

# Attendance Policy

St George State School



## ***Rationale***

State schools in Queensland are committed to ensuring that every day, in every lesson, every student is learning and achieving within a safe, supportive and disciplined learning environment.

St George State School expects that every student will attend school every day of the school year, unless prevented by reasonable circumstances from doing so.

The St George State School attendance policy aims to maximise participation in learning programs by all students.

Our school attendance management practices are crucial to minimising absences.

We:

- identify absences quickly
- follow-up promptly, and
- send clear messages to students and parents that attendance is vital.

## ***School community beliefs about the importance of attending school***

It is important that students, staff and parents have a shared understanding of the importance of attending school. St George 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 truanting 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.

## ***Responsibilities***

**School responsibilities include:**


- Promoting high expectations of student attendance.
- Sending clear messages to students and parents that attendance is vital.
- Communicating consistently to students and the school community through the website, newsletters and in the school's enrolment package.
- Identifying absences quickly.
- Following up on absences promptly.
- Having consistent and effective follow-up processes for unexplained student absences.
- Ensuring timely follow-up as a main preventative strategy in reducing absenteeism.
- Analysing school attendance data to identify absenteeism trends and individual students with high levels of absenteeism.
- Investigating absentee rates and their relationship to factors such as the day of the week, the class/ year level and particular gender/cultural groups.
- Developing a safe and supportive school environment that promotes positive relationships and includes the implementation of programs which develop social and emotional skills, peer tutoring and mentoring and anti-bullying strategies.
- Establishing positive home-school relationships to assist parents to support their child's attendance at school.

- Collaborating with other agencies and implementing appropriate strategies/support mechanisms, including Queensland Police and local non-government organisations, to address the trends or support individual students and their families to encourage attendance.

#### **Teachers' responsibilities include:**

- Marking rolls each day at 8:50am, 11:05am and 1:45pm.
- Ensuring "late notes" are presented by students arriving after the class rolls are marked.
- Monitoring student absences.
- Discussing absences with parents where appropriate as the first step.
- Advising the Principal of factors impacting on a student's attendance.

#### **Principal's responsibilities include:**

- Informing parents of their [legal obligations](#) about enrolment and attendance.
- Implementing strategies to manage student enrolment, absences, chronic absenteeism, school refusal and truancy using the [Guidelines to address chronic absenteeism, school refusal and truancy](#)  and the [Every Day Counts materials](#).
- Monitoring student absences and identifying when a student is absent, or where there is a pattern of persistent unexplained absences, or where a student's attendance rate is reasonably considered unsatisfactory.
- Taking reasonable steps to follow-up unexplained absences as soon as possible, or ideally within three days of the absence.
- Continuing to work with regions and other local resources (when attendance issues are identified) to engage with the student and their family with the aim of returning the student to school.
- Following appropriate processes for enforcing parental obligation in regard to:
  - [enrolment](#)
  - [attendance](#)
  - [Compulsory participation](#).

#### **Students' responsibilities include:**

- Coming to school each day, ready for work to the best of their ability.
- If coming to school late, signing in at the office and taking a "late note" to class.
- Remaining at school the entire day and only departing prior to the end of the school day through the office with a parent/carer who signs them out, and with approval by school administration.
- Ensuring their parents provide them with a note or phone call explaining absences.
- Actively and promptly following up with their teachers after all absences to ensure they have all the required work to continue successfully in their classes.

#### **Parents' responsibilities include:**

- Ensuring their child of compulsory school age is enrolled at a state or non-state school, and attends their educational program every school day.
- Ensuring their child is participating full-time in an eligible option.
- Ensuring their child does not miss any school unless for illness or extenuating circumstances.
- Providing a reason for their child's absence as soon as possible before/during/after the absence.
- Avoiding keeping their child away from school for birthdays, shopping, visiting family or friends, if they sleep in, minor check ups or care such as hair cuts.

## **Strategies**

At St George State School we promote 100% attendance by:

### **1. Applying our school attendance policy**

The attendance policy promotes high expectations of student attendance. This policy, including clear expectations about attendance, is communicated consistently to students and the school community through the school's website, newsletters and in the school's enrolment package.

### **2. Recording and following up student absences**

A consistent and effective follow-up process for unexplained student absences is applied (see Responses to Absences section).

### **3. Monitoring student non-attendance and patterns of non-attendance**

The school's attendance data is analysed to identify absenteeism trends and individual students with high levels of absenteeism. The school investigates absentee rates and their relationship to factors such as the day of the week.

### **4. Developing a positive school culture**

A safe and supportive school environment that promotes positive relationships and includes the implementation of programs which develop social and emotional skills, peer tutoring and mentoring, and anti-bullying strategies, has been developed.

We develop positive home-school relationships to assist parents to support their child's attendance at school.

### **5. Collaborating with other agencies**

We liaise with other agencies such as Queensland Police and local non-government organisations, to address the trends or support individual students and their families to encourage attendance.

## **Responses to absences**

At St George State School, we are committed to achieving the following targets in improving attendance:

- 100% attendance of all students.
- Reduction to zero in non-legitimate reasons for their absences.

When a student is absent without explanation for one or more days or a pattern of absences has been identified, St George State School will take the following actions:

- Office staff or the Community Liaison Officer will make personal contact with parents, verify the reason for the absence and this is recorded in OneSchool.
- If parents are unable to be contacted, a letter will be sent requesting an explanation.
- Office staff and Principal will monitor for ongoing student absences.

## **Frequent absences**

**If there is a pattern of absences and staff have contacted the parents and there has been no improvement, the following steps may be taken:**

- The Principal directs the office staff to send by registered post, a Notice: Form 4 – Failure to attend to both parents outlining their legal obligation and inviting both parents to attend a meeting to discuss the situation.
- Office staff keep a copy of the Notice (Form 4) and records, date, time and by whom the letter was posted. Noted in OneSchool and a copy with registered mail sticker kept on the student's file.
- If the parents did not attend a meeting or absences have not improved within 5 days of sending the notice, the Principal will direct the office staff to send by registered post, Warning Notice (Form 5).
- A copy of the Warning Notice (Form 5) and records, date, time and by whom the letter was posted on the register will be kept on file. Contact is noted on One School and a copy with the registered mail sticker kept in the student's file.
- If there is no change in attendance within 5 days after the Warning Notice (Form 5) was sent, the Principal will:
  - Request Performance, Monitoring and Reporting Branch to conduct a search (approval for search to be given by Regional Director or Assistant Regional Director) for information regarding enrolment and attendance to ensure the child is not enrolled at another State School (including School of Distance Education); and
  - check with Home Education Unit whether the child is registered for home education; and
  - advise Regional Office they wish to seek the Director-General's consent to prosecute.

## ***Reporting and monitoring attendance***

At St George State School, reports of absence or truanting are taken seriously. Students, parents, members of the community and school staff may report an absence in the following ways:

- Sending a letter or email to the school.
- Telephoning and speaking to class teacher, office staff, Community Liaison Officer or Principal.

## **Some related resources**

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

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

### ***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/>