WALPOLE PRIMARY SCHOOL

NON-COMPULSORY

ATTENDANCE POLICY
BACKGROUND

The 1999 Education Act stipulates mandatory attendance requirements for children in year one and above. Although the Act is silent on the question of attendance during the years a child is eligible to attend Kindergarten and Pre Primary, the Department of Education and Training Policy on attendance makes the following statement:

"It is widely recognised that students need to attend school on a regular basis to gain the maximum benefit from schooling in order to optimise their life opportunities. It is also widely recognised that attendance problems are best managed by early identification and intervention." (2000)

The Policy document also goes on to say:

"Although there is no legal requirement in the School Education Act 1999 for pre and post-compulsory aged students to enrol in a school, there is an expectation that once enrolled students will attend on a regular basis, and positive attendance patterns should be fostered with all students by schools."

Therefore this school policy document is designed to outline the expectations and obligations a Parent owes to the School upon the enrolment of their child.

ATTENDANCE REQUIREMENTS

KINDERGARTEN
In Kindergarten children will attend school for two (2) full days per week unless an alternative and reduced attendance has been negotiated with the school.

PRE PRIMARY
In Pre Primary students will attend school for five (5) full days per week unless an alternative and reduced attendance has been negotiated with the school.

NEGOTIATED ALTERNATIVES
At the point of enrolment or at any time during the year Parents may enter into negotiations with the School to reduce either the frequency or the length of the time a child spends in either Kindergarten or Pre Primary. For example, in the early part of the year it may be appropriate for a child to come to Kindergarten for only each of the mornings that the program is offered. Similarly, the full week program for Pre Primary may be difficult for some children to adapt to and it can be negotiated that for a certain amount of time a child will attend for less than the full five days. The important aspect to bear in mind is that if the child is to attend less than the expected amount of time, this must be arranged before the absences occur. These agreements can be altered at anytime and are always at the discretion of the Parents.

MONITORING ATTENDANCE

a) When a student has been absent from school and an acceptable explanation has not been forthcoming, the school is to send a written request for an explanation to the student's family to establish the reasons for non-attendance.

b) If a student's attendance rate falls below 90% over a ten-week period, the school must further investigate the reasons why the student is not attending school.

c) Schools are to use a case management approach for attendance issues. Schools must be mindful of consulting with all stakeholders, and accessing support from other community groups and agencies if required.

REFERRALS TO SCHOOL ATTENDANCE OFFICER

If a school has identified a student as being a regular or chronic non-attender, and the intervention strategies implemented by the school have not been successful in restoring the student's attendance, the student is to be referred to the school attendance officer by the school Principal.