



## **Attendance Policy 2019**

### **Rationale**

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

In Queensland, research shows that higher student attendance is associated with higher student achievement. Attending school every day helps children to build social and emotional skills such as communication, teamwork and resilience.

Morayfield State High School's attendance policy aims to ensure students are actively engaged in school and attend every day to ensure optimal individual outcomes and student participation. We have high expectations of student attendance.

Regular attendance at school is central to both schooling success and later employment. Students must attend school each day. Legal requirements of attendance pertain to all students. It is a legal requirement to explain all absences. Morayfield State High School operates under the following guidelines:

- Punctuality and regular attendance are essential.
- All students from Year 7 through to Year 12 are required to attend ALL TIMETABLED CLASSES in every one of their subjects. Class rolls are marked every period.
- Attendance at school each day is a legal requirement under the Education (General Provisions) Act 2006 current as at 1 July 2014.
- Attendance Rolls are legal documents which are subject to checking by the Department of Education and Training.
- Full attendance gives students the optimal chance for success.

### **Aim**

To provide students with every opportunity to achieve to the best of their ability and to create clear and consistent processes pertaining to attendance.

### **Beliefs**

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

### **Rights and Responsibilities**

#### **The School:**

- Regularly inform students, staff and parents/carers about the Morayfield State High School *Attendance Policy and Procedures* (including the Policy and Procedures for late arrival, early departure, truancy and missed assessment due to absence) and make this publically available through the school's website, newsletters and enrolment package and enrolment process.
- Monitors attendance daily through the marking of the official roll at the beginning of each day and via teacher rolls each lesson.
- Notifies parents/guardians of unexplained absence, requesting a satisfactory explanation for their child's absence.
- Provides students with school work when they are absent for legitimate extended periods of time.
- Offers support when school attendance has become a problem.
- Notifies the relevant authorities if non-attendance persists.

### **Students:**

- Attend all classes on time, with the necessary equipment.
- Never leave the school during school hours without permission from parents/carers or the school and without getting an appropriate *Leave Pass* from T Block.
- Ensure all missed school work is completed.
- Report to T Block if arriving to school late, or leaving early, and provide a note from parents/carers explaining the reason for late arrival / early departure.
- Discuss attendance with the Year Level Co-Ordinator, Head of Department for Student Behaviour or Deputy Principal if there are issues or concerns.
- Ensure absence records are accurate and all absences have been explained by parents/carers.

### **Parents/Carers:**

School absenteeism and truancy can impact significantly on students' learning and wellbeing. Under the law, you must make sure your child is enrolled and attends school on all school days unless there is a reasonable excuse.

If your child does not want to go to school, or is missing school without you knowing, contact your school immediately for assistance and support.

You need to:

- Ensure that your child attends school every day for the program in which they are enrolled.
- Complete an exemption form if your student will be absent for more than 10 consecutive days.
- Engage regularly with school staff (every 3 days) for extended periods of absence and notify the school of extenuating circumstances.
- Ensure absence records are accurate and all absences have been explained.
- Advise the school of any change of address or phone numbers to ensure school records are accurate. Current data is essential in an emergency.
- Contact the school prior to any planned absence. Where this is not possible provide the reason for any absence as soon as possible. This should take the form of a medical certificate if a student is missing assessment for medical reasons.
- Contact the Deputy Principal if your child's absence is to be for an extended period of time (eg for family reasons or illness) and request school work. Completion of an exemption form may be necessary (Appendix 1).
- Contact the Deputy Principal if your child is refusing to attend school. Initiate or attend meetings to seek support and discuss your child's attendance or participation in their educational program. Engaging with outside service providers may be necessary.

You need to provide a satisfactory explanation to the school (notes must be signed and dated):

- If your child arrives late or needs to depart early from school.
- If your child is going to be, or has been, absent from school as a result of illness or injury.

### ***Procedures for attendance and lateness***

Student attendance is recorded in each lesson and is first taken during each student's Form class. Students need to allow enough travel time to ensure they are at Form class by the first bell.

Teachers will take the form roll as soon as the first bell goes but will not submit their roll until the end of form time. This allows all students who arrive in form time to be marked present. If students are not present when the roll is initially taken, a late detention should be issued by the form teacher.

Class rolls should be taken within the first ten minutes of the lesson starting. Any student arriving late to lesson should be marked as late on the roll – this may mean having to reopen the electronic roll and amending it. If students do arrive late to class, without permission, the class teacher should issue a detention.

Teachers will only mark a student as being in attendance if the student is physically present in the classroom. Students must not be late for their first class, or other classes, without a valid excuse. Students repeatedly late to form will be referred to their Year Level Co-Ordinator and Head of Department for Student Management or Wellbeing.

All student absences must be explained by parents. This can be done by contacting the school's absence line on 5428 5522, QParents App, absence email to [2154\\_studentabsence@eq.edu.au](mailto:2154_studentabsence@eq.edu.au), texting our dedicated attendance mobile on 0426 305 995, or by writing a note and having it delivered to the school by the student. All absences require explanation by a parent or guardian.

Students who arrive at school during form time should proceed straight to their form class to receive their mark. If arriving after the Form has finished, they must report to the Student Support Centre to sign in. If a student is late, a detention will be issued unless their lateness is confirmed with a valid reason provided by their parents / carers with a

phone call, text message, letter or other form of communication. Students who continually arrive late at school will be required, with their parents, to attend an interview with a Head of Department or Deputy Principal. Detentions, community service, suspension, exclusion and cancellation of enrolment may be considered for students who fail to rectify their attendance issue.

Student attendance in each lesson is monitored. Students truanting class or with other attendance anomalies will be initially addressed by the school Attendance Officer. If there are persistent issues, they will be managed by the appropriate Year Level Co-Ordinator, Behaviour Management Coordinator or Deputy Principal. Students truanting lessons will be required to make up lost lesson time before or after school. Parents will be notified if students are truanting school or lessons.

### **SMS notification**

Morayfield State High School has an SMS notification system to advise parents / caregivers if their child is absent or has arrived late to school. This is designed to act as a reminder in case notifying the school has been overlooked. Parents / caregivers are requested to reply to the message with a reason for the absence / lateness. This same number can be used to notify the school of any existing or future known absences. The number is 0426 305 995.

### **Excursions and/or Representing the School:**

Students must be able to demonstrate a pattern of regular attendance before they will be permitted to attend an excursion (if it is not related to assessment) or represent the school. Students in positions of added responsibility (e.g. School Captains) may have their positions rescinded should their attendance rate become unacceptable. Extenuating circumstances will be considered by a Deputy Principal.

## **Strategies**

### **At Morayfield State High School we promote 100% attendance by:**

- Ensuring attendance is a priority for every single member of staff – ‘Everyday Counts’
- A specific focus for attendance lies with the Form Teacher / Connect Teacher and Year Level Co-ordinator under the guidance of the Head of Department.
- Absence is monitored by the attendance team and led by school leadership.
- Regular rewards and acknowledgement for individual students, Form classes or Year Levels relating to excellent attendance are embedded in our School Wide Positive Behaviour Support program.
- Using a text messaging system to inform parents of student’s absenteeism without explanation.
- Dealing with truancy in a timely manner with follow up consequences by the Behaviour Management Team.
- Reinforcing punctuality.
- Teachers will take the form roll as soon as the first bell goes but will not submit their roll until the end of form time. This allows all students who arrive in form time to be marked present. If students are not present when the roll is initially taken, a late detention should be issued by the form teacher.
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- Class rolls should be taken within the first ten minutes of the lesson starting. Any student arriving late to lesson should be marked as late on the roll – this may mean having to reopen the electronic roll and amending it. If students do arrive late to class, without permission, the class teacher should issue a detention.
- Students who are continually late will have consequences initially implemented by the teacher of the class they are late to and then further consequences may be implemented by a Head of Department, Year Level Coordinator and/or Deputy Principal for repeated offences.
- Reminding students to explain all absences. If students are absent from school at any time, parents/carers should advise the school and provide a satisfactory explanation for the absence. They can do this by using the QParents app, writing a signed and dated note, emailing or phoning the school.

### **Leaving School During the Day**

Students are not permitted to leave school during school hours without providing a dated and signed letter of permission from parents/carer OR a parental/carer phone call to the office. Therefore:

- An appropriate leave pass will be issued to the student by of the Student Support Centre staff.
- Students who leave school for medical appointments when assessment are due are required to obtain a medical certificate and present it to the attendance office so a copy can be placed on file.

Students must collect their leave pass before school or during break times and not during learning times.

### **Truancy**

- Student attendance will be monitored daily through an electronic marking system – *ID Attend*. This is regularly monitored by the Attendance Officer and teachers.
- Students found to be truanting will be disciplined under the school’s Responsible Behaviour Plan for Students.

## Response to Absences

### Compulsory Schooling (up to age 16 or the completion of Year 10)

When a student is absent without explanation, Morayfield State High School will take the following actions:

- Attendance Officer will contact parent by text message and if no response, by phone or email.
- This will continue until a satisfactory response is achieved.
- Ongoing absences will be monitored and reviewed by the Year Level Coordinators who will either telephone home or request a meeting in school with parents / carers.
- School will offer support to family to ensure child's attendance improves. If this is a welfare or wellbeing issue, then the Year Level Coordinators will initiate the start of a referral and support from the wellbeing team at the school. Attendance will still be required during the referral process.
- If there is no improvement then a formal process will be initiated at the school as follows:
- If the child is still not attending regularly after two weeks (10 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))** outlining parents' legal obligation and inviting parents to attend a meeting to discuss the situation.

If, after sending the Notice (Form 4):

- A meeting occurred with the parents, but there is no change in circumstances within two weeks (10 school days) of this meeting, or
- A meeting did not occur with the parents, and there is no change in circumstances within two weeks (10 school days) of sending the Notice (Form 4), then 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.

At Morayfield State High School the consequences of not complying with the Warning Notice (Form 5) might include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Detentions to complete work that has been missed.
- Meetings with student and parents/carers.
- Referral to MEARS – (Morayfield Educationally at Risk Students)
- Meetings with relevant support staff or outside agencies.
- Commencing processes associated with the enforcement of compulsory school and compulsory participation (i.e. **Recommendation to Prosecute (Form 6)**).
- Community service.
- Suspension.
- Exclusion.

If a parent / carer has a concern around an upcoming or planned absence of greater than 10 school days, special consideration must be requested from the school Principal.

Other planned or potential absences that may require an exemption or flexible arrangements are only to be authorised by the Deputy Principal and approved by the school Principal.

Any absence that may interfere, coincide or impact on any period of formal assessment will be managed and responded to through the Academic Integrity Plan.

### Post-compulsory Schooling (student has turned 16 or completed Year 10)

Students of post-compulsory school age whose attendance is unacceptable will be required to show cause as to why their enrolment should remain effective. If no improvement is seen, a Form 7 letter is sent home and a meeting will be arranged with the Deputy Principal to find a solution. Failure to attend or make improvements in attendance show that the student is refusing to engage in the programme of instruction and cancellation of enrolment may be enforced.

## Useful Resources

1. [Roll Marking in State Schools](#)
2. [Managing Student Absences and Enforcing Enrolment and Attendance at State Schools](#)
3. [Every Day Counts](#)

## ***Appendices***

1. Form 1: Application for exemption for a child/young person enrolled in a state school or a child/young person not enrolled at any Queensland school.
2. Table 1 – Absence codes for full or part day absence
3. Table 2 – Absence reason codes for reasonable excuse
4. Table 3 – Absence reason codes for unexplained or unreasonable excuses
5. Guidelines for determining whether excuses for student absences are considered reasonable excuses
6. Guidelines for recording attendance of students who are enrolled but not attending school and cannot be located, and students who have been granted an exemption from schooling

## Appendix 1

### Form 1

## **Application for exemption for a child/young person enrolled in a state school or a child/young person not enrolled at any Queensland school**

This form is to be used for a child/young person currently enrolled in a state school or for a child/young person not enrolled at any Queensland school.

#### **Exemption requested (please tick whichever is appropriate)**

- Exemption from *compulsory schooling* or *compulsory participation phase* for student enrolled in a state school
- Exemption from *compulsory schooling* or *compulsory participation phase* for students not enrolled in any Queensland school

#### ***FOR exemptions for a child/young person enrolled in a state school***

- Part A is to be **completed and signed by the parent**. All supporting material should be attached to the application for consideration.
- Part B is to be **completed and kept by the Principal** as a record of the decision making. Written notification of the decision regarding this application must be forwarded to the parent and/or young person.
- Part C is not required to be completed.

#### ***FOR a child/young person NOT enrolled in any Queensland school***

- Part A is to be **completed and signed by the parent**. All supporting material should be attached to the application for consideration. The completed application should be forwarded to the regional office for consideration.
- Part B is not required to be completed.
- Part C is to be **completed by the Decision Maker** to record their decision. Written notification of the decision regarding this application must be forwarded to the parent and/or the young person.

#### ***Privacy Notice***

The Department of Education, Training and Employment is collecting the information on Part A of this form to determine if a student is entitled to an exemption from compulsory schooling or an exemption from compulsory participation. This collection is authorised by s.186 and s.245 of the *Education (General Provisions) Act 2006*. Information from this form may also be disclosed to third parties as required or authorised by law.

**Application for exemption** *(Please type or print clearly)*

**Part A - To be completed by the parent and young person**

1. Name of student in full					
2. Date of birth					
4. Name of school	Morayfield State High School				
5. Year level	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>				
6. Name of parents/carers					
7. Address					
8. Home phone			9. Mobile phone		
10. Period for which exemption is sought (insert dates)	From	/	/	To	/ /
11. Reasons for seeking exemption (please provide full details and attach documentary evidence to support this application e.g. statement from medical practitioner)					
_____ Signature of parent			_____ Date		
_____ Signature of young person (if it is inappropriate for the parent to sign the consent)			_____ Date		

# Application for exemption

## Part B - To be completed by the principal

Application for {Child/young person's name} exemption from

- Compulsory schooling
- Compulsory participation

**Student's academic history:**

(Please detail academic progress and ability; attach recent report card if relevant)

**Support offered by school:**

(Please detail support offered through re-engagement activities, alterations to student's educational program considered, alternative education options, referrals to support programs, etc)

**Queensland Studies Authority (QSA) Account:**

Where school or region is required to open student account with QSA prior to exemption being granted

- QSA Account Number ..... has been opened
- QSA Account will be opened for this student in the year prior to entering compulsory participation phase

**Attachment/s – documentary evidence used to make the decision (please list):**

**Additional comments supporting the application (where applicable):**

Please outline why it is in the student's best interest to receive this exemption (further statements of support from **Guidance Officers** or other specialist personnel should be attached to this form on submission).

Reasons that conditions be imposed on the exemption or that the exemption be granted for a lesser period than requested.

**Principal's name**

**Address of school**

**Telephone number**

**Fax number**

Please tick whichever is appropriate:

- I grant an exemption for this student.
- I do not grant an exemption for this student.
- I grant the exemption with the following conditions:
  - 
  -
- I grant the exemption with the following changes to what has been requested:
  - 
  -

Principal \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_



## Application for exemption

### Part C – To be completed by decision-maker

Application for {Child/young person's name} exemption from

- Compulsory schooling
- Compulsory participation

**Attachment/s or documentary evidence used to make the decision (please list):**

•

**Reasons for decision:**

•

#### Granted as requested

I grant the exemption for this student as requested.

#### Exemption not granted

I do not grant the requested exemption for this student.

#### Granted with conditions

I grant the exemption for this student with the following conditions:

○

#### Granted with changed conditions

I grant the exemption for this student but for a lesser period than what has been requested:

○ **From** \_\_\_\_\_ **to** \_\_\_\_\_

My decision, material considered, findings of fact and reasons for my decision are set out in my decision notice.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_/\_\_\_/\_\_\_

## Appendix 2

**Table 1 – Absence codes for full or part day absence**

Type of Absence	Code	Explanatory notes
Entire day	A	Student was absent entire day.
Early (No Penalty)	E	Student left early, but within the final 2 hours of scheduled schooling. This will not count as an afternoon/half day absence.  If the student left earlier than 2 hours prior to the end of the scheduled school day, this will count as an afternoon/half day absence (see "P" code).
Late (No Penalty)	L	Student arrived late, but within 2 hours of scheduled schooling. This will not count as a morning/half day absence.  If the student arrived after the first 2 hours of the scheduled school day, this will count as a morning/half day absence (see "M" code).
Morning	M	Student was absent for the morning. This will count as a half day absence.
Afternoon	P	Student was absent during the afternoon. This will count as a half day absence.

### Appendix 3

**Table 2 – Absence reason codes for reasonable excuse**

Reason why student is not physically present at school	Code	Explanatory notes	Counted as an absence*
School activity	A	Student is participating in an authorised school activity for school purposes. May include participation in school choirs, youth parliament, or community service, or attendance at a hospital school. Refer to the Guidelines.	No
Attendance not required	B	Student was not required to attend school on this day as it is not included in his/her educational program.	No
Excursion	C	Student is participating in an excursion which occurs outside the school grounds and is conducted, organised and/or approved by the school. Excursions could include part-day, full-day or multi-day class visits to venues outside the school or school camps.	No
Off Campus activity	F	Student is participating in an authorised activity that is away from the school campus. These activities may include flexible arrangements, attendance at a TAFE or other training provider course, participation in a VET activity or participation in a school-based apprenticeship or traineeship. These activities will be regular and ongoing.	No
Holiday	H	The parent, or the student if they are living independently, has informed the school that the student/family is taking a holiday. Note that holidays during the school term should be discouraged. If the absence is more than 10 consecutive days, an exemption is required. Refer to <a href="#">Exemptions from Compulsory Schooling and Compulsory Participation</a> .	Yes
Illness	I	The parent, or the student if they are living independently, has informed the school that the student is sick. This includes all references to ill health or reasons related to the health of the student. If a medical certificate has been provided this should be noted in OneSchool and kept on file. If a child is unable to attend school for a period longer than 10 consecutive school days, an exemption is required. Refer to <a href="#">Exemptions from Compulsory Schooling and Compulsory Participation</a> .  A child may be absent from school if the child is, or is a member of a class of persons that is, subject to a direction or order given about an infections or contagious disease or condition.	Yes
Natural Disaster	N	Student is unable to attend school due to an extreme weather event or other natural disaster.	No
Sorry Business	D	Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students participating in sorry business. Refer to <a href="#">Guidelines</a> .	Yes
Other	O	The principal has determined that the excuse provided by the parent or student (where the student is an adult or where it would be inappropriate to ask the parent) is reasonable. Principals must use the <a href="#">Guidelines</a> to determine reasonable excuses and document these reasons. This code may be used for medical and dental appointments, religious observances, funerals, and legal matters.	Yes
Short suspension	P	Student is suspended for 1 to 10 days under s283 of the EGPA.	Yes
Long suspension	Q	Student is suspended for 11 to 20 days under s283 of the EGPA or for charge related reasons.	Yes
Suspension – recommended exclusion	R	Student is suspended with the recommendation for exclusion under s293 of EGPA.	Yes
Sport (Representative Sport)	S	Student is representing their school, district, region, state or nation at a sporting event recognised by the school.	No, if representing their school, district state or region. Yes, in all other circumstances.
Sport (Non-representative)	O	Student is participating in sporting activities that are not endorsed by the school and is not representing the school, district, region, state, or nation.	Yes
Work experience	W	Student is participating in an approved work experience program.	No
Exemptions	Z	Student has an exemption from schooling. Refer to <a href="#">Exemptions from Compulsory Schooling and Compulsory Participation</a> .	No

## Appendix 4

**Table 3 – Absence reason codes for unexplained or unreasonable excuses**

*\*For absences less than 2 hours (i.e. E or L code from Table 1), the absence will not be counted irrespective of reason given.*

<b>Reason why student is not physically present at school</b>	<b>Code</b>	<b>Explanatory notes</b>	<b>Counted as an absence*</b>
Unexplained	U	No reason has been given for the student absence	Yes
Unauthorised	J	The excuse given for a student absence is deemed as unreasonable. The reason (with any supporting evidence) as to why an explanation is considered to be unreasonable must be documented.	Yes

## Appendix 5

### **Guidelines for determining whether excuses for student absences are considered reasonable excuses**

Pursuant to s176(1) of the Education General Provisions Act (EGPA) 2006, 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. Pursuant to s239(1) of the Education General Provisions Act (EGPA) 2006 a parent of a young person in the [compulsory participation phase](#) must ensure the young person is participating full-time in an eligible option, unless the parent has a reasonable excuse.

*A student who is participating in one of the following activities must be recorded as not physically present at the school site but will not be recorded as absent for the purpose of report cards or school attendance data:*

**School activity (Absence Reason Code A)** – A student will not be considered absent when they are participating in an authorised activity for school purposes. Examples include students performing in school choirs, bands or dance groups, students participating in a youth parliament or council, or students participating in community service. Students attending a hospital school should also be marked with Code A. Upon discharge from hospital, the hospital school should advise the usual school of any variations in the student's attendance. Code A should be replaced with Code I (Illness) for days when the student has not participated in the education program at the hospital school due to illness.

**Excursion (Absence Reason Code C)** – A student will not be considered absent when they are participating in an excursion which occurs outside the school grounds and is conducted, organised and/or approved by the school. Excursions include part-day, full-day or multi-day class visits to venues outside the school, and school camps.

**Natural Disaster (Absence Reason Code N)** – A student will not be considered absent if they are unable to attend school due to an extreme weather event or other natural disaster. This code may be used whether or not the student is continuing with school work while absent from school, and may be used for full or part-day absences.

**Off Campus Activity (Absence Reason Code F)** – A student will not be considered absent if they are participating in an authorised activity that is away from the school campus. These activities may include flexible arrangements, attendance at a TAFE or other training provider course, or participation in a school-based apprenticeship or traineeship. These activities will be regular and ongoing in nature.

**Sport – Representative (Absence Reason Code S)** – A student will not be considered absent when they are representing the school, district, region, state or country at a sporting event approved by the school. For non-representative sport, see below.

**Work experience (Absence Reason Code W)** – A student will not be considered absent when they are participating in a work experience program approved and organised by the school. Work experience programs are available for students 14 years or older. Schools must ensure appropriate work experience agreements have been completed before students participate in work experience.

**Exemption (Absence Reason Code Z)** – The student has been formally exempted for this absence and is recorded in the school's exemption register.

**Attendance not required (Absence Reason Code B)** – The student was not required to attend school on this day as it is not included in his/her educational program. This may include part-time students or students whose educational program does not require their attendance on particular days.

*The following circumstances will be considered absences for which a reasonable excuse has been given:*

**Illness (Absence Reason Code I)** – It is reasonable that a child may be absent from school when they are genuinely too ill to attend. On any single day of absence due to illness, or as soon as possible within 2 days of the student's return to school, a parent should provide the school with an explanation for the absence, in line with the school's agreed processes for notifying of student absence. This may take the form of a written explanation note containing the student's name, date(s) of absence(s) and reason for absence(s), a verbal explanation through either a phone call or visit to the school, or a medical certificate.

If the absence is more than 10 consecutive school days, an exemption is required. Refer to [Exemptions from Compulsory Schooling and Compulsory Participation](#).

**Infectious or contagious disease (Absence Reason Code I)** – It is a reasonable excuse for a child to be absent from school if the child is, or is a member of a class of persons, that is subject to a [direction or order given about an infectious or contagious disease or condition](#).

**Medical or dental treatments or procedures (Absence Reason Code O)** – In some circumstances it may be reasonable for a student to be absent to attend a medical or dental appointment during school hours, however, parents should be encouraged to

make these appointments out of school hours if possible. These absences should be documented through the provision of a written or verbal explanation from a parent.

**Holiday (Absence Reason Code H)** – Holidays during terms should be actively discouraged. Parents should be encouraged to plan holidays during gazetted school holiday periods and student free days. If the absence is more than 10 consecutive school days, an exemption is required. Refer to [Exemptions from Compulsory Schooling and Compulsory Participation](#).

**Religious observance (Absence Reason Code O)** – In some circumstances it may be reasonable for a student to be absent to participate in a special religious observance. These absences should be documented through the provision of a written or verbal explanation from the parent.

**Sport – Non-representative (Absence Reason Code O)** – Principals should use their professional judgement to determine if it is reasonable for a student to be absent from school to participate in a sporting event where they are not representing their school, district, region, state or nation, taking into consideration the type of event and the organising sporting body.

**Suspension** – Suspension is a reasonable excuse for absence and the following applies:

- a student suspended for 10 days or less (**Absence Reason Code P**)
- a student suspended for 11 to 20 days **or for charge-related reasons (Absence Reason Code Q)**
- a student suspended with a recommendation for exclusion (**Absence Reason Code R**).

For all suspensions, the school's principal must take reasonable steps to ensure the student can continue their education.

**Law of the Commonwealth (Absence Reason Code O)** – It is a reasonable excuse for a child to be absent from school if a Law of the Commonwealth allows a child to carry on an activity other than attending school.

**Funeral (Absence Reason Code O)** – Attendance at a funeral may be considered as a reasonable excuse for absence. Parents should be encouraged to ensure their child misses as little school as possible. There may also be circumstances where a child is kept out of school due to grief for a close family member. In such circumstances, the school should work with families to encourage them to have the child attend school to maintain a sense of normalcy. These situations should be handled with respect and sensitivity and should be underpinned by the interests of the child.

**Sorry Business (Absence Reason Code D)** - Student is Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander and was required to be absent to participate in cultural activities related to a recent family bereavement. Parents should be encouraged to ensure their child misses as little school as possible. There may also be circumstances where a child is kept out of school due to grief for a close family member. In such circumstances, the school should work with families to encourage them to have the child attend school to maintain a sense of normalcy. These situations should be handled with respect and sensitivity and should be underpinned by the interests of the child.

**Legal (Absence Reason Code O)** – It is a reasonable excuse for a child to be absent from school where the child is required to attend court or fulfil other legal requirements.

***The following circumstances will be considered absences for which there is NOT a reasonable excuse given:***

**Unexplained absence (Absence Reason Code U)** – When no explanation for a student absence has been offered to the school by the parent, or the student if they are living independently.

**Leisure activities (Absence Reason Code J - Unauthorised)** – Undertaking a leisure activity such as shopping, visiting friends and relatives, or fishing, is not considered a reasonable excuse for an absence from school.

**Any other reason for absence (Absence Reason Code J - Unauthorised)** – The principal should use their professional judgement in determining whether other reasons given by the parent, or the student if they are living independently, are reasonable explanations for a student's absence. If the reason given is not a reasonable excuse, the principal should document the decision and record the absence with the Code J.

## Appendix 6

# **Guidelines for recording attendance of students who are enrolled but not attending school and cannot be located, and students who have been granted an exemption from schooling**

### **Purpose**

These guidelines will assist state schools in Queensland to record information about students who are currently enrolled in a state school but have stopped attending school for a period of 15 or more consecutive school days and cannot be located. The guidelines will also assist schools in recording information about students who have been granted exemptions from state schools.

### **Background**

- Schools treat a student's enrolment as having ended if one or more of the following circumstances arise:
- student has graduated
- student has no remaining allocation of semesters
- student has been excluded or their enrolment cancelled under the *Education (General Provisions Act) 2006*
- student has enrolled in another school
- student has died
- student has permanently moved interstate or overseas with no intention of returning
- there is reasonable evidence that the student, having voluntarily left the school, has no intention of attending the school again (e.g. school has been advised student has left the school to undertake an apprenticeship).

### **Inactive students**

However, situations arise where an enrolled student ceases to attend school and all attempts to contact the parent and student are unsuccessful. As these students do not meet the criteria for their enrolment to be cancelled, they remain on rolls indefinitely and their non-attendance is reflected in student attendance data.

### **Exempt students**

Students who have been granted an exemption from schooling do not meet the criteria for cancellation of enrolment as their absence from schooling is for a specific period of time (e.g. the length of the exemption) after which their enrolment will resume. An exemption simply removes the legal obligation of parents with regards to compulsory schooling for that period.

### **Process**

OneSchool provides for schools to categorise a student's enrolment status as either:

- A – Active (enrolled and attending school regularly)
- D – Deceased
- F – Future (an application for enrolment process has taken place and the student is expected to enrol at the school at a particular point in time – e.g. first day of school year)
- L – Left (school is satisfied student has left school and will not be returning)
- N – Non-Attendee (student had a Future status but did not enrol when expected)
- I – Inactive (enrolled but not attending school and unable to be contacted).

### **Inactive students**

In line with current Department of Education, Training and Employment policies regarding the monitoring of student absences, schools are required to follow-up unexplained absences as soon as possible but within three days of the absence. Parents are required to provide a reason for a child's absence within two days of their child's return to school.

Where a student has been absent from school for 15 or more consecutive school days and the school is unable to contact the parents to seek an explanation for the absence, the student's enrolment status may be changed from A – Active to I – Inactive. A decision to change a student's enrolment status to "I" should only occur after careful consideration and once processes outlined in *Managing Student Absences and Enforcing Enrolment and Attendance at State Schools* have been followed and the situation warrants it.

Students who have been allocated an "I" - Inactive enrolment status will be required to re-enrol at the school if they are eventually contacted and intend to return to school. The "I" code should not be backdated. Students marked with an enrolment status of "I" will appear on regional reports of students whose enrolments are inactive.

A school that has allocated a student an "I" status should continue to work with its regional office and local resources (such as Police, Child Safety Officers and other support organisations) to locate the student and their family, with the aim of the student returning to school.

If the student returns to school, a new enrolment form will be required before the student can be returned to an A – Active enrolment status. An enrolment form containing the student's details can be generated in OneSchool. While a student's status is "I", the student will not appear on school rolls and therefore will not be marked as absent.

If a school is pursuing the prosecution of the parents for failure to attend, the student's enrolment status should stay as A – Active. A component of the prosecution process is being able to contact the parents and inform them of their legal obligation to ensure their child attends school regularly and to provide them with a warning notice advising that the school is seeking to obtain consent from the Director-General to prosecute.

### **Exempt students**

Where a student has been granted an exemption from schooling, the details of the exemption should be entered into the school's OneSchool exemption register. The exemption register will identify the student as absent, with an absence reason "Z" for the duration of the exemption. The student's enrolment status will remain as active. Exemptions are not included in absence data.

Inactive and exempt students would not be included in February and August census counts.