

GOLDEN BAY HIGH SCHOOL ATTENDANCE POLICY

RATIONALE:

Non-attendance and irregular attendance are the two biggest barriers to student achievement. This policy seeks to address that and also to ensure that the school complies with MOE requirements for the use of electronic attendance registers.

1. Golden Bay High School will take proactive steps to increase student attendance, and ensure parents and caregivers are responsible for explaining any student absence.
2. Student attendances will be recorded electronically at morning form time, and every teaching session, through the school's Student Management System, together with the reason for any absence.
3. Parents/caregivers will be contacted as soon as is practicable in relation to any unexplained or unjustified absence.
4. The Principal will develop protocols on the recording of student attendance/absences and on steps which the school will take to maximise student attendance. The protocols will include an outline of which kinds of absence the Principal will accept as 'justified' together with the steps to be taken in the case of 'unjustified' absences and is appended to this policy.
5. The Principal will devise and, when approved by the Board, will implement a strategy to inform parents/caregivers and the community at large about the school's policy on attendance and absences. (See appendix to this policy.)

GUIDELINES:

RECORDING ATTENDANCE

1. Student attendance for every teaching session will be recorded in the school's SMS by class teachers or the attendance officer/data operator (referred to as "office")
2. During Form Period at the start of the day Form Teachers will record student attendance and absences, using either the SMS or on a pre-printed Form List which they will send to the School Office.
3. At the end of Form Period the office will enter the data into the SMS.
4. By the end of Period 1 the office will have produced a paper record of all student absences. A copy of this list will be posted in the office and on the staff notice board. At the end of each week Linda puts a copy of the week's absences in form teacher and deans' pigeon holes.

ABSENCE CODE

5. 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 symbol under the current Attendance Code published by the Ministry of Education.

UNEXPLAINED ABSENCE

6. When a student is marked absent and that absence hasn't been explained beforehand, the Office will try and contact a parent/caregiver by phone. If an explanation is received by the Office, the SMS will be updated with the current Attendance Codes.
7. If the Office has been unable to find a reason for a student's absence the office will subsequently record the reason for the absence in the SMS, using the current Attendance Codes and the student will be referred to the form teacher and then the dean if the absences are still unexplained.

IMPENDING ABSENCE

8. 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

inform 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).

9. If parents/caregivers advise the school of an impending absence of five school days or more due to medical reasons, and request work to be provided for the student, then the Dean may 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.
10. 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. a phone call
 - b. a face-to-face explanation
 - c. a note
 - d. an email message to school
 - e. 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 form class
- ii. the date of and reason for the absence

CAREGIVER CONTACT

11. If the absence remains unexplained when the student returns to school, the form teacher will seek to obtain an absence note through the student. If that is unsuccessful after two days, the Dean will attempt to contact the parents/caregivers by phone. If no satisfactory explanation for an absence has been received by the school within two weeks then Kamar automatically updates the absence to truancy.

UNJUSTIFIED ABSENCE

12. When an absence is deemed (in terms of school policy) to be 'unjustified', the Principal may contact the parents/caregivers by sending a note home. The aim of this contact is to alert parents/caregivers to the fact that the absence falls outside what is acceptable to the school.

ESCALATION POINTS

13. The DP will analyse data generated by Kamar and at the end of each term in consultation with the dean, will refer students with under 80% attendance to the District Truancy Service.

STATISTICS

14. At the end of Terms 1 and 3 the Principal will use the statistical analysis generated by Kamar to report to the Board on student attendance.

ENROLMENT PACK

15. Information on 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. The Principal will be responsible for all this information.

ROLL AUDIT

16. In order to comply with the requirements of a roll audit, all Form Teachers will complete paper returns for three days around 1 March and 1 July (i.e. for the one school day prior to the date in question, on that date, and for the school day immediately after that date). Form teachers of Years 9 -13 must also do this for the MOE returns around the 1 June and 1 September.

PRINCIPAL'S DISCRETION

17. 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.

NOTES:

- a. Clauses 10 and 11 gives rise to the importance of accurate record-keeping and/or strong protocols within the school with regards to attempted contacts with parents/caregivers.
- b. Each period, teachers without access to the SMS will record the names and form classes of all absentees on a pre-formatted absentee list. This paper-based information will be sent to the office after form time and after the last period of the afternoon.
- c. The paper-based information will be entered into the school's SMS by the Office as collected and available.

Adopted by the Board of Trustees on: 24 August 2015

Review Date: 2018

APPENDIX 1

MAXIMISING STUDENT ATTENDANCE

- The Deputy Principal who oversees attendance will liaise regularly with the District Truancy Service Officer to analyse attendance patterns and to pick up on students whose absence patterns are of concern.
- Each Friday, the office will print off a form class list of unexplained absences for the week, for the form teacher to follow up. Any unexplained absences by the end of the following week will be recorded as truancy. The form teachers will discuss any patterns of concern with the Dean.
- The MOE list of attendance codes provides clear direction for most absences as to what is justified and what is unjustified. Some absences require further clarification and school policy determines the following decisions:

Absence	Justified or unjustified
Overseas trip when parents and student accept responsibility for the student's learning with work provided by the teachers	Justified
Overseas trip where no work is undertaken	unjustified
Holidays taken within New Zealand outside of normal school holidays	Unjustified
Trip to visit a very ill close relative (e.g. grandparent, parent with whom the student does not normally reside, sibling)	justified
All medical related absence, including dentist and orthodontist	Justified
Bereavement – time to pay respects and/or attend a funeral/tangi	justified
Absence due to attendance at an employment related or tertiary interview	justified
Absence due to attendance at a tertiary expo event such as a university open day	justified
Absence due to attendance at the capping or ordination ceremony or similar of a sibling or parent	justified

- The principal will publish this information annually in Goldie; parents will always be contacted in the case of unjustified absence.