



Mackay Central State School

ATTENDANCE policy

Rationale

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.

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

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

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

★ **A 93.5% average attendance rate for students in 2015 and beyond.**

The importance of attending school

At Mackay Central State School we believe that students need to attend school regularly in order to participate fully and gain maximum benefit from schooling. Regular attendance enables children to access a full education and assists them to reach their full potential. School staff set an example for students by encouraging and emphasising attendance and punctuality.

A child between the ages of six and sixteen years is of compulsory school age, irrespective of distance from the school or whether the student has a disability. All students are required to be enrolled at a registered government or non-government school and must attend on every day instruction is provided, unless the minister has granted an exemption from school attendance.

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.

It is important that students, staff and parents/carers have a shared understanding of the importance of attending school. Mackay Central State School is committed to promoting the key messages of the Queensland State-wide initiative *Every Day Counts* which promotes four key messages:

- ⇒ All children be enrolled at school and attend on every school day
- ⇒ Schools monitor, communicate and implement strategies to improve regular school attendance
- ⇒ Truancy can place a student in unsafe situations and impact on their future employability and life choices

⇒ Attendance at school is the responsibility of everyone in the community

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 within 2 days 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 9:00am and provide a note from parents/carers explaining their lateness.
- 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 Mackay Central State School *Attendance 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.
- Monitor student attendance daily through marking the roll at the beginning of each day.
- Notify parents/carers of any unexplained absence, requesting a satisfactory explanation for their child's absence – within 3 days of unexplained absence
- Discuss individual attendance with students and offer support and help to parents and students when school attendance has become a problem.
- Principal and staff will refer to a Student Attendance Officer on an ED171 (Report of Unsatisfactory Attendance) form 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.

Strategies

At Mackay Central State School, we are committed to achieving our attendance target and continually improving and promoting attendance and achievement by:

- Ensuring consistent monitoring and follow up of absences with parents/caregivers
- Working with students and families to reduce absenteeism.
- Recognising and rewarding students who are on target and maintain attendance of >90%
- Ensuring work that is missed due to absence is completed during play breaks and in some cases for homework
- Any student with an attendance rate of <85% and are falling behind academically or have incomplete work may not be able to participate fully in extracurricular activities and will not be eligible for consideration in school captaincy.

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" form to give to the student, who will take it home to be signed and be returned the following day
- Each week unexplained absence letters will be generated and attached to newsletters, 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 *Unexplained Absence Letter*.
- If any unexplained absence letters are not returned within 3 days, or if a regular pattern of non-attendance is observed the Principal will contact home by phone or post a letter where contact is not made.
- 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.

NB: In the event of a natural disaster or localised flooding, where buses have notified the school they won't be running, students who generally catch the bus will be marked absent under natural disaster.

Students who do not regularly catch the bus will be marked unexplained until notification is made by parents or carers.

Reporting and monitoring attendance

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

- Telephone / email to the school office (the.principal@Mackcentss.eq.edu.au)
- Signed/dated note sent with the student or in diary
- In person to the office or class teacher

Exception to compulsory schooling

If your child or children cannot attend or it would be unreasonable in all circumstances to attend school for more than 10 consecutive days, an exemption from compulsory schooling or the compulsory participation phase is available. The exemption excuses parents from their legal obligation to ensure that their child of compulsory school age is enrolled at or attends a school, or in the compulsory participation phase, is participating full-time in an eligible option.

Some related resources

Every Day Counts

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

Departmental Policies and Procedures

[***Managing Student Absences and Enforcing Enrolment and Attendance at State Schools***](#)

[***Exemptions from Compulsory Schooling and Compulsory Participation***](#)

[***Roll Marking in State Schools***](#)

Appendixes

Appendix A: Example of unexplained absence letter

Appendix B: What chance does your child have of being successful?

Appendix D: Parent and Carers Fact Sheet

Appendix A



Mackay Central State School

P.O Box 5335, Mackay Mail Centre, Qld. 4740
Phone: 07 4969 3111 Fax: 07 49578082
www.mackcentss.eq.edu.au

10th August 2015

Miss Citizen

STREET
MACKAY QLD 4740 AUSTRALIA

Dear

It has come to our attention that your children, , have had an alarming number of absences from school since enrolling. Since being enrolled 10 days ago, _____ have had 6 out of the 10 days absent with 3 of those being unexplained. This will be seriously impacting on the educational outcomes for both children.

I have enclosed an explanation of the impact of irregular attendance on students.

If you are having any difficulty in ensuring _____ regular attendance at school, please contact the school and we will do our best to assist you.

I look forward to having _____ at school regularly.

Yours Sincerely

Len Fehlhaber
Principal

What chance has your child got of being successful?

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

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

EVERY DAY COUNTS!!



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

Mackay Central State School Attendance Monitoring Flow Chart

