Students engage in a range of social and emotional development programs supported by an Anti-Bullying and Child Safe Policy, with Wellbeing as one of three goals in the School Strategic Plan.

We are most proud of our school.

4. School Vision

Creating independent, collaborative and contemporary thinkers with a passion for learning who make positive contributions as global citizens in an ever-changing world

5. School Values

Respect

- We value and appreciate the strengths and skills of others and ourselves.
- We speak, act and treat others fairly and equally irrespective of individual differences.
- We treat all members of the school community equitably, justly and with kindness.
- We engage parents, carers and the broader community and acknowledge the vital role they play in supporting successful learning outcomes for all students.
- We learn from others and share our ideas.

Integrity

- We act at all times in a responsible and ethical manner.
- We are truthful, honest and caring.
- We ensure that the classroom and the school environment is positive, safe, caring and purposeful.

Community

- We foster a social responsibility both locally and globally.
- We foster a positive and inclusive culture based on healthy relationships between all members of the school community.
- We provide students with a safe, supportive and inclusive learning environment, where the risk of harm is minimised and students feel physically and emotionally secure.
- We foster high standards of behaviour based on school values.

Innovation

- We use evidence to reflect on how effective our practice is and look beyond what we currently do to identify best practice through research.
- We foster creativity and deep level learning to transfer our understandings, skills and knowledge from one context to another.
- We use technology to enhance our learning.
- We create contemporary and flexible learning spaces that support and inspire learning opportunities both individually and collaboratively.

Perseverance

- We are committed to continual improvement of learning.
- We strive to develop a deep understanding of our strengths and capabilities.
- We are risk-takers and agents of our own learning through constantly being challenged by creative learning activities.

6. Engagement and Attendance Strategies

1. Uphold the right of every child to receive an education.
2. Monitor and follow up on absences in compliance with Department of Education and Training (DET) procedures.
3. Intervene early to identify and respond to student needs for social, emotional, and learning support.

4. Where resources allow, provide specialist support to assist teachers to meet the social, emotional and learning needs of students at risk.
5. Recognise and respond to students' needs through the *Program for Students with Disabilities* (PSD), language support programs and other DET initiatives.
6. Provide all staff, including pre-service and casual relief teachers and volunteers professional learning and support regarding student wellbeing issues.
7. Provide opportunities for students to participate in developing a positive school culture (e.g. student led assemblies, student leadership, buddy programs, Peer Mediators).
8. Provide opportunities for families and the wider community to participate in school activities (e.g. School Council and sub-committee meetings, classroom helpers, camps and excursions).
9. Communicate the school's expectations and support **parents/carers** to:
 - Ensure that their children attend school as required by law.
 - Advise the school as soon as possible when their child is late or absent.
 - Ensure that student enrolment details are correct.
 - Provide all relevant information to the school.
 - Attend parent-teacher meetings and participate in 3 – way student conferences.
 - Read and respond to school communications in a timely manner.
 - Seek advice from the school if desiring to remove children for extended periods (e.g. holidays).
10. Develop positive relationships between teachers and students that promote engagement, wellbeing and learning.
11. Engage with the development of Student Individual Learning Plans for relevant students.
12. Deliver teaching and learning and extra-curricular activities and services that are inclusive and responsive to student needs, and that reflect the diversity of the school community.
13. Use evidence - based and flexible pedagogical styles to cater for different learners and to engage all students in meaningful learning experiences.
14. Teach and assess students using current pedagogical knowledge aimed at challenging and extending student learning.
15. Promote pro-social behaviours using a range of resources (e.g. Character Strengths, Positive Education strategies, restorative practices, Values education, Respectful Relationships).
16. Communicate concerns about student wellbeing to parents/carers in a timely manner.
17. Adhere to the 'stepped' behaviour management processes (Appendix 4).

Inclusion, Wellbeing & Transitions

Malvern Central School has a proactive approach to student health with the continued provision of a first Aid room and all staff trained at Level 2 First Aid. In addition, staff are trained annually in the management and treatment of asthma and anaphylaxis.

Sunsmart School.

The school promotes sun smart behaviours with the wearing of hats for all outside activities in terms 1 and 4 and in terms 2 and 3 on days of higher UV ratings. Teachers are responsible for being alert on high UV rating days.

Parent Participation

Parent participation is important and we are continuously reviewing our Parent Participation Policy and Volunteer Policy, in line with current research on home school partnerships and its impact on student learning and engagement.

Student Support Services

Malvern Central School is fortunate enough to have a DET Psychologist and Speech Therapists who actively contribute as members of the school community.

Professional Learning

Teacher professional learning is given high priority at Malvern Central School to ensure that teaching and learning approaches are based on deep level pedagogical understanding and are reflective of best practice. Peer Observation and team teaching are opportunities for teachers to learn with, from and on the behalf of each other. Improvement to teaching and learning is supported by modelling of best practice, underpinned by current research facilitated by education consultants from Melbourne University. Ongoing professional learning in DET initiatives and school based priorities will continue to be a focus at Malvern Central School.

Collaboration and Communication

At Malvern Central School we have a school wide understanding of the positive impact of parent's involvement in the development of student's behavioural, emotional and cognitive engagement with learning. We foster a collaborative approach with parents through Compass, student planners, pastoral care interviews, individual learning improvement plan interviews, reports, newsletters, educational forums, parent-teacher interviews, phone calls and student support meeting

7. Positive Student Behaviour Strategies

1. Promote a respectful and inclusive school community culture.
2. Communicate high expectations (regarding student behaviour) with students and their families.
3. Use the Student Engagement Policy as a basis for negotiating class-based shared expectations with students at the beginning of each school year and revisit this regularly throughout the year.
4. Through professional learning, build staff capacity to promote positive student behaviours (including specific behaviour management strategies and teaching about social skills) promote a team approach to behaviour management.
5. Provide support for students with behavioural issues (e.g. Students Support Officer Referral, Student-Support Groups, Positive Behaviour Plan, Individual Learning Plan).
6. Monitor student behaviour and the effectiveness of implemented strategies.
7. Work with parents/carers to promote understanding about how they can support positive student behaviours.
8. Build school wide and community understanding of the school values and how they translate from classroom to school yard.

8. Other School Policies and Relevant Legislation

This policy should be read in conjunction with other relevant school policies found on our website, such as:

- **Acceptable Use of Digital Resources Policy**
- **Anti-Bullying Policy**
- **Home School communication Policy**
- **Sunsmart Policy**
- **Duty of Care Policy**
- **Childsafe Policy**

The Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act (2006) outlines a vision of human rights for all Victorians. The Charter affirms that all people are born free and equal in dignity and rights. While the Charter demands equality for all, it also emphasizes the value of difference. The Charter requires public authorities, including government schools and their employees, to act compatibly with human rights and to consider them when making decisions and delivering services.

In addition to the Charter, the following legislation needs to be considered when determining rights and responsibilities of all members of our school community.

- *Equal Opportunity Act 2010*
- *Disability Discrimination Act 1992* (in conjunction with DEECD Disability Standards for Education 2005)

- *Education and Training Reform Act 2006*
- *Information Privacy Act 2000 and Health Records Act 2001*
- *Children, Youth and Families Act 2005* (includes Mandatory Reporting Legislation).
- *Racial and Religious Tolerance Act 2001*

All school policies and key documents need to be considered in relation to the Student Engagement Policy. This policy is to be read in conjunction with Appendix 1 – 8.

9. Resources

Student Engagement Policy Guidelines retrieved **8th June, 2017** from:

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/participation/Pages/policydev.aspx>

Compass Education Website:

<https://www.compass.education/>

Restorative Practice:

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/programs/bullystoppers/Pages/methodrestorative.aspx>

10. Evaluation

Data will be collected regularly in relation to student engagement and student wellbeing. Some sources of data may include data from:

- the Attitude to School survey
- school reports
- CASES21
- Compass
- SOCS
- the Parent Opinion Survey
- case management work with students

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

Review Date: 2020

11. Appendix 1 - Rights and responsibilities of students, staff and parents/carers

All members of the Malvern Central School community have a **right** to:

- fully participate in an environment free of discriminatory behavior – including racist, sexist, ability-based, class-based, gender-based and homophobic forms of harassment, bullying, cyber-bullying, vilification, violence, intimidation, abuse and exclusion.
- be treated with respect and dignity.
- feel valued, safe and supported in an environment that encourages freedom of thought and expression.

All members of the Malvern Central School community have a **responsibility** to:

- acknowledge their obligations under the *Equal Opportunity Act 1995* and the *Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006* and communicate these obligations to all members of the school community.
- actively participate in and contribute to a learning environment that supports the learning of self and others.
- ensure their actions and views do not have a negative impact on the health and wellbeing of other members of the school community.

Students	
Rights	Responsibilities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To learn in a secure, inclusive and positive environment. • To be valued and treated with respect, fairness and courtesy by all members of the school community. • To be supported in challenging situations. • To be free of harassment and bullying, including cyber bullying. • To be encouraged to be a good role model for other children 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To come to school every day (except in exceptional circumstances). • To behave respectfully and appropriately at all times. • To respect, value and learn from the differences of others. • To provide support to others and seek help when needed. • To report bullying or other inappropriate behaviours to a teacher. • To respect school and other people's property. • To comply with all school policies and procedures. • To treat all members of the whole school community with equality, respect, fairness and dignity - honouring our school values and expectations
Staff	
Rights	Responsibilities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To work in a safe and secure environment. • To be treated with respect, fairness and courtesy by all members of the school community. • To be supported in challenging situations. • To be free of harassment and bullying, including cyber bullying. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To build positive relationships with students, parents/carers as the basis for engagement and learning and fairly implement the Student Engagement Policy. • To agree to uphold Child safe standards by having zero tolerance to child abuse, and will treat all allegations and child safety concerns very seriously • To have high expectations for all students. • To engage in constructive communication with students, staff and parents/carers regarding the learning of individuals. • To provide an inclusive, engaging and differentiated curriculum. • To treat all members of the school community with respect, fairness and dignity. • To be familiar with all relevant policies • To ensure attendance of students are documented everyday and reasons for lateness or absence are logged immediately. • To treat all members of the whole school community with equality, respect, fairness and dignity - honouring our school values and expectations
Parents/Carers	
Rights	Responsibilities

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To expect that their child/ren will learn in a safe and positive environment. • To be treated with respect, fairness and courtesy by all members of the school community. • To be free of harassment and bullying, including cyber bullying. • To expect a positive and supportive approach to their child's learning. • To be contacted by the school when the wellbeing of their child/ren is at issue. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To ensure students attend school every day (except in exceptional circumstances). • To promote and model respectful communication and healthy relationships. • Support the school in maintaining a safe and respectful learning environment. • To communicate with the school about student lateness and absence. • To participate in student support group meetings and follow up where necessary at home. • To be familiar with the Student Engagement Policy and other relevant policies. • To treat all members of the whole school community with equality, respect, fairness and dignity - honouring our school values and expectations
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Appendix 2 - Behavioural Consequences

At Malvern Central School we support a positive approach to behaviour and foster a school climate where personal responsibility and self-discipline can develop.

STUDENT BEHAVIOUR EXPECTATIONS *Students are expected to:*

- Play and learn cooperatively
- Treat and speak to others with respect and courtesy
- Resolve problems and disagreements calmly, sensibly and fairly
- Move and play safely inside and outside the school grounds
- Comply with all school policies
- Take care of the school environment and school property.
- Behave in a manner which is guided by the school values of respect, integrity, community, innovation and perseverance.

Consequences at Malvern Central School for inappropriate or unacceptable behaviours include:

- The student is given a reminder (verbal or non-verbal) about acceptable behavior
- The teacher explains the situation to the student, drawing his/her attention to the agreed class expectations and School Values.
- The issue is discussed with the student and he/she is asked to reflect on his/her behaviour either verbally or through a Restorative Practice Form.
- The student is asked to make up missed learning in his/her own time (No more than half the time allocated for any recess or lunch may be used for this purpose)
- The student may be asked to move temporarily to another Year Level or to the care of a PCO
- The student may be asked to walk for a certain period of time with a yard duty teacher
- The student may be asked to provide a verbal or written statement or apology
- The student may be asked to complete a form of community service
- The student and his/her family may be asked to repair or pay for damage to property or equipment
- The teacher reflects on behavioural issues or needs and plans to teach appropriate social skills explicitly
- The teacher arranges for the student's behavior to be discussed with others which may include the child's parents/carers, DEET SSSO, PCO or Student Wellbeing team member. A Positive Behaviour Plan is formulated at this meeting
- Suspension procedures (if disruptive or dangerous behaviour continues)
- Expulsion considered and may be implemented.
- Extreme inappropriate behaviour will result in immediate suspension, and possible involvement of relevant external authorities.

Inappropriate behavior is responded to through a staged response that has preventative and early intervention strategies, such as:

Teachers will:

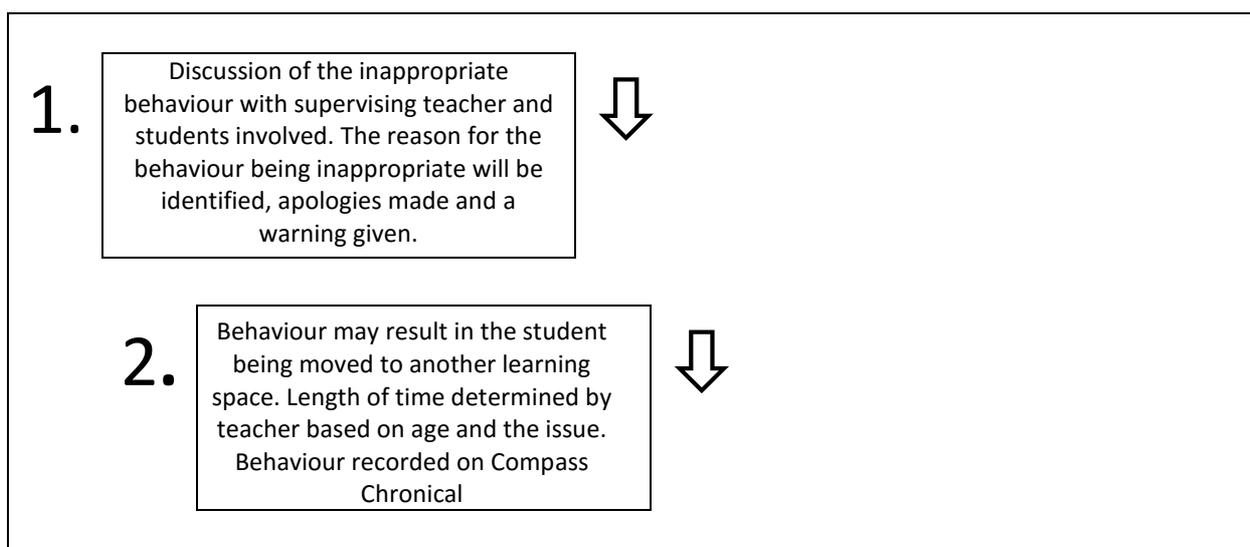
- Build rapport with students and create positive and nurturing learning environments
- Develop quality curriculum teaching programs
- Make explicit behavioural expectations of students at the start of the year
- Unpack School Values and how they translate from classroom to yard.
- Teach specific social-skills such as:
 - Being more resilient
 - Anger-management
 - Making appropriate choices
 - Friendship/relationship building skills
 - Protective behaviours
 - Sexuality Education
 - Promoting character strengths
 - Restorative Practice

Broader support strategies include:

- involving and supporting the parents/ carers
- involving the student wellbeing team
- mentoring and/or counselling
- convening student support group meetings – the student support group is an important component of the staged response for students facing difficulty with engagement, attendance or behaviour
- developing Individualised Learning, Positive Behaviour or Attendance Plans
- involving community support agencies.
- Peer Mediators

Appendix 3 – Behaviour Management Process

The following Behaviour Management process will be followed. Depending on the severity of the behaviour, the process may commence at any of the following six stages. In some cases, the process may be sequential.



3.

Restorative Chat with Student/s involved and Student Wellbeing Team member. Behaviour is recorded on Compass Chronical and may result in consequence (yard duty, detention for half of lunch time).



4.

Meeting with Principal/Assistant Principal and parents to arrange appropriate consequence and support
*e.g. Mediation
Counselling
Positive Behaviour Plan
Suspension*



5.

Principal informs student and parents of suspension. Meeting prior to return to school to outline expectations for the future.



6.

Extreme inappropriate behaviour will result in immediate suspension, and possible involvement of relevant external authorities.

If after repeated suspensions within Department of Education and Training guidelines, behavioural problems of a serious nature continue, the Principal and Assistant Principal will meet with student and parents leading to alternative schooling arrangements.

The Education Training and Reform Act (2006) prohibits the use of corporal punishment in any Victorian Government school.

Appendix 4 – Exclusion Procedures: Suspension and Expulsion

At Malvern Central School, parents/carers are involved in exclusion procedures.

SUSPENSION – General Information

Suspension is a serious disciplinary measure and should only be used when other measures have not produced a satisfactory response.

Suspension should be used for the shortest time necessary. The maximum period of time a student can be suspended consecutively is five school days. 'School days', as referred to in this document, does not include weekends, public holidays or school holidays. A student cannot be suspended for more than fifteen school days in a school year, unless approval is sought from the Regional Director. However, a

student may be suspended for a further period (not exceeding five school days) pending the Principal's decision whether to expel a student.

For further information:

- School Policy & Advisory Guidelines: Suspensions
<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/participation/Pages/suspensions.aspx>

EXPULSION – General Information

The school Principal has the authority to permanently exclude a student from his or her school according to the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development's procedures. This power cannot be delegated to any other person at the school level.

Permanent expulsion from a school is the most extreme sanction open to a Principal. Except in the most unusual and extreme circumstances, it will only be used after all other relevant forms of behaviour management outlined in the engagement guidelines have been exhausted.

For further information:

- School Policy & Advisory Guidelines: Expulsions
<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/principals/spag/participation/Pages/expulsions.aspx>

Appendix 5 –Staged Response

A restorative chat approach is built upon the following key questions:

To the person(s) who caused harm:	To the person(s) harmed:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Could you please tell me what happened? • What were you thinking? What was in your head/in your mind? • Was it the right/wrong thing to do? • Who has been affected/upset/harmed by your actions? In what ways? • How has this affected you? • Is that fair? Can you do that? • What else do you need to do to make things better? How can you fix this? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What did you think when it happened? • What have you thought about since? • How has it affected/upset/hurt/harmed you? • What has been the worst thing? • What is needed to make it right/to make you feel better? • Do you agree? • Is that fair?
<p>To both:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How can we make sure this doesn't happen again? • Is there anything I can do to help? • Is there anything else you would like to say? • <i>Formally record agreement/congratulate them for working it out.</i> 	

A Staged Response

- This approach will be conducted in an informal way for minor incidents and be embedded in classroom teaching and learning.
- Serious incidents will require a more formal restorative session that involves Student Wellbeing Team, Assistant Principal, Principal and if necessary the DET Student Support Officer and all persons affected in the incident. The response will be documented.

- There will be situations where a formal conference involving the before mentioned people: parents, support persons and convener will be required (Student Support Group). Any imposed consequence will be imbedded in the restorative process that requires a response 'that makes things right' in relation to those who have been affected.
- Where a restorative approach has previously been conducted and subsequently the behaviour continues, the school will constitute a further Student Support Group to devise strategies and approaches to address the behaviour. This may include intervention from specialist services and external agencies in the local community and the development of a Positive Behaviour Plans

Appendix 6 – Student Support Group Guidelines

A Student Support Group meeting may be held to exchange information and facilitate strategies to address social, emotional, academic and/or behavioural concerns.

These meetings are to be held at a time suitable both to the school and to the parents/carers.

The procedures for such meetings will vary depending on the needs of individuals and schools, but they promote positive behaviours through a staged response.

As well as teachers, parents/carers and the student, the meeting could involve the Principal or nominee and any support staff who have been involved with the student and/or the student's family or who have particular relevant expertise or a person requested by the parents/carers.

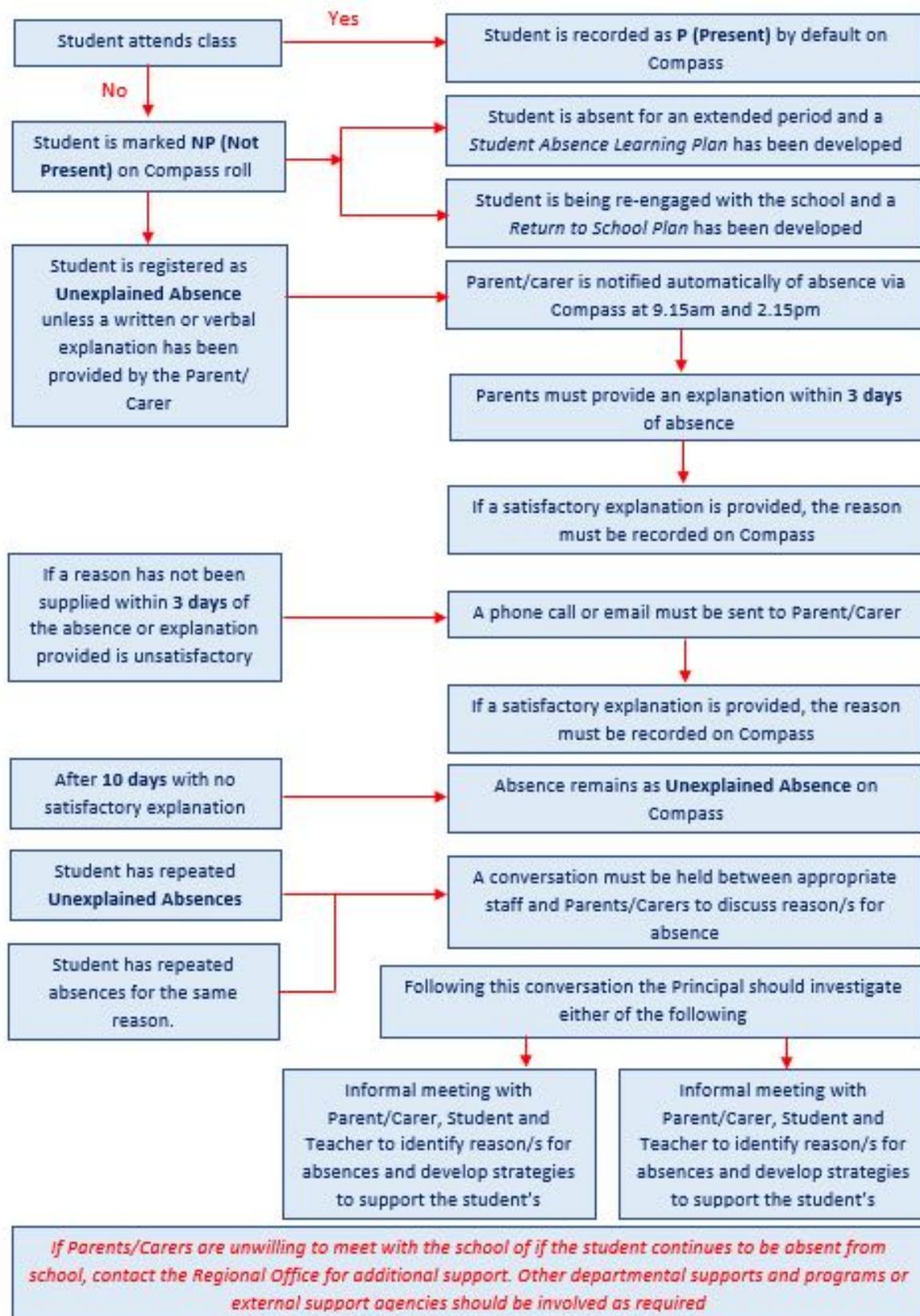
The Principal or Assistant Principal must ensure suitable language interpretation facilities are made available, if relevant.

A brief written statement including a list of participants and agreed outcomes should be maintained to assist future problem-solving processes at the school.

The statement should be verified by the parents/carers and/or student and remain confidential.

Appendix 7 – Attendance Procedures

Process map for following up absences:



This policy was last ratified by School Council in: **November 2017**