

# Mareeba State High School

*"Building a Better Future Together"*



## Attendance Policy



## Attendance Policy

### Rationale

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

At Mareeba State High School we are committed to achieving the target of 95% in student attendance. We expect that every student attends school every day, arriving punctually and ready to engage in lessons. Maximising participation in learning ensures every child can learn and succeed.

### The importance of attending school

Students, staff and parents/carers work together to ensure students attend school.

Mareeba State High School:

- promotes the key messages of Every Day Counts
- believes all students should be enrolled at school and attend school every day
- monitors student attendance and communicates with parents/carers
- believes school attendance is the responsibility of everyone in the community
- develops engaging classrooms to encourage students to want to come to school

The Department of Education and Training is responsible for recording and monitoring attendance and taking appropriate action to rectify problems of non-attendance. Mareeba State High School believes truanting can place a student in unsafe situations and impact on their future employability and life choices.

### Strategies

At Mareeba State High School we are committed to achieving our target of 95% attendance by:

- Employing a Student Attendance Office(SAO) to monitor and assist with monitoring student attendance
- Promoting a positive and supportive school environment through Positive Behaviour for Learning(PB4L)
- Individual Case management of serious cases of student absenteeism.
- Work collaboratively with community to promote the message that every day counts and support families so their children attend school everyday
- Provide weekly attendance data to students, staff, parents and the broader community
- Recognise improved attendance:
  - 100% morning teas
  - Awards on Parades
  - Certificates (individual and care class)
- Implement a consistent approach to attendance across Mareeba State High School and Mareeba State School
- Review school attendance policy annually
- Ensuring consistent follow up of absences with parents/caregivers
- Implement and embed the School Attendance System
- Induct and train staff in the School Attendance System
- Engage staff members in student attendance team



## Attendance Policy

### Responsibilities

#### School Responsibility

- The Principal ensures that students, staff and parents/carers are informed about the *School Attendance Policy and Procedures* (eg: *late arrival, early departure and truanting*) through the school's website, newsletters, parent meetings, staff professional development, student assemblies and enrolment package.
- Teachers accurately keep rolls on One School to record each student's attendance at school. Rolls are marked in the first 15 minutes of each lesson.
- Student Attendance Officer (SAO) notifies parents/carers of any unexplained absence via an automated text messaging system/ SMS text message at 9.30am daily, and accurately records parent/carer reasons for absences on One School.
- Teachers and school leaders record, monitor and review student attendance and record parent contacts on One School and use this data to monitor student attendance.
- Teachers and school leaders provide quality, engaging learning and social opportunities that encourage students to attend school daily.
- School staff provide an inclusive, welcoming and supportive environment to encourage parents/carers to engage in their child's education
- School staff work closely with community agencies including Mulungu Health Service and Mareeba Police.

#### Parents/Carers Responsibilities:

- Ensure your child understands EVERYDAY COUNTS and attends school every day
- Contact the school whenever your child is absent, late, leaving early, or prior to any planned absences (eg: extended family holiday).
- Respond immediately to any SMS text message for your child's Unexplained Absence
- Provide a medical certificate or a satisfactory explanation to the office for any absences over 3 days.
- Contact school office and complete an "Exemption Form" if a student will be absent for more than 10 days (e.g. Family funeral, extended holiday)
- Principal to approve and sign the 'Exemption Form'
- Contact class teacher to provide school work for student who is absent- teachers require 2 day's notice to prepare the work. Parent/carer to collect school work from the office.
- Report to the office if you need to collect your child to leave school early.
- Contact the Deputy Principal Student Services or the Head of Department Junior School or Senior School for support your child is refusing to attend school.
- Ensure that school records of home address and phone numbers are current, as this is essential in an emergency.
- Make informed decisions about appropriate absences from school, remembering that every absence requires the student to organise catch-up work. Parents/Guardians decision to match the school's aim for all students to attend 95% or greater (miss no more than one day per month across the year).

#### Student Responsibilities:

- Show that everyday counts: attend school all day everyday
- Report to the office if arriving to school late to sign in
- Make sure notes from your parents go to your Care Teacher (re absence details) or Student Services
- Ask your teachers for help if you have problems attending everyday
- Be prepared for learning and actively engage in lessons
- actively and promptly follow up with their teachers after all absences to ensure they have all the required work to continue successfully in their classes.

#### Responses to unexplained absences

The school SAO will:

- Send automatic InfoWay system/ SMS text alert at 9.30am requesting parent to provide a reason for student absence.
- Generate unexplained absence letter posted home to parents. Parents return letter with reason to office.
- Provide attendance reports to HOD JS/SS, 3 day, 10 day and long term absences

The Principal may also commence formal processes to address chronic absenteeism - (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.)

#### Reporting and monitoring attendance

At Mareeba State High School reports of absence or truanting are taken seriously. Parents, members of community and school staff may report an absence in the following ways:

- Return an SMS text message when prompted to by receiving a school SMS text

- Ring Student Absence Line 40862766 to report a student absence or email [attendance@mareebashs.eq.edu.au](mailto:attendance@mareebashs.eq.edu.au)
- Send a signed/dated note sent with the student, given to the Care Teacher or return to Student Services.
- By telephone or in person to the office on 40862777.
- Monitoring school data to identify patterns and trends across students, families and year levels in order to implement targeted strategies.

#### **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/epr/students/smspr017/>

SMS-PR-029: Managing Student Absences <http://education.qld.gov.au/strategic/epr/students/smspr029/>

SMS-PR-036: Roll Marking in State Schools <http://education.qld.gov.au/strategic/epr/students/smspr036/>

##### ***Mareeba State High Policies***

Mareeba State High School Responsible Behaviour Plan

Mareeba State High School –School-wide Positive Behaviour System.

#### **Appendixes**

1. Unexplained letter to Parents
2. Regular attendance information for Parents and Carers

25<sup>th</sup> November, 2019

Name  
Address  
MAREEBA QLD 4880

Dear Parent/Guardian,

RE: ATTENDANCE SUPPORT

I am writing about *Students Name* attendance. Attached is our record of your child's absence from school for this term to date. We use this report to identify students whose attendance is not regular. At present, *student name* has (missed number of days absent) school days. If this trend continues, your child will have missed valuable educational opportunities. For example, 'missing one day each week means that you miss out on about 2 weeks of lessons each term'. It is in your child's best interest to attend school full time on every school day.

As a guide, activities such as shopping, a day off for their birthday, visiting family and friends and tiredness are not acceptable reasons for student absences. You are welcome to talk to the Head of Junior/Senior Schooling or Deputy Principal if you are unsure when it is acceptable to keep your child at home. You can also visit the Every Day Counts website for further information at [www.education.qld.gov.au/everydaycounts](http://www.education.qld.gov.au/everydaycounts)

If you feel that your child is having problems with school or needs some additional support, the school is more than happy to work with parents to ensure that all students are learning at school every day. If your child is away ill, please contact the school office and we can provide learning resources while they are away from school. Appointments to see the Head of Junior/Senior Schooling or Deputy Principal can be made by phoning the school office on 4086 2777 between 8am and 3.30pm.

Head of Junior Schooling (7, 8 & 9)

Mr Brendon Alexander

Head of Senior Schooling (10, 11 & 12)

Ms Jenny Walker

Deputy Principal (Student Services)

Mrs Lesa Pershouse

We look forward to seeing *student name* at school more often and working with you to ensure the best possible educational outcomes for your child.

Yours sincerely,

Scott Whybird  
Principal



# 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)

