Pentland State School - ATTENDANCE POLICY

Rationale

All schools in Queensland are committed to providing safe and supportive learning environments for all students which support their educational needs.

Pentland State School expects that all students will attend the educational program every school day.

Pentland State School attendance policy aims to ensure all students are given the best opportunity to learn by outlining the responsibilities of the school, parents and students in managing attendance issues.

School community beliefs about the importance of attending school

It is important that students, staff and parents/carers have a shared understanding of the importance of attending school.

Pentland 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
Pentland State School Attendance Policy
We Strive to Improve

Responsibilities

School responsibilities:

• Monitor and identify student absences as outlined in: Roll Marking in State Schools
• Follow up absences quickly and address absence issues with parents and carers
• Follow Education QLD policy and procedures for enforcing enrolment and attendance in Managing Student Absences and Enforcing Enrolment and Attendance at State Schools

Student responsibilities:

• Attend school each day unless there is an acceptable reason for an absence
• Make every day count in their learning

Parent responsibilities:

• Ensure that their child is enrolled at school and regularly attends the educational program provided at Caboolture State School
• Ensure that their child arrives on time each day
• Contact the school prior to any planned absence or within 2 days of returning via the following methods:
  • Phone:
  • Email:
  • In Person: verbally or via a hand written letter by the parent or carer. This may take the form of a medical certificate if the child has been absent for multiple days with illness.

Strategies

At Pentland State School we promote 100% attendance through a five step approach:-

- Developing a positive school culture
- Communicating high expectations of attendance
- Recording and following up student absences
- Monitoring student non attendance
- Providing intervention and support

Implementation of the school’s attendance policy
Pentland State School Attendance Policy
We Strive to Improve

Responses to absences

When a student is absent without explanation or a pattern of absences has been identified, Pentland State School will take the following actions:

• The parent or carer may be contacted by phone in the case of one day absences to determine if there is a reasonable excuse for the absence

• The parent or carer will be contacted in writing to determine if there is a reasonable excuse for the absence/s Education (General Provisions) Act 2006 (Qld.).

• If the school receives no response and the absence/s remain unexplained, the parent or carer will be contacted in writing, requesting them to attend an interview with the principal

• Records of contact with parents and carers regarding unexplained absences will be recorded in OneSchool

• If, after 3 weeks, the student is still not attending school regularly, the school will follow the processes for managing student absences as outlined in the Education (General Provisions) Act 2006. This includes the reporting of persistent and/or unexplained absences to Education Queensland, The Queensland Police Service and the Department of Child safety

Some related resources

Every Day Counts

Departmental Policies and Procedures

Managing Student Absences and Enforcing Enrolment and Attendance in State Schools

Roll Marking in State Schools
Pentland State School Attendance Policy

We Strive to Improve

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

Please note: Some aspects of this process (such as Form 4 and Form 5) can be completed in OneSchool under the “Enforcement of Attendance” tab within a student’s individual record.

1. School identifies unexplained or unsatisfactory absences or patterns of absences for example:
   - when a student is absent for three or more consecutive school days
   - where there is a persistent pattern of unexplained absences or absences without reasonable excuses
   - where a student’s attendance is reasonably considered unsatisfactory by the principal.

2. Authorised officer at the school confirms that child is obliged to attend and that no circumstances exist where the parent’s obligation does not apply.

3. Authorised officer at the school contacts both parents and determines if there is a reasonable excuse for not ensuring their child is attending school, using the Director-General’s Guidelines for authorised officers on how to determine whether parents have a reasonable excuse for the purposes of ss.176 and 239 of the Education (General Provisions) Act 2006.

4. School offers support to family to ensure child’s attendance improves. All efforts, including records of meetings and conversations, must be documented in OneSchool (e.g. phone calls, home visits, contact with local police, referral to Youth Support Coordinator or other support worker).

5. 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.

6. 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.

7. Authorised officer at the school keeps a copy of the Notice (Form 4) and records date, time and by whom letter was posted.

8. 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.

9. Authorised officer at the school keeps a copy of the Warning Notice (Form 5) and records date, time and by whom letter was posted.

10. If there is no change in attendance a week (5 school days) after the Warning Notice (Form 5) was sent, Authorised Officer:
Pentland State School Attendance Policy

We Strive to Improve

- requests 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
- checks with Home Education Unit whether the child is registered or provisionally registered for home education; and
- advises Regional Office they wish to seek the Director-General’s consent to prosecute.

11. Recommendation for consent to prosecute should only be made:
   - if the compulsory schooling requirements applies
   - after reasonable attempts have been made to contact and assist both parents to ensure the child achieves regular attendance
   - there is no reasonable excuse for the child not attending school.

12. To gain consent from the Director-General to prosecute, an officer from the region, in consultation with the authorised officer from the school:
   - completes Template 6 – Failure to attend – General Briefing Note (GBN);
   - scans completed Chief Executive’s Certificate template and its attachment (Template 10 - Instrument of Authorisation) as one document, and saves this as Attachment 1 to the GBN in TRIM; and
   - if applicable, scans completed and signed Principal’s Certificate template and its attachment (student’s attendance record) as one document, and saves this as either Attachment 7 or 8 to the GBN in TRIM.

13. Region progresses the GBN (Template 6) through the Regional Director to Legal and Administrative Law Branch (LALB) for consideration.

14. LALB returns brief to Region and Region progresses brief (with any necessary amendments) to the Director-General.

15. Director-General considers brief and makes a decision regarding consent to prosecute.

16. Director-General returns GBN to the relevant Regional Director.

17. If Director-General’s consent to prosecute has been granted, Region provides GBN, copy of all forms and any relevant correspondence regarding the child’s attendance to the Officer-in-Charge of their local Queensland Police Service (QPS) Child Protection Investigation Unit. QPS will use this information to consider whether or not to commence the prosecution in accordance with QPS policy.

18. Region enters the Director-General’s decision in OneSchool and notifies the school.

19. Region keeps a central record in TRIM of all cases where the Director-General has consented to prosecute and the matter has been referred to the QPS.

20. Region liaises with local QPS to determine if any further assistance is required by the QPS (e.g. contact details for witnesses, staff attendance at Court etc). Region consults with LALB if necessary about any further assistance required by the QPS.

21. If QPS indicate that they will not prosecute the matter, Region liaises immediately with Executive Director, Legal and Administrative Law Branch.

22. Region must maintain contact with QPS to obtain the outcome of the prosecution. Region enters decision in OneSchool and TRIM central record, and notifies the school of the decision.
RESOURCES

Student attendance profile

This student profile can assist schools to clarify the current attendance situation for an individual student. The profile can be developed when staff members have reason to believe a student’s non-attendance or lack of punctuality is likely to be ongoing and a cause for concern. Information can be extracted from OneSchool and used to discuss the situation with the student and parents. A plan can be developed recording how the student, parents and school staff agree to work together to resolve the situation.

**Student information**

Student name:

Year level:

**Frequency of absence, lateness and early leaving**

- Date, absence reason code, notes

**Patterns of non-attendance**

- When did the absence start?

- How long has the absence been occurring?

- Has it been on particular days or when particular subjects are being taught?

- Is the student absent alone or in the company of others?

- Have parents explained absences?

**Contact with student**

- Are there any unresolved disagreements at school?

- Does the student feel he/she is being given a fair hearing?

- Do outside interests compete with school as a priority? Any part-time job issues?

- Is the student isolated from peers?

- Is the student a victim of bullying or harassment on the way to or from school or while at school?
Pentland State School Attendance Policy
We Strive to Improve

- Is there a particular staff member who the student identifies with or has a good relationship with?

- What are the reasons provided for the student’s absences?

**Contact with parents**
- Telephone calls/SMS – details and response from parents and outcome
- Letters home – details and response from parents and outcome
- Home visits – details and response from parents and outcome

**Family information**
- Sibling attendance patterns – any similarities?
- Does the student act as a carer at home?
- Are there any other family circumstances or pressures that may be affecting the student’s attendance?

**Learning support**
- Does the student require any learning support?
- Would the student benefit from an alternative program? Why and what program?
- Has the student been referred to Guidance Officer, or other support worker?
- Are there any other agencies involved in assisting the student?

**Student progress**
- Does the student experience difficulty with particular subjects?
- How is the student progressing overall?
- Have there been changes in the student’s work or attitude that coincide with the absenteeism?
- What are the student’s own expectations of his/her ability?

Adapted from Government of South Australia, Department of Education and Children’s Services. *Attendance improvement package.*
Pentland State School Attendance Policy

We Strive to Improve