



# ATTENDANCE POLICY

## WOOROLIN STATE SCHOOL

(ENDORSED OCTOBER 2016)

### *Rationale*

At Wooroolin State School we have a firm belief that *Every Day Counts*. We are committed to providing a safe and supportive learning environment for all students and seek to address individual educational, social and emotional needs so that every student is able to reach his/her full potential.

### *Beliefs about the Importance of Attending School*

At Wooroolin State School we are committed to ensuring that the program delivery of equitable education aligns with our belief that *Every Day Counts*. We believe that the safety and wellbeing of students are the highest priorities for Wooroolin State School.

Our attendance policy aims to uphold the notion that a day of school missed is a missed opportunity for learning and personal growth. Research identifies very clear links between attendance, and success and achievement at school.

#### *We believe ...*

- ✓ that all children should be enrolled at school and attend school all day, every school day
- ✓ that early detection and assessment of the causes of school non-attendance and the provision of organisational structures, which are responsive to the needs of students, are vital. Wooroolin State School monitors, communicates and implements strategies to improve regular school attendance.
- ✓ truancy can place a student in unsafe situations and impact on their personal safety, future employability and life choices.
- ✓ every member of the school community is expected to meet the requirements of attendance, and work consistently and with integrity to the best of their ability to achieve full attendance.
- ✓ it is important that students, staff and parents/carers have a shared understanding of the importance of attending school.

## Strategies

At Wooroolin State School we promote 100% attendance by:

- Providing rich, engaging learning experiences for every child
- Supporting every child to make Wooroolin PROUD
- Working in partnership with parents and carers to ensure regular attendance
- Collaborating with experts to achieve the best attendance outcomes for every student
- Rewarding students for excellent attendance

## Responsibilities

### *Parent/Carer Responsibilities*

- Ensure that their child attends school on every school day for the programme in which they are enrolled
- Provide a satisfactory explanation for all absences, that is, any time during which a student is not attending or participating in their educational programme

#### *Satisfactory Explanations for Absence*

Illness; specialist appointments; natural disasters; significant family issues; representing school in sports; school excursions; significant cultural event; suspensions

#### *Unsatisfactory Explanations for Absence*

Recreation, eg fishing, camping; visiting friends or relatives; birthdays; shopping; tiredness from school or non-school event; bullying; believed it to be a 'student free day'; student 'does not like' the teacher/subject/event

- Contact the school *prior* to any planned absence. Where this is not possible, parents must provide the reason for any absences prior to 9.00am on the day of absence. This may take the form of a medical certificate or a satisfactory explanation for the absence in verbal, written or text form

- Immediately, or as soon as practical, respond to texts or phone calls from the school enquiring about a student absence **but no later than the end of the day**
- Contact the Principal or nominated staff member if the student absence is to be for an extended period of time (eg significant family reasons or illness)
- Contact the Principal or nominated staff member 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 programme.
- Provide a written note (signed and dated), a verbal explanation or text to the school if their child is required to leave school early
- Provide a written note (signed and dated), a verbal explanation or text to the school if their child arrives late to school
- Advise the school of any change of address or phone numbers to ensure school records are accurate. *Current 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.
- Report to the classroom and administration if arriving to school after 9.00 am and provide an explanation for their lateness
- Ensure missed school work is completed

### ***School Responsibilities***

For students in Out of Home Care and/or At Risk students (eg students with health issues, students with complex needs, students walking to school from the Wondai bus) the school will take extra precautions around communication with parents/carers and will SMS and/or phone a parent immediately on non-attendance.

- Regularly inform students, staff and parents/carers about the Wooroolin State School Attendance Policy and make this publicly available through the school's website, newsletters and enrolment package
- Monitor student attendance daily through marking the roll at the beginning of each day and in the afternoon in all classes

- Make reasonable attempts to contact both parents and determines if there is a reasonable excuse for not ensuring their child is attending school, using the Director-General's Guideline for Authorised Officers no How to Determine Whether Parents have a Reasonable Excuse for the Purposes of ss.176 and 239 of the Education (General Provisions) Act 2006-01/2015
- Notify parents/carers of any unexplained absences, requesting a satisfactory explanation for their child's absence
- Notify careregivers immediately when a student in out-of-home care is identified as missing from school
- Notify the Principal or nominated officer when concerned that the explanation for student absence is unsatisfactory
- Discuss individual attendance with students and offer support and help to parents and students when school attendance has become a concern
- Record details of meetings and conversations (eg phone calls, home visits, contact with local police, referral to Guidance Officer, or other support worker) in One School
- Consider whether an exemption from schooling, flexible arrangement or alteration to a student's educational program is appropriate and required
- Provide students with school work when they are absent for legitimate extended periods of time
- If the child is still not attending regularly after two weeks (10 school days) of the first attempt to contact parents, an authorised officer at the school will follow the processes for enforcing parental obligation that a child of compulsory school age attends on every school day, for the educational program in which the child is enrolled. These processes are set out in the most current version of **Managing Student Absences and Enforcing Enrolment and Attendance at State Schools** Policy from the Department of Education and Training

## Absenteeism Processes

PLEASE NOTE: If notification is not provided, the absence will be recorded as unexplained and this will be recorded and displayed on the semester reports.

When a student not in out-of-home care is absent without explanation for 3 days or the school identifies unexplained or unsatisfactory absences or patterns of absences without reasonable excuses or where a student's attendance is reasonably considered unsatisfactory by the principal, Wooroolin State School will take the following actions:

- Authorised officer at the school confirms that the child is obliged to attend and that no circumstances exist where the parent's obligation does not apply.
- Authorised officer at the school contacts both parents and determines if there is a reasonable excuse for not ensuring their child is attending school.
- School offers support to family to ensure child's attendance improves.
- Authorised officer at the school considers whether an exemption from schooling, flexible arrangement or alteration to a student's educational program is appropriate and required.
- If the child is still not attending regularly after three weeks (15 school days) of the first attempt to contact parents, an authorised officer at the school sends by registered post, a **Notice (Form 4 – Failure to attend (s.178(2))** to both parents outlining parents' legal obligation and inviting both parents to attend a meeting to discuss the situation.
- Authorised officer at the school keeps a copy of the Notice (Form 4) and records date, time and by whom letter was posted.
- If after sending the Notice (Form 4):
  - a meeting occurred with the parents, but there is no change in circumstances within one week (5 school days) of this meeting; or
  - a meeting did not occur with the parents, and there is no change in circumstances within one week (5 school days) of sending the Notice;

an authorised officer at the school sends by registered post a **Warning Notice (Form 5 – Failure to attend (s178(4))** advising parents of their legal obligations and offering a meeting to discuss support available to address failure to attend.

## *Reporting Absences*

At Wooroolin State School we request parents/carers/guardians inform the school of ANY length of student absences by

- Calling the school and notifying admin of the absence and the valid reason for the absence
- Sending a text to the school mobile advising of the absence and the valid reason for the absence
- Provide notification in writing to the class teacher or admin and outline the valid reason
- E-mail the class teacher or [admin@wooroolinss.eq.edu.au](mailto:admin@wooroolinss.eq.edu.au) with notification clearly outlining the valid reason

## *Exemptions from Compulsory Schooling*

Every parent of a child of compulsory school age or a young person in the compulsory participation phase has a legal obligation to ensure their child is enrolled and attending school or participating in an eligible option.

Parents can apply for an exemption from this obligation when their child cannot attend or it would be unreasonable in all the circumstances for their child to attend school or participate in an eligible option for **a period of more than 10 consecutive school days.**

Situations where an application for an exemption may be made include:

- Illness
- Family reasons
- Cultural or religious reasons

If your child is exempted from compulsory schooling, you are excused from your obligation in relation to compulsory schooling or compulsory participation.

The school principal is not responsible for providing an educational program to your child, however they may provide advice on other educational options available.

You are encouraged to discuss with the school whether an application for exemption is a suitable option. The school can provide you with an **application form for an exemption.** It is important that supporting documentation and evidence are attached to the application.

When a decision about the exemption has been made, you will be informed in writing whether or not the exemption has been granted and if any conditions have been imposed. If you are not satisfied with the decision made, you can make a submission for the decision to be reviewed.

## Some related resources

### ***Every Day Counts***

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

### ***Addressing Student Absenteeism***

[http://education.qld.gov.au/studentsservices/behaviour/docs/guidelines-chronic\\_absenteeism.doc](http://education.qld.gov.au/studentsservices/behaviour/docs/guidelines-chronic_absenteeism.doc)

### ***Attendance routines from Prep***

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eE5P7jAL73M&list=PLgJv5epyrnQDLNMTmhLA6z-cssQylcsvN&index=1>

### ***Departmental Policies***

#### ***SMS-PR-017: Enforcement of Compulsory Schooling and Compulsory Participation Phase***

<http://education.qld.gov.au/strategic/eppr/students/smspr017/>

#### ***SMS-PR-029: Managing Student Absences***

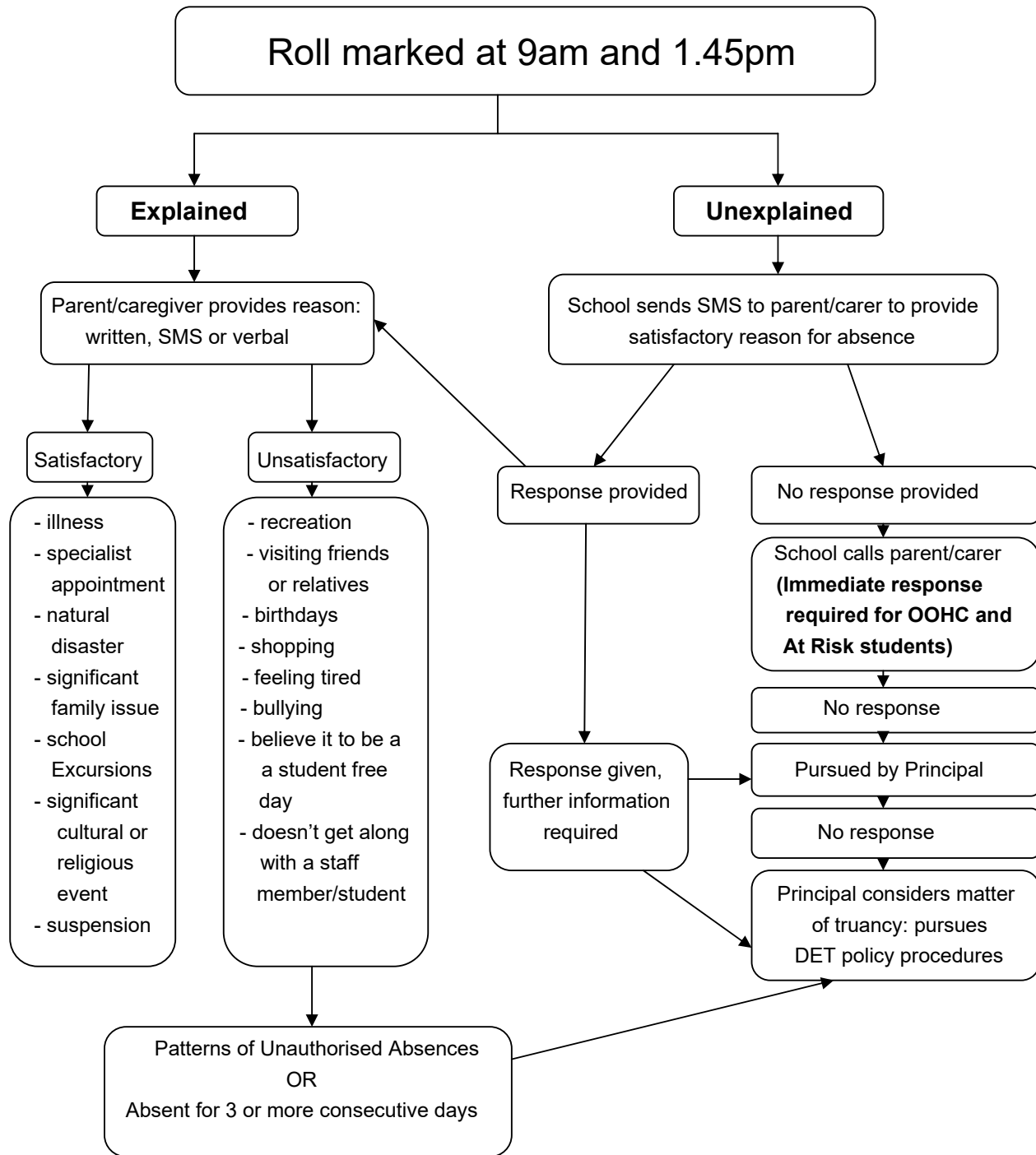
<http://education.qld.gov.au/strategic/eppr/students/smspr029/>

#### ***SMS-PR-036: Roll Marking in State Schools***

<http://education.qld.gov.au/strategic/eppr/students/smspr036/>



# **Tracking Student Absence Flowchart**



\*\* 'At risk students include those in Out-of-Home Care (OOHC) and other deemed 'at risk' (eg students walking to and from town bus to school, students with health issues, students with complex family issues)