



## ALPHA STATE SCHOOL

# ATTENDANCE AND ABSENCES POLICY

### RATIONALE/ PURPOSE

All schools in Queensland are committed to providing safe and supportive learning environments for all students which address their educational needs. Research shows that regular attendance is integral to successful academic, employment and social outcomes. Accordingly, it is important that students, staff and parents/carers have a shared understanding of the importance of regular student attendance

Alpha P - 10 State School expects that every student will attend school every day of the school year unless prevented by reasonable circumstances from doing so.

Alpha State School's attendance policy aims to maximise participation in learning programs by all students to ensure all children can access equitable educational outcomes.

At Alpha State School we are committed to achieving the following targets in improving attendance:

ATTENDANCE IN 2016 – 91.7%

### SCHOOL/ COMMUNITY BELIEFS

It is important that students, staff and parents/carers have a shared understanding of the importance of attending school. The responsibility for enforcing school attendance is with the Department of Education and Children's Services. The Department therefore has a legal responsibility to record and monitor attendance and take appropriate action to rectify problems of non-attendance.

Alpha P - 10 State School;

- is committed to promoting the key messages of Every Day Counts
- believes all children should be enrolled at school and attend school all day, every school day
- monitors, communicates and implements strategies to improve regular school attendance
- believes truancy can place a student in unsafe situations and impact on their future employability and life choices
- believes attendance at school is the responsibility of everyone in the community.

### STRATEGIES

At Alpha P - 10 State School we promote regular attendance by:

- Promoting the importance of attending school every day through parades, school newsletter items and in classroom discussions.

- Creating safe and supportive classroom environments that encourage children to attend school every day. Explicitly teaching attendance expectations regularly in class and through newsletters, the school's Facebook page and the school's website.
- Providing rich and stimulating learning experiences in all classrooms that encourage students to learn.
- Encouraging participation in extracurricular offerings, in particular voluntary lunchtime activities run by staff members and individual child interest areas at the school.
- Celebrating the success of students who have 100% attendance each term in an award ceremony during our school parades. Students reaching attendance targets will receive an award. Award for the best attendance across the whole school year will be given at the Alpha P - 10 State School end of year awards night.
- Staff showing interest and concern for student welfare and following up with absences that have been unexplained.
- Expecting **all** parents to explain **all** absences. Alpha P – 10 State School will provide a variety of options for parents to notify the school of absences (email, note or phone). Alpha P – 10 State School will provide a written template for parents to use to inform the school of any absences. Classroom teachers will follow up unexplained absences by sending home a reminder letter to parents where absences have been unexplained. Principal will regularly send home Unexplained Absence Letters for parents to explain child absences.
- Ensuring consistent follow up of absences with parents/caregivers
- Working with students and families to reduce absenteeism.
- Monitoring attendance through weekly report and data display (updated weekly)
- Ensuring work that is missed due to absence is completed during play breaks and in some cases for homework

## RESPONSIBILITIES

### Parents/Carers Responsibilities:

- Ensure that their child attends school on every school day
- Provide a satisfactory explanation for all absences, lateness or early departure
- Contact the school prior to any planned absence. Where this is not possible, parents must provide the reason for any absences prior to 10.00 a.m. on the day of absence, or the day of the student's return to school. This may take the form of a medical certificate or a satisfactory explanation for the absence.
- Contact the Principal if student absence is to be for an extended period of time (e.g. family reasons or illness) and request school work - at least 2 days' notice should be given to prepare work
- Contact the Principal if a student is refusing to attend school. Initiate or attend meetings to seek support and discuss their child's attendance or participation in their educational program.

- Provide a written note (signed and dated) to the teacher, if their child is required to leave school early.
- Provide a written note (signed and dated) from parents/carers explaining their lateness.
- Advise the school of any change of address or phone numbers to ensure school records are accurate. Up to date data is essential in an emergency.

### **Student Responsibilities:**

- Under the Education (General Provisions) Act 2006, students must attend school each day. They must be on time and have all necessary equipment.
- Never leave school during school hours without permission from parents/carers or the school
- Report to the office if arriving to school after 8:50am and provide a note from parents/carers explaining their lateness/ sign in as a late arrival
- Ensure all missed school work is completed.
- Ensure absence records are accurate and all absences have been explained by parents/carers.

### **School Responsibilities:**

- Regularly inform students, staff and parents/carers about the Alpha P - 10 State School *Attendance and Absences Policy* and Procedures (including the Policy and Procedures for *late arrival, early departure* and *truanting*) and make this publicly available through the school's website, newsletters and enrolment package.
- Ensure all staff follow electronic roll marking procedures in the morning and afternoon using One School.
- Follow Same Day Notification information regarding student absences each day Ensure unexplained absences are followed up **the next day**. Classroom teachers/ admin to send home unexplained absences note/ phone call home when there is no phone call, email or note from parents explaining reason for absence.
- Administration staff to record all telephone calls regarding absences and give to classroom teacher for recording on One School.
- Notify parents/carers of any unexplained absence, requesting a satisfactory explanation for their child's absence.
- Where classroom teacher is absent ensure supply teaching staff are aware of roll marking procedures. Options: - Administration Officer to follow up with paper copy roll and enter data. Principal or delegate to follow up and electronically mark rolls on behalf of absent teacher.
- Principal to monitor non-attendance and implement strategies to reduce occurrence. One school absence letter generated and sent home to parents to explain absences.

- Discuss individual attendance with students and offer support and help to parents and students when school attendance has become a problem.
- Principal will commence departmental processes if attendance issues are not resolved.
- Provide students with school work when they are absent for legitimate extended periods of time.
- Notify the relevant authorities if non-attendance persists.

## RESPONSES TO ABSENCES

Absences for which a satisfactory reason has been provided are considered *explained absences*, and the student's enrolment is viewed as continuous. Undertaking a leisure activity such as shopping, visiting friends and relatives, fishing or camping, is not considered a satisfactory explanation for an absence.

An absence for which a satisfactory reason has not been provided is considered an *unexplained absence and be recorded as an unauthorised absence*.

If there is no explanation from the Parent/Caregiver regarding a student's absence or lateness for that day the teacher will:

- Complete an "Unexplained Absence" (blue) form or "Notification of Late Attendance" (orange) form (as appropriate)
- Students who are collected before the end of the school day, or those students who arrive late, need to sign out/ sign in using the book in the office. These records are then cross checked with electronic rolls.
- Give the form to the student who will take it home to be signed and be returned the following day
- On the third day of an unexplained absence, lateness or if a regular pattern of non-attendance is observed, Administration staff will contact home by phone
- When students are absent without explanation for 3 or more days in any given fortnight, an *Absence Letter* will be mailed home, reminding parents/carers of their obligations to ensure their child attends school on every school day and the requirement for providing satisfactory explanations for all absences. Parents are asked to provide the reason for the unexplained absences, sign and return the *Absence Letter*.
- Where there is a continuation of unexplained absences, or absences without satisfactory reasons, parents will be required to attend a meeting with the Principal to address issues contributing to these absences and to discuss implementation of appropriate strategies and support mechanisms.

- Where unsatisfactory attendance still continues, the Principal may commence Formal processes associated with *Enforcement of Compulsory Schooling and Compulsory Participation* as per Education Queensland policy up to and including referral by the Director General for prosecution under the Education (General Provisions) Act.
- All 'unexplained' absences, will be followed up by teachers prior to the end of the reporting period as no student report cards will be sent home with an unexplained absence on them.

## REPORTING AND MONITORING ABSENCES

- At Alpha P - 10 State School, reports of absence or truanting are taken seriously. Students, parents, members of community and school staff may report an absence in the following ways:
  - Phoning or emailing the school.
  - Making an appointment with the school principal at a time that is mutually convenient.
  - Discussing the issue or concern with the school guidance officer.

## SAME DAY STUDENT ABSENCE NOTIFICATION

The safety and wellbeing of students are the highest priorities for the department. Parents need to know if their child hasn't turned up for school, and schools need to know when and why a child is absent.

State schools are required to notify parents on the same day that any student is absent from school without explanation.

The Roll Marking in State Schools and Managing Student Absences and Enforcing Enrolment and Attendance at State Schools procedures provide further information on this requirement.

Schools can choose the approach to same day notification that best suits the local community. This may include text or email messages, phone calls or home visits. It is also recognised that for any notification process to be effective, parents will need to ensure the school has current contact details and schools will need to have effective and efficient processes in place to ensure this occurs.

The department has established a Standing Offer Arrangement (SOA) with suppliers of electronic attendance management systems - ensuring that schools get value for money and can be assured that the product meets all required data security and compliance requirements. Suppliers will be added to this SOA as contracts are finalised with the department.

A separate SOA is also available for those schools that are only seeking a text messaging service to use with OneSchool or with another electronic roll marking system that they already have in place.

## FLOWCHART OF PROCESSES



## RELATED LINKS

### Every Day Counts

<http://education.qld.gov.au/everydaycounts/index.html>

### Roll Marking in State Schools

<http://ppr.det.qld.gov.au/education/management/Pages/Roll-Marking-in-State-Schools.aspx>

### Enrolment in state Primary, Secondary and Special Schools

<http://ppr.det.qld.gov.au/education/management/Pages/Enrolment-in-State-Primary,-Secondary-and-Special-Schools.aspx>

Managing Student Absences and Enforcing Enrolment and Attendance at State Schools

<http://ppr.det.qld.gov.au/education/management/Pages/Managing-Student-Absences-and-Enforcing-Enrolment-and-Attendance-at-State-Schools.aspx>

Exemptions from Compulsory Schooling and Compulsory Participation

<http://ppr.det.qld.gov.au/education/management/Pages/Exemptions-from-Compulsory-Schooling-and-Compulsory-Participation.aspx>

Flexible Arrangements for School Students

<http://ppr.det.qld.gov.au/education/management/Pages/Flexible-Arrangements-for-School-Students.aspx>

Exemptions from Compulsory Schooling and Compulsory Participation

<http://ppr.det.qld.gov.au/education/management/Pages/Exemptions-from-Compulsory-Schooling-and-Compulsory-Participation.aspx>

**APPENDIX A**



**Alpha P - 10 State School  
ABSENCE NOTE  
(yellow)**

Student's Name: .....  
Year Level: .....  
Date/s of Absence: .....  
Reason for Absence: .....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

Signed: .....  
(Parent/Guardian)  
Date: .....



**Alpha P - 10 State School  
UNEXPLAINED  
ABSENCE NOTE  
(blue)**

Student's Name: .....  
Year Level: .....  
Date/s of Absence: .....  
.....  
Reason for Absence: .....  
.....  
.....  
.....

Signed: .....  
(Parent/Guardian)  
Date: .....



**Alpha P - 10 State School  
LATE NOTE  
(orange)**

Student's Name: .....  
Year Level: .....  
Dates of Absence: .....  
Reason for being late: .....  
.....  
.....  
.....

Signed: .....



(Parent/Guardian)

Date: .....

## APPENDIX B

# What chance has your child got of being successful?

1 or 2 days a week doesn't seem much but ...

He/She is only missing just...	This equals...	Which each year is...	and over 13 years of schooling that's...
1 day per fortnight	20 days per year	4 weeks per year	Nearly <b><u>1.5 years</u></b>
1 day per week	40 days per year	8 weeks per year	Over <b><u>2.5 years</u></b>
2 days per week	80 days per year	16 weeks per year	Over <b><u>5 years</u></b>
3 days per week	120 days per year	24 weeks per year	Nearly <b><u>8 years</u></b>

**EVERY DAY COUNTS!!**

## APPENDIX C



DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION, TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT

# Regular school attendance

## Information for parents and carers

Did you know? Research shows that in Queensland, higher student attendance at school is associated, on average, with higher student achievement.

### Why is regular attendance at school important?

Regular school attendance will mean that your child has a better chance in life. Your child will achieve better when they go to school all day, every school day.

- they learn better
- they make friends
- they are happier
- they have a brighter future.

### Why must I send my child to school?

Under Queensland law, you must make sure your child of school age is enrolled and attends school all day, every school day unless they have an acceptable reason. Illness, doing work experience or competing in a school sporting event are acceptable reasons for being absent from school.

Principals decide if the reason given for your child's absence is acceptable.

Avoid keeping your child away from school for:

- birthdays, shopping, visiting family and friends, if they sleep in, looking after other children, minor check ups or care such as hair cuts.

Routine medical or other health appointments should be made either before or after school or during the school holidays.

### What should I do if our family is going on a holiday in school time?

You are encouraged not to schedule holidays during school time. If your family holiday is during school time, let the school know in advance and talk about what arrangements

can be made for your child. Depending on the circumstances the school may be able to provide tasks for your child to complete while they are absent or assist you to organise an exemption from schooling.

### Do I need to let the school know if my child has been away from school?

Yes, you must let the school know the reason why your child has been absent from school within two school days of their return. If possible, advise the school beforehand.

### Are you having problems getting your child to school for some of these reasons?

- won't get out of bed in the morning
- won't go to bed at night
- can't find their uniform, books, school bag ...
- slow to eat breakfast
- haven't done their homework
- watching TV
- have a test or presentation to do, have an assignment to hand in
- it's their birthday.

### If so, a set routine can help

- have a set time to go to bed
- have a set time to get out of bed
- have uniform and school bag ready the night before
- have a set time for starting and finishing breakfast
- set a time for daily homework activities
- speak about school positively
- be firm, send your child to school every school day including their birthday and the last day of term!

### What should I do if my child won't go to school?

You should contact the school as soon as possible for advice and support.

Every day counts – Is your child at school today?

[www.education.qld.gov.au/everydaycounts](http://www.education.qld.gov.au/everydaycounts)



