Moonie 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.

Moonie State School expects all students to attend school everyday. Moonie State School’s attendance policy aims to improve student attendance by providing a set of clear strategies.

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

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

★ A 95% average attendance rate for students in 2013.

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. Moonie 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 truancing 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:

- Ensure all staff follow electronic roll marking procedures in the morning and afternoon using OneSchool.
• Ensure unexplained absences are followed up routinely. Classroom teachers to send home Unexplained absences note when there is no phone call, email or note from parents explaining reason for absence.

• Administration staff to record all telephone calls regarding absences and give to classroom teacher for recording on OneSchool.

• Where classroom teacher is absent ensure supply teaching staff are aware of roll marking procedures. Options:- (1) Administration Officer (T W Th) to follow up with paper copy roll and enter data; (2) Principal or delegate to follow up and electronically mark rolls on behalf of absent teacher; or (3) mark on the daily plan any absences and on return to school, the class teacher will complete the electronic roll.

• Principal to monitor non attendance and implement strategies to reduce occurrence. Oneschool absence letter generated and sent home to parents to explain absences.

• Provide students with school work when they are absent for legitimate extended periods of time.

• Notify the relevant authorities if non-attendance persists.

Student responsibilities:

• Attend school regularly unless there is a valid reason.

• Provide copies of notes to teachers or from teachers to parents to reduce number of unexplained absences.

• Remind parents to email, phone or return a note when absent from school.

• Ensure all missed school work is completed.

Parent responsibilities:

• Send child/ren to school everyday unless there is a valid reason.

• Contact the school prior to any planned absence.

• Provide an explanation of all absences to the school within 24 hours of absence. This can be done via email, note or by phone.

• Meet with school staff in cases of regular non attendance, or regular unexplained absences and follow up with strategies for improvement.

• 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.

• 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.

Strategies

At Moonie State School we promote 100% attendance by:

• Promoting the importance of attending school everyday through parades, school newsletter items and in classroom discussions.
• Creating safe and supportive classroom environments that encourage children to attend school every day.

• Providing rich and stimulating learning experiences in all classrooms that encourage students to learn. Encouraging participation in extra curricular offerings and individual child interest areas at the school.

• Celebrating the success of students who have 100% attendance each term in an award ceremony during our school parades. Students reaching attendance targets will receive an award. Award for the best attendance across the whole school year will be given at the Moonie State School end of year concert and awards night.

• Staff showing interest and concern for student welfare and following up with absences that have been unexplained.

• Expecting all parents to explain all absences. Moonie State School will provide a variety of options for parents to notify the school of absences (email, note, or phone). Moonie State School will provide a written template for parents to use to inform the school of any absences. Classroom teachers will follow up unexplained absences by sending home a reminder letter to parents where absences have been unexplained. Principal will regularly send home Unexplained Absence Letters for parents to explain child absences.

Responses to absences

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

• No Unexplained Absences.

• 100% follow up to ensure all children who are away have phoned, emailed or called the school. (Attendance note reminder, phone call home).

When a student is absent without explanation for 3 days or a pattern of absences has been identified, Moonie State School will take the following actions:

• Classroom teacher to call parent enquiring about the absent child and the reason for their absence.

For repeated unexplained absences, Principal to hold a parent teacher meeting outlining the concerns and strategies to improve child’s attendance. Principal to follow Managing Student Absences and Enforcing Enrolment and Attendance at State Schools DETE policy.

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

• Year 7 Leadership roles may be limited- to be determined by the school principal.

• Involvement in extra curricular activities may be limited- to be determined by the school principal.

Reporting and monitoring attendance

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

• Phoning or emailing the school – ABSENTEE LINE: 07 4665 0276

Every day counts – Is your child at school today?
www.education.qld.gov.au/everydaycounts

Queensland Government
• In person to the office or class teacher
• Signed/dated note sent with the student upon returning to school
• Making an appointment with the school principal at a time that is mutually convenient.
• Discussing the issue or concern with the school guidance officer.

Some related resources

Every Day Counts

Departmental Policies and Procedures:

Roll Marking in State Schools

Managing Student Absences and Enforcing Enrolment and Attendance at State Schools

Appendixes

Appendix A: Unexplained Absence form

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

Appendix C: Parent and Carers Fact Sheet
Unexplained Absence

Dear Parent/Caregiver,

Moonie State School is committed to improving student attendance. We are striving for no unexplained absences. Your child was recently absent. Please fill out the attached slip, send an email or call the school to explain the reason for your child’s absence. Thank you for supporting our attendance policy.

Amy Casey
Principal

Absence Note
“Every Day Counts”

Dear ________________,

My child ________________ was away on __/__/ 2013, __/__/ 2013, due to:

☐ sickness
☐ holiday
☐ family reasons
☐ other (please explain)____________

Parent Signature_________________

Please return this note to your child’s classroom teacher. Please note all student absences must be explained.
Alternatively please email your absence note to admin@moonies.eq.edu.au

Appendix A
1 or 2 days a week doesn’t seem much but ...

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

Appendix B
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, exams, work experience or competing in a school sporting event are acceptable reasons for being absent from school.

Principals can excise 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 checkups or care such as haircuts.

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 arrangements that 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.