

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 higher student attendance is associated with higher student achievement. Sunnybank State High School expects 100% attendance every day unless illness or a serious family emergency prevents this. The minimum benchmark for every student is 92% attendance.

92% attendance equates to:

- 4 days absent per term
- 8 days absent per semester
- 16 days absent per year

Sunnybank State High School's attendance policy aims to ensure that 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. **Sunnybank 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
- expects to work in partnership with parents to ensure regular attendance of students
- 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

Acceptable reasons for student absences are:

- illness;
- family trauma or bereavement;
- events of cultural significance;
- participation in school organised activities eg. work experience;
- representation in elite sporting or cultural activities eg. MET West sporting trials.

Examples of unacceptable reasons for absence are:

- truancy;
- shopping expeditions with or without parent or carer;
- helping at home or at parent/caregivers place of work;
- part-time or casual work (including travel to or from work);
- appointments which could be made out of school hours (eg. haircuts, driving lessons, dentist etc)
- family holidays and birthdays.

Responsibilities

School Responsibilities

- The Attendance Strategy is endorsed by Sunnybank State High School P & C Association.
- To monitor and identify student absences as outlined in [Roll Marking in State Schools](#);
- Follow Education QLD policy and procedures for enforcing enrolment and attendance in [Managing Student Absences and Enforcing Enrolment and Attendance at State Schools](#);
- Provide a safe and supportive learning environment for all students;
- To clearly communicate the importance of attendance at key school events eg, student assemblies, parent information sessions, enrolment interviews;
- To clearly communicate to staff the importance of student attendance to class and the importance for the explicit instruction of college procedures to students regarding processes to be followed by students around absences and attendance issues.;
- Implement strategies, processes and monitoring junctures to ensure regular review of student attendance is undertaken;
- Report to parents on a needs basis for students who are flagged as needing monitoring, support and intervention.

Student Responsibility

- Attend school every day (or planned school activity eg. SBT) unless there is an acceptable reason for an absence;
- Be punctual, with necessary equipment and make every day count in their learning;
- Never leave school grounds during school hours without permission from parent/carers or the school without getting an appropriate leave slip from Student Services;
- Report to Student Services if arriving to school late, or leaving early, and provide a note from parent/carers explaining the reasons for the late/arrival/early departure;
- Ensure all absence records are accurate and that all absences have been explained by parent/carers.

Parent/Carer Responsibility

- Each parent of a child of compulsory school age has the obligation to ensure their child is attending school every school day, for the educational program their child is enrolled;
- Set a high expectation of daily attendance;
- Explain all absences in a timely manner – only illness/emergency absences are appropriate.
- Engage regularly with school staff when your child has extended periods of absence, and notify the school of extenuating circumstances. A medical certificate will be required for extended periods of time due to illness/injury;
- A medical certificate will also be required when a student misses assessment due to illness/injury;
- Ensure their child has the resources they need for school each day;
- Makes every effort to ensure external requirements (eg. appointments) have a minimal impact of learning time.

Strategies

At Sunnybank State High School we promote 100% attendance by:

- Communicating clear and high expectations to the school community;
- Regularly reviewing data with staff;
- Providing individual pastoral care with a focus on student well-being and a safe and supportive school environment that promotes positive relationships;
- Celebration of attendance on a formal basis – each term. Certificates and rewards issued to students who attend 100%;
- Celebration of attendance through the issuing of acknowledgement and rewards for top attendance 100% (week 2 assembly), 95% - 100% and 100% - 92% (school target) each year level, each term (week 10 assembly);
- Students in the senior phase who attend 92% - 100% (school target) will receive offer to purchase a School Senior Jersey (year 11);
- Providing a comprehensive, vibrant and engaging curriculum and co-curricular program;
- Developing a safe and supportive environment. This includes support mechanisms such as the Guidance Officer, School Nurse, School Chaplain, Youth Support Coordinator, Year Coordinators, Attendance Officer and Student Service Team (The CREW – Care, Resilience, Engagement and Wellbeing) to assist students and families. This may also include working with other community resources to help engage students and their families.

Response to absences

The Queensland Government's education policy states that: *"parents of children of compulsory school age have a legal obligation to ensure that their children are enrolled in school and attend for every day of the educational program in which they are enrolled and parents of students in the post compulsory phase have a legal obligation to ensure that these students participate full-time in an eligible option"*.

For more information about legal requirements visit: [Queensland Enrolment in state primary, secondary and special schools](#)

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

- use ID Attend to monitor student attendance at school on a daily and lesson by lesson basis;
- send SMS messages (to provided parent details) for students who are absent from school on a daily basis;
- contact parents via letter to request information regarding the identification of 3 or more absences within a two week period;
- intervene with parents where a student is absent without sufficient explanation for 3 days or more, or where a pattern to absence is identified.
- intervene with parents/carers when it is identified that a student has been truant.
- Teachers will close the learning loop by ensuring that students who are absent are required to complete missing work;

- Students with significant absence issues will be case managed by SSHS staff (outlined below). This case management will include regular face to face interviews, support intervention and possible referral to community support services.
- After support and intervention has been undertaken and the student is still not attending school regularly, the students may follow the processes for managing student absences as outlines in the *Education (General Provisions) Act 2006* – [Managing student absences and enforcing enrolment and attendance at state schools](#). This includes the reporting of persistent and/or unexplained absences to Education Queensland, the Queensland Police Service and the Department of Child Safety.
- Students in the Post Compulsory Phase of Learning – eg year 11 and 12 students, may face possible sanctions of their enrolment including cancellation of enrolment at SSHS.

Attendance Level	Case Manager	School Response
92% - 100%	Attendance Officer	Target Range <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Celebration on assemblies • Eligible for rewards days • 100% attendance - positive OS entries • Positive rewards
85% - 92%	Year Level Coordinators CEC (indigenous students) SEP (year level case managers)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide support • Regular monitoring of attendance • Parental contact regarding absences
51% - 85%	WIP (Wellbeing Intervention Process) CEC (indigenous students) SEP (year level case manager & HOD Inclusion) Attendance Officer Year Level Deputy Principal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Case management of individual students assigned through WIP (Wellbeing Intervention Process) • The CREW referral • Intervention Strategies • 3+ day absenteeism letters • Formal attendance processes (Compulsory Participation Phase) • Cancellation of Enrolment processes (Compulsory Participation Phase) (DP ONLY)
0% - 50%	Year Level Deputy Principal Attendance Officer Principal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parent/carer interview with Principal/Year Level Deputy Principal • Formal attendance processes (Compulsory Participation Phase) • Cancellation of enrolment processes (Compulsory Participation Phase) (DP ONLY) • Agency Referral – QPS/DOCS • Transition Officer support

Monitoring and Intervention

Stakeholder	Responsibility and Role
Year Level Coordinator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sets expectations for 100% attendance • Member of Professional Learning Teams (PLT) • Investigates possible truancy – ID Attend data daily/weekly • Tracks student attendance – report fortnightly to PLT meetings • Celebrates positive attendance of students
Classroom Teacher	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sets expectations for 100% attendance • Provides vibrant and engaging classroom experiences for students • Actively builds positive relationships with students • Prepared and punctual to all classes • Accurate roll marking every lesson (see roll marking procedures) • Referral of truancy to the subject Head of Department via OS • Closes the loop for learning for absent students • No Surprises – makes contact with parents about absenteeism and the impact on learning
Roll Class Teacher	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sets expectations for 100% attendance • Marks roll class daily (see roll marking procedures) • Refers to ongoing Late to School/Late to roll class to Year Co via OS • Receives fortnightly attendance report and discusses attendance patterns with students
Youth Support Coordinator (YSC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sets expectations for 100% attendance • Member of the Student Services Team • Case management of identified students
Guidance Officer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sets expectations for 100% attendance • Member of the Student Services Team • Assists the Deputy Principal investigate reasons for absences • Case management of identified students
Community Educational Counsellor (CEC)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sets expectations for 100% attendance • Case managers identified students • Researches student backgrounds and identifies key issues • Sources appropriate support • Member of Student Services Team
Attendance Officer (AO)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sets expectations for 100% attendance • Provides attendance data to roll class teachers • Organises positive attendance rewards processes • Oversees all data requirements of the ID Attend program • Monitors attendance patterns across all year levels • Parent contact regarding absenteeism including fortnightly attendance letters for students that have been absent 3 or more days (without explanation) over a two week period • Manages student attendance data • Exemptions and formal departmental attendance processes
Executive Admin Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sets clear and well communicated expectations for 100% attendance to whole school community • Representation in the Student Services Team • Implements formal meetings with parents/carer regarding absenteeism • Endorser of exemption, flexible, alternate programs referrals and part-time engagement options for students • Member of PLT team case management of school refusals, chronic absenteeism and repeated truancy • Analysis of school attendance data relevant to year levels • Work with region and other local resources to engage with student and family with the aim of returning students to school • Formal enforcement of attendance processes (Principal)
THE CREW - Student Services Team	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sets expectations for 100% attendance • Conducts fortnightly case management review meetings • Monitors and supports identified at risk students in a case management approach • Implements risk management and intervention strategies appropriate to student situation • Implements/refer to support programs as required to address student attendance issues • Initiates attendance support plan for chronic absenteeism with Line Manager (DP year level) • Parental contact – referral to outside agencies

Attendance Junctures

Explaining absences

Students absences must be explained at the time of the absence AND every day of the absence. Each fortnight student/families will be sent a letter informing of student absences of more than 3 days over the fortnight period. If absences are not reasonably explained by the following fortnight, they are coded as UNEXPLAINED.

Occasional absences can be explained by:

- Phoning the School on 33238111
- Contacting the school via the Student Absence Email: absences@sunnybankshs.eq.edu.au
- Writing a note in your child's Student Dairy explaining the reason(s) for the absence
- Providing a note to the school explaining the reason(s) for the absence
- Text the student absence line 0427217544 explaining the reasons(s) for the absence
- Providing a copy of a medical certificate

Known or planned absences are unavoidable events that the student must attend which will take time away from school. In these cases, the parent must notify the school in writing ahead of the start of the absence. A plan to make sure there is continuity of curriculum is developed between the student and teachers. When the student returns, the work negotiated is presented to teachers who sign off on the work being completed. The absences are then recorded as explained.

Significant absence, a medical certificate needs to be provided. Application for an attendance exemption (form) can be undertaken if absences are for 10 or more consecutive days and are due to medical, family or other acceptable reasons. The Principal endorsement is required.

Chronic absence has potentially significant impact on regular learning programs. In these cases, an absence support plan should be developed.

Punctuality

Arriving at school in time to attend roll class (roll marking) is critical to being part of the school community. This is the time when a student's attendance is recorded and important messages are given. Being late to roll class means that the student may miss hearing about sporting, cultural, vocational and academic opportunities that are being made available. They also risk not understanding policy, procedure and requirements for the day.

Lateness To school (after roll class) requires students to 'sign in' and receive a late slip at the attendance window, administration. If the student does not have a reason outlined in a note or student diary, consequences for tardiness may be applied in line with the school's Student Code of Conduct.

Lateness To class and events organised for student impedes the ability of students to maximise their learning and interrupts the learning of others. Punctuality is the responsibility of the student. Being late to class is

inappropriate and may result in consequences being applied in line with the School's Student Code of Conduct. Students will be sent to Student Services if they arrive late to school and attend class (after Roll Class) without a 'late slip'.

Leaving school during school hours requires student to gain permission from the school. If a student is required to leave during school hours a note/student diary entry must be provided by a parent/carer and submitted to a Student Services for permission before roll class. If permission is granted, the student must officially sign out at student services before leaving school grounds. Leave passes will not be provided for lunch passes. Early departures from school must be avoided.

Sick Bay facilities are provided by the school at Student Services. Students who are ill should not attend school. Students who fall ill during the day must report to Student Services so that appropriate care can be provided to the student. When required, parent/carers will be contacted and the student will remain in the sick bay until they can be collected.

Truancy is managed within the processes of the School's Student Code of Conduct.

Identification of Attendance Pattern and Response

Patterns of absence are first detected by the Attendance Officer or Roll Class Teacher. This triggers the prompt follow up and subsequent support processes as listed below.

