BYFIELD STATE SCHOOL

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Implemented 2013

'Every Day Counts'
Rationale

At Byfield State School we are committed to providing a safe and supportive learning environment for all students which address their educational needs. We are determined to ensure that every child at our school has the best opportunity to learn. The only way for this to occur is for a child to attend school every day.

Non-attendance due to unexplained activities or unacceptable reasons can have serious consequences on a student’s learning and can result in them falling further behind their peers.

School commences at 8:55am. It is important that students are at school before this and ready to start lessons at this time. A warning bell goes at 8:50am. The roll is marked at 8:55am. School finishes at 3:00pm.

The Byfield State School attendance policy aims to give all our students the framework for them to have every success in their learning through their attendance. Research shows that missing even one day places a student at a disadvantage in comparison to their peers.

Byfield State School expects all students to attend school every day and for parents to ensure that their child attends school every day.

School Target – 95% attendance

Beliefs About Attendance

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

- Provide a safe, inclusive and stimulating environment to ensure each student feels safe, has fun and achieves.
- Mark roll each morning and afternoon.
- Monitor and identify absences as per SMS-PR-036: Roll Marking in State Schools.
- Ensure all unexplained absences are followed up promptly. Class teachers are to send home ‘Unexplained Note’ immediately upon a student’s return, if there was no explanation via phone call, note or personally beforehand. Appendix B
- Follow-up two day un-notified absences on the third day via phone contact.
- Monitor reasons given by parents to explain absences.
- Support parents in addressing a student’s absenteeism issues that may arise.
- Notarise any student lateness (after 9:00am) and early departures (before 3:00pm) below roll. This data will assist in reviewing student rate of improvement in learning outcomes and also gives data to parents for amount of lost time for learning.
- Follow Education Qld policy and procedures for enforcing enrolment and attendance in SMS-PR-043: Managing Student Absences and Enforcing Enrolment and Attendance at State Schools
- Follow Education Qld policy and procedures for EXEMPTION FORM COMPULSORY EDUCATION. Refer to Appendix A.
- Ensure relief teachers adhere to correct roll marking procedures.

Student responsibilities:

- Attend school every day unless there is an acceptable reason
- Arrive on time
- Remind parents to phone or send a note to school following an absence
- Make every day count in their learning

Parent responsibilities:

- Ensure that student attends school every day and arrives on time.
- Ensure that student attends at least 95% of school days throughout the year.
- Contact the school immediately a child is absent for any reason. If the absence is for more than two days to provide written explanation such as note or medical certificate.
- Endeavour to plan extra family holidays, medical appointments outside of school time to minimise loss of learning time.
- Ensure student arrives to school in a clean and neat presentation
- Follow-up on any agreed strategy to improve attendance
Strategies

At Byfield State School we promote 100% attendance by:

- Implementing school Attendance Policy
- Promoting the message that Every Day Counts through commencing teaching and learning from first to the last day of school each term
- Promoting a safe, inclusive and positive learning environment for each student to enjoy and prosper in their learning
- Celebrate students who attend 100% each term and improvements in learning
- Include parents in their child’s school through ‘Meet and Greet’ each morning and afternoon, open door policy, informing parents on their child’s progress both informally and formally, encouraging parents to attend school parade and other school events.
- Focussed delivery of high quality explicit teaching with regular feedback
- Teachers being consistent with marking roll and follow-up strategies to any absence
- Promoting high expectations for school attendance through parade, classroom discussions, P&C Meetings, school newsletter and Parent Handbook.

Responses to absences

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

- No unexplained absences
- Students attend for at least 95% of a school year
- 100% of absences are followed-up for an explanation

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

- Class teacher to call parents in third day about the absent child and to determine if the reason is the excuse is reasonable. Appendix B & C

At Byfield State School the consequences or impacts of unexplained or unauthorised absences might include the following:

- Record of contact with parents regarding unexplained or long periods of absence recorded in One School.
- Involvement in extra-curricular activities reviewed by Principal.
- Student may not be eligible for Student Leader position in Year 6
Reporting and monitoring attendance

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

- Phoning, emailing or notifying the Principal
- Discussing continued absence with class teacher and principal. Education Queensland Services available to the school for support include Guidance Officer and Behaviour Support Teacher.
- If after three weeks, the student is still not attending regularly, the school will follow the processes for managing student absences as outlined in the Education (General Provisions) Act 2006 – SMS-PR-043. This includes the reporting of persistent and/or unexplained absences to Education Queensland, the Queensland Police and the Department of Child Safety.
- Displaying ‘Late Arrivals Chart’ in classroom and in newsletters. Appendix D

Some related resources:

Every Day Counts

Departmental Policies and Procedures

Managing Student Absences and Enforcing Enrolment and Attendance at State Schools

Roll Marking in State Schools
APPENDIX A

Exemption from Compulsory Participation

What is an exemption and why do I need it?
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 a child is exempted from compulsory schooling, parents are excused from their obligation in relation to compulsory schooling or compulsory participation.

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

Who decides to grant or not grant an exemption?

For state school students:
Decisions about exemptions for up to one school year are made by the principal of the school the student attends.

Decisions about exemptions for more than one school year are made by the relevant Regional Director of the Department of Education, Training and Employment, responsible for the supervision of the school your child attends.

Applying for an exemption
Parents are encouraged to discuss with the school whether an application for exemption is a suitable option. The school can provide parents 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, parents will be informed in writing whether or not the exemption has been granted and if any conditions have been imposed. If parents are not satisfied with the decision made, they can make a submission for the decision to be reviewed.

APPENDIX B

ROLL MARKING FLOWCHART

Roll marking
It is a legal requirement that students attend school all day, every school day. All schools are required to comply with departmental policies for the marking of rolls as outlined in the Roll Marking in state schools procedure and managing student absences as outlined in the Managing Student Absences procedure. This ensures accurate representation of school and student attendance rates, and appropriate management of student absences.


Roll marking: new definitions of arriving late and leaving early
The threshold at which late arrivals and early departures count as half-day absences has increased from 30 minutes to two hours. This change is to align Queensland data collection with national practices. It is expected that all students continue to be enrolled at school and attend on every school day. For more details refer to the roll marking procedure.


A student is marked late if they are not in the classroom at 9:00am. It is notarised below roll with student name, date and time of arrival. The student is not marked absent. This data assists teachers when discussing attendance at school with parents.

Student is absent
On the third day of absence teachers are to ring parent

Student returns to school with note or parent has phoned to explain absence

Form returned with reason

Send home in envelope ‘Notification of Absence’ form that day of student return

Written note sent to school

Student returns to school – no reason

Form not returned. Phone parent and ask for written note

Form not returned.
Parent sent letter (refer next page) to complete. This advises school of absence explanation.

If days are consecutive – see AO2 officer who will generate a ‘Student Absence Letter from One School.

If still no explanation then follow process as per departmental policies – ‘Managing Student Absences’

Please note: Teachers are able to review all ‘Unexplained’ absences through One School.

One School→Student Management→Attendance/Absence→Student Official Absence report.
Dear

RE: Unexplained Absences

Your child ______________________ has been absent from school without explanation. Two Notification of Absence forms have been sent home to you in the past week. They have not been returned.

I remind you of the legal responsibility of parents with regard to their child attending school and absences -

‘Each parent of a child who is of compulsory school age must ensure that the child is enrolled and attends school on every school day for the educational program in which the child is enrolled unless the parent has a reasonable excuse.’

According to the records held by the school your child ______________________ has been absent without explanation for the dates below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DATE</th>
<th>PART/ALL DAY</th>
<th>ABSENCE REASON</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Parent Signature

Please advise the school of the reason for the identified absences in the table above, sign and return this letter within three days.

Yours sincerely

Jo-Anne Shephard
Principal
Byfield State School
## Late Arrivals at School

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>He / She is only missing just....</th>
<th>That equals....</th>
<th>Which is.....</th>
<th>And over 13 yrs of schooling that’s...</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10 minutes per day</td>
<td>50 mins per week</td>
<td>Nearly 1.5 weeks per year</td>
<td>Nearly ½ year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 mins per day</td>
<td>1 hour 40 mins per week</td>
<td>Over 2.5 weeks per year</td>
<td>Nearly 1 year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Half hour per day</td>
<td>Half a day per week</td>
<td>4 weeks per year</td>
<td>Nearly 1½ years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 hour per day</td>
<td>1 day per week</td>
<td>8 weeks per year</td>
<td>Over 2½ years</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Research shows that poor school attendance is associated with:**

- lower academic achievement including literacy and numeracy
- reduced opportunities for students to learn and access educational resources, further limiting achievement
- early school leaving
- leaving school with fewer qualifications
- further absenteeism in higher year levels
- increased alcohol, tobacco, and substance use in adolescents.