Jimboomba 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.

Jimboomba State School expects all students to attend school on time, prepared and ready to learn 100% of the time. This attendance policy aims to identify the school’s beliefs, expectations, targets, and strategies to support student attendance.

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.

Jimboomba 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 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.

Responsibilities

School responsibilities:

- inform parents of their legal obligations about enrolment and attendance
• implement strategies to manage student enrolment, absences and chronic absenteeism, school refusal and truancy

• monitor student absences and identify when a student is absent for three or more consecutive days, or where there is a pattern of persistent unexplained absences, or where a student’s attendance rate is reasonable considered unsatisfactory

• take reasonable steps to follow-up unexplained absences as soon as possible, or ideally within three days of the absence

• continue to work with regions and other local resources to engage with the student and their family with the aim of returning the student to school

• follow appropriate processes for enforcing parental obligation in regards to:
  o enrolment
  o attendance
  o compulsory participation

Student responsibilities:

• attend school every day on time, prepared to learn and remain at school from 9am to 3pm

• report to the office for a late slip if arriving to school after the commencement of classes at 9:00am

• provide absenteeism notes from the parent/carer to the class teacher.

Parent responsibilities:

• legal obligation to ensure their child, who is of the compulsory school age, is enrolled and attends school every day of the educational program in which the child is enrolled, unless the parent has a reasonable excuse

• inform the school of all absences and provide an reasonable explanation in the form of a short note to the teacher, or by phone to the office.
  o phone the Jimboomba State School 24Hour Absentee Message Line (07) 5548 8366 and leave a detailed message

• if students are required to leave school before 3:00pm (the end of the school day):
  o a written note explaining the absence is required and any supporting evidence, for example, a medical certificate
  o any student to be collected by an adult, other than their parent, is to have written permission from the child’s parent
Parents may be asked to show identification before students are released.

All students must be signed out at the Office.

Children are not allowed to meet parents at the school gates.

All students must be collected at the Office or the classroom after being signed out.

Parents wishing to collect their child early from the classroom (including Prep Parents), are required to collect an **early departure authorisation slip** from the office, which ensures your child’s safety and teacher release conditions.

Under s176(1) of the **Education (General Provisions Act) 2006** (EGPA) 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**.

Under s239(1) of the EGPA, each 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**.

**What is a reasonable excuse**

For the purposes of ss.176 and 239, and without limiting the ordinary meaning of the term, parents have a **reasonable excuse** if, for example:

- the child (or children in question) resides with parent 1, and parent 2 (who does not reside with the children) believes, on reasonable grounds, that parent 1 is complying with the obligation to have their child or children enrolled and attending school. Parent 2 has a reasonable excuse.
- the parents are not reasonably able to control the child’s behaviour to the extent necessary to comply with their obligation to have their child enrolled, attending or participating.
- the parents are unable to comply with their obligation because of ill health or a disability.
- the child’s non-attendance or non-participation was due to an accident or unforeseen event that the parent could not prevent. Evidence must be provided (e.g. certificate signed by medical/health professional in case of medical event).

**What is not a reasonable excuse**

For the purposes of ss.176 and 239, and without limiting the ordinary meaning of the term, parents **do not have a reasonable excuse** if, for example:

- they claim they meet the situation of a reasonable excuse as mentioned above without providing reasonable and sufficient evidence to support their claim.
- they refuse to let their child attend school due to an alleged incident or incidents that occurred at school.
- they refuse to cooperate with staff at the school or region.
- they claim they do not understand their legal obligations.
- they refuse to respond to the notices and/or claim that they did not receive the notices.
- they claim they are not able to control their child without any valid reasonable or sufficient evidence (e.g. information provided by relatives, police or child protection authorities and/or the child/young person, observations from school/region personnel, information from other agencies) supporting their claim.
- they claim the extended absences are for family reasons.
- they have provided false, misleading or incorrect information intentionally.
Strategies

At Jimboomba State School we promote 100% attendance by:

- developing a positive school culture
  - implementation of social skills programs, anti-bullying strategies and attendance reward schemes.
- communicating high expectations of attendance
  - newsletters, website, enrolment package and parent meetings.
- recording and following-up student absences
  - consistent and timely follow-up processes support with OneSchool tracking data.
- monitoring student non-attendance
  - analysis of attendance data, as supported by the OneSchool Performance Dashboard, to identify trends and patterns.
- providing intervention and support
  - liaise with internal and external agencies such as the Queensland Police Service, Department of Communities for assistance in addressing patterns of absenteeism and to support students and families, where appropriate.

Responses to absences

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

- 100% attendance
- reduction in late entry and early departure

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

- Class teacher is to remind student about providing a note to explain their absence.
- Class teacher to send home with the student a Student Absence Letter (SAL) which is generated from the office on a weekly basis.
  - Update student absence reason in OneSchool if a reasonable explanation was given.
When a student is absent without explanation for 3 days or a pattern of absences has been identified, Jimboomba State School will take the following actions:

- **Class teacher is to contact the parent/carer via phone/email to inquire about the student’s absence.**
  
  - Class teacher to record contact in OneSchool, including if there was no answer (record that contact was attempted).
  
  - Update student absence reason in OneSchool if a reasonable explanation was given.
  
  - If no response from the parent/carer, email details of the absence to the Deputy Principal.

- **Deputy Principal to generate a mid-term and end of semester ‘3 days or more’ absence report and identify:**
  
  - students with irregular attendance, frequent unexplained absences and/or patterns of absences may be placed on an ‘Attendance Alert’ in OneSchool
  
  - Deputy Principal to contact parent/carer to ascertain what support or assistance may be necessary to support the student attending school on a regular basis.

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

**Please note:** Some aspects of this process (such as Form 4 and Form 5) can be completed in OneSchool under the “Enforcement of Attendance” tab within a student’s individual record.

1. School identifies unexplained or unsatisfactory absences or patterns of absences for example:
   - when a student is absent for three or more consecutive school days
   - where there is a persistent pattern of unexplained absences or absences without reasonable excuses
   - where a student’s attendance is reasonably considered unsatisfactory by the principal.

2. Authorised officer at the school confirms that child is obliged to attend and that no circumstances exist where the parent’s obligation does not apply.

3. Authorised officer at the school contacts both parents and determines if there is a reasonable excuse for not ensuring their child is attending school, using the Director-General’s Guidelines for authorised officers on how to determine whether parents have a reasonable excuse for the purposes of ss.176 and 239 of the Education (General Provisions) Act 2006.
4. School offers support to family to ensure child’s attendance improves. All efforts, including records of meetings and conversations, must be documented in OneSchool (e.g. phone calls, home visits, contact with local police, referral to Youth Support Coordinator or other support worker).

5. Authorised officer at the school considers whether an exemption from schooling, flexible arrangement or alteration to a student’s educational program is appropriate and required.

6. If the child is still not attending regularly after three weeks (15 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))) to both parents outlining parents’ legal obligation and inviting both parents to attend a meeting to discuss the situation.

7. Authorised officer at the school keeps a copy of the Notice (Form 4) and records date, time and by whom letter was posted.

8. If after sending the Notice (Form 4):
   • a meeting occurred with the parents, but there is no change in circumstances within one week (5 school days) of this meeting; or
   • a meeting did not occur with the parents, and there is no change in circumstances within one week (5 school days) of sending the Notice;
   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.

9. Authorised officer at the school keeps a copy of the Warning Notice (Form 5) and records date, time and by whom letter was posted.

10. If there is no change in attendance a week (5 school days) after the Warning Notice (Form 5) was sent, Authorised Officer:
    • requests Performance, Monitoring and Reporting Branch to conduct a search (approval for search to be given by Regional Director or Assistant Regional Director) for information regarding enrolment and attendance to ensure the child is not enrolled at another state school (including School of Distance Education); and
    • checks with Home Education Unit whether the child is registered or provisionally registered for home education; and
    • advises Regional Office they wish to seek the Director-General’s consent to prosecute.

11. Recommendation for consent to prosecute should only be made:
    • if the compulsory schooling requirements applies
    • after reasonable attempts have been made to contact and assist both parents to ensure the child achieves regular attendance
    • there is no reasonable excuse for the child not attending school.

12. To gain consent from the Director-General to prosecute, an officer from the region, in consultation with the authorised officer from the school:
    • completes Template 6 – Failure to attend – General Briefing Note (GBN); and
• scans completed Chief Executive’s Certificate template and its attachment (Template 10 - Instrument of Authorisation) as one document, and saves this as Attachment 1 to the GBN in TRIM; and
• if applicable, scans completed and signed Principal’s Certificate template and its attachment (student’s attendance record) as one document, and saves this as either Attachment 7 or 8 to the GBN in TRIM.

13. Region progresses the GBN (Template 6) through the Regional Director to Legal and Administrative Law Branch (LALB) for consideration.

14. LALB returns brief to Region and Region progresses brief (with any necessary amendments) to the Director-General.

15. Director-General considers brief and makes a decision regarding consent to prosecute.

16. Director-General returns GBN to the relevant Regional Director.

17. If Director-General’s consent to prosecute has been granted, Region provides GBN, copy of all forms and any relevant correspondence regarding the child’s attendance to the Officer-in-Charge of their local Queensland Police Service (QPS) Child Protection Investigation Unit. QPS will use this information to consider whether or not to commence the prosecution in accordance with QPS policy.

18. Region enters the Director-General’s decision in OneSchool and notifies the school.

19. Region keeps a central record in TRIM of all cases where the Director-General has consented to prosecute and the matter has been referred to the QPS.

20. Region liaises with local QPS to determine if any further assistance is required by the QPS (e.g. contact details for witnesses, staff attendance at Court etc.). Region consults with LALB if necessary about any further assistance required by the QPS.

21. If QPS indicate that they will not prosecute the matter, Region liaises immediately with Executive Director, Legal and Administrative Law Branch.

22. Region must maintain contact with QPS to obtain the outcome of the prosecution. Region enters decision in OneSchool and TRIM central record, and notifies the school of the decision.

**Reporting and monitoring attendance**

At Jimboomba 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:

- phone the Jimboomba State School 24Hour Absentee Message Line (07) 5548 8366 and leave a detailed message
- phone (07) 55 488 333 to speak with an administration officer
• email administration admin@jimboombass.eq.edu.au or the class teacher via their @eq.edu.au email address

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*

Forms and Templates

• **Notice (Form 4 – Failure to attend (s.178(2)))**

• **Warning Notice (Form 5 – Failure to attend (s.178(4)))**

• **Template 6 – Failure to attend – General Briefing Note (GBN)**

• **Template 10 - Instrument of Authorisation**

• **Letter regarding prep attendance**

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