Bowen State School

Attendance Policy

Rationale

Queensland Schools are committed to providing safe and supportive learning environments for all students which address their diverse learning needs. Regular attendance at school is essential to ensure uninterrupted progress and to enable children to reach their potential.

Every Day Counts promotes four key messages regarding student attendance;
- all children should be enrolled at school and attend on every school day
- schools should monitor, communicate and implement strategies to improve regular school attendance
- truanting can place a student in unsafe situations and impact on their future employability and life choices
- attendance at school is the responsibility of everyone in the community

At Bowen State School we expect every student to attend school every day of the school year unless prevented by reasonable circumstances (i.e.; sick, natural disaster). The school's attendance policy aims to maximise student engagement in all learning programs. Bowen State School will:
- Develop a safe, supporting and positive school culture
- Identify and analyse student absences
- Follow-up absences promptly
- Educate students and parents about the importance of attendance

Bowen State School Attendance Targets

∞ **Decrease** → the number of students attending less than 85%

∞ **Increase** → the number of students attending above 95%

∞ **Increase** → whole school attendance.

Our 2018 whole school target is 95% attendance.

The five step approach to address and discourage student absenteeism

1. Develop a positive school culture

Schools should develop a safe and supportive school environment that promotes positive relationships. This may include implementation of programs that develop social and emotional skills, peer tutoring and mentoring, and anti-bullying strategies.

It is also important to establish positive home-school relationships to assist parents to support their child's attendance at school.

The department's learning and wellbeing framework website provides more information and ideas for creating a welcoming and positive school learning environment.

Bowen State School is a Positive Behaviour for Learning school and is also in the process of implementing the Kids Matter Program across the whole school. These programs, in conjunction with positive relationships between and amongst students, staff, and parents ensure a positive school environment for all.

2. Communicate high expectations of attendance

Staff, parents and students should collaboratively develop a clear, inclusive and simple attendance message that promotes high expectations of student attendance. This message should be communicated consistently to students and the school community through the school's website, newsletters and enrolment package.

Bowen State School's expectations regarding our school attendance and our attendance rates are regularly communicated with the community through a range of channels including; newsletters, attendance board, parade, class tracking tools, email updates, media outlets (including Facebook). Teachers regularly engage students in discussions about attendance and how they are progressing towards reaching our whole school attendance target.

3. Record and follow-up student absences

It is important that schools develop consistent and effective follow-up processes for unexplained student absences. Timely follow-up is a key preventative strategy in reducing absenteeism. It makes it harder for students to miss school without being detected. It also enables parents, who may not be aware that their child is absent, to take action.

Text messages are sent daily to parents if students are marked absent via ID Attend. Follow up phone calls are made by administration staff if the absence is not explained to minimise unexplained absences.

Students with less than 85% attendance received an Individual Attendance Plan which outlines layers of support and individual goals to improve attendance and increase support.

4. Monitor student non-attendance

The school's attendance data should be analysed to identify school and student absenteeism trends. Schools should investigate absentee patterns and their relationship to factors such as

the day of the week, the class/subject/year level, particular gender/cultural groups, and individual student's patterns of attendance.

Weekly data exports from OneSchool allow school leadership to closely monitor student attendance and identify attendance trends. This triggers further communication with family and investigations of support and intervention.

5. <u>Provide intervention and support</u>

Prosecution of one or both parents may occur if the parent/s do not fulfil their legal obligation in regard to enrolment and attendance of their child at school. However, prosecution is considered to be a last resort for use when alternative approaches to improving a student's attendance have not been successful. Schools should also liaise with other agencies such as the Queensland Police Service, Department of Communities, and local non-government organisations for assistance in addressing patterns of absenteeism and to support students and families, as appropriate.

Bowen State School Staff follow the Managing Student Absences and Enforcing Enrolment and Attendance at State Schools informed from the Policy & Procedure Register.

Responsibilities

Parents

School absenteeism and truancy can impact significantly on students' learning and wellbeing.

Research shows that in Queensland, higher student attendance is associated, on average, with higher student achievement. Additionally, attending school every day helps children to build social and emotional skills such as communication, teamwork and resilience.

Under the law, parents must make sure their child is enrolled and attends school on all school days unless there is a reasonable excuse. Schools must monitor attendance of students and follow up with parents and caregivers any unexplained absences.

It is important that everyone works together to help children obtain the best possible start in life with a good education. Parents should work in partnership with the school, notifying the school of the reason for any of their child's absences and highlighting any areas of concern they may have so they can be addressed promptly.

Parents/Carers are responsible for the following:

- Ensuring that their children are at school and on time
- Children should arrive at school between 8:30am and 8:45am, ready for learning to begin at 8:50am
- Children should attend school every day unless there are reasonable circumstances for being absent (i.e.; sick, natural disaster)
- Inform the school with an appropriate explanation for non-attendance by phone or note.
- For extended absences, parents/carers must notify the school, providing reasons for the absence
- Attend meetings and work in partnership with the school administration to address issues of poor attendance

Students

Students are to be at school every day ready for learning. Students are expected to:
- Arrive at school by 8:45am each day
  - Have a healthy breakfast
  - Wear school uniform
  - Have all equipment required for learning
- Go directly to the office after 9am to sign in and receive a late slip, which must be handed to the class teacher
- Hand absence note to teacher if they have been absent from school

Teachers

Teachers will:
- Accurately mark rolls by; 8:50am and 2:05pm in accordance with State Schooling procedures
- Actively promote attendance with both students and families
- Regularly liaise with families regarding attendance
- Monitor student absence and liaise with Deputy Principal about concerns
- Notify Deputy Principal and office staff for reason of unexplained absence (if note is handed in)

- Monitor and review class attendance data with whole class on a daily basis and record using the Classroom Attendance Tracker Tool (to be displayed within the classroom)
- Communicate attendance to Parade Co-ordinator on a weekly basis for awards and celebration.

Learning Engagement Teachers

Learning Engagement Teachers will support students in re-engaging in the school if they enrol throughout the school year or if they have had a significant absence from school.
They will:
- Gather evidence / data from previous school/s and OneSchool
- Conduct literacy and numeracy assessment
- Engage with classroom teacher to disseminate information
- Support student in engaging in classroom upon enrolment.

Deputy Principal and Principal

Leadership will;

- Review and implement the Bowen State School attendance policy and procedures
- Inform parents of their legal obligations regarding enrolment and attendance
- Ensure all staff adhere to OneSchool attendance recording protocols
- Collect and analyse school attendance data
- Identify and implement support for students displaying significant patterns of absence and/or late arrivals.
- Implement strategies to manage student enrolment, absences, school refusal and truancy
- Promote school attendance with Parents/Carers through school newsletter media outlets and during parade
- Reward and recognise excellent attendance through a variety of strategies
- Investigate trends such as:
  - days of the week with the highest levels of absenteeism (usually Mondays and Fridays)
  - times of the year in which attendance is lowest (e.g. end of term, around public holidays)
  - year levels, gender and cultural groups with the poorest attendance
- Create Individual Attendance Plans for students with less than 85% attendance and review as required
- Work with regional office staff and other local resources to engage with the student and their family.
- Follow processes for enforcing parental obligation in regard to attendance and compulsory participation.

School-Wide Processes for Monitoring Non-Attendance and patterns of Non-Attendance

Attendance	Action	When	Person/s Responsible

Regular	Monitor	Daily
		▪ Rolls marked <u>by</u>
		  ▪ 8:50am
		  ▪ 2.05pm
		▪ Track class attendance on Attendance Tracker (provided)
			Class Teacher

Regular	Monitor	Weekly ▪ attendance / punctuality certificates ▪ Email attendance to Parade co-ordinator	All Staff
Regular	Monitor	Weekly ▪ Whole school attendance data updates (data wall)	
Unexplained daily absence	Text message / phone calls to all parents when student is marked absent	Daily ▪ each morning after 9:30am	Admin Officer
3 days unexplained absence	Admin to follow-up with parents Report provided to DP to phone parent.	As required	Admin Officer
5 or more days absent (explained or unexplained)	Staff to report to DP to organise a meeting with parent/carer Home visit if appropriate and required	As required	Deputy Principal
Ongoing Absence	Form 4 letter mailed to parent/carer via registered mail	As required	Deputy Principal Admin Officer
Ongoing Absence	Form 5 letter mailed to parent/carer via registered mail	As required	Deputy Principal Admin Officer
Ongoing Absence	Form 6 letter mailed to parent/carer via registered mail	As required	Deputy Principal Admin Officer
▪ For students with ongoing absences, Deputy Principal will ask parent/carer to attend a meeting to provide support and explore strategies for improving attendance. ▪ For students with ongoing absences, Individual Attendance plan is written with stakeholders.			

Strategies to encourage attendance and improve irregular attendance

- Parents/carers are informed of attendance and punctuality rates for each year level and class via the school newsletter.
- School community informed of attendance rates weekly through school display board.
- Classroom Teacher to monitor class attendance daily and review weekly on classroom attendance tracker.
- Weekly certificates presented to year groups and classes who have the best attendance for the week.
- Whole school data wall in data room to monitor 'at risk' students, updated regularly.
- 100's club presentation (gold wrist band) on Parade for students who maintain 100% attendance for 5 weeks.
- Badge presentation of Parade for students who maintain 100% attendance for 1 Semester.
- Class rewards for whole class attendance of 100% for 5 consecutive days.
- At enrolment, a delegate will discuss the Bowen State School Attendance Policy.
- Use resources by State Schooling - Every Day Counts to inform and engage parents and the wider community. (Fact sheets, brochures, posters, letters)
- When students achieve the goals of their Individual Attendance Plan (e.g. to attend school for 10 consecutive days), the planned reward will be implemented.

Positive reinforcement / rewards for Attendance

Weekly / 5 weekly	Termly / Semester	Yearly
Highest Class Attendance receives Certificate & Trophy. Presented on Parade, photo on attendance board.	Positive letter sent home for student who reach whole school attendance target.	End of Year Attendance Celebration • 100's club celebration • Attendance Badge celebration
100% class attendance for 5 consecutive days – • Tangibles (stickers, certificate, ribbon, prizes) • break time games with either Principal / DP with snacks provided	Attendance badge for 100% attendance for 1 Semester	End of Year Award / Prize • 100% attendance award/s • Most improved attendance
Wrist band for 5 weeks of 100% attendance		

Bowen State School: Individual Attendance Plan

An Individual Attendance Plan may be documented for those students who attend school less than 85%. This plan will be created with applicable stakeholders and regularly reviewed.

Individual Attendance Plan		
The purposes of this are: ▪ to identify if possible, the causes for irregular attendance, and ▪ to make a plan to adapt and change patterns of irregular attendance		
Date:	Attendees:	
Concerns – Student, Parent/Carer		
Number/Pattern of absences/lateness	Explained/Unexplained	Relevant family information (including sibling attendance)
Student Perceptions		Issues at school which impact on attendance
Impact of irregular attendance – What do you think?		
Achievement / learning		
Skills: being on time, being organised, following rules, personal presentation, being part of a group/tem, dealing with conflicts, being recognised for achievements		
Friendships		
Future education/career aspirations		
Safety whilst not at school		
What can we do in partnership to ensure that your child's attendance becomes more regular? *(Set goals and strategies. See suggestions on next page)*		
Student		
Parents/Carers		
School		
Signatures		
Student		Parent
Class Teacher		Deputy Principal

Possible Strategies to Support Increased Attendance

Even with a supportive school environment, interesting learning opportunities, and clear attendance policy, there will be some students who require additional assistance or encouragement to attend school regularly.

School staff may need to work with these students and their families to help identify the reasons for poor attendance, promote the benefits of attending school, identify attendance and achievement goals, and develop a realistic plan for improving attendance.

Frequent unexplained absences from school may indicate that a student or their family has other issues which need to be addressed before attendance will improve (e.g. access to uniforms, school shoes, or transport).

Where there is no reasonable excuse for the child's non-attendance, the department may refer parents to the Queensland Police Service for prosecution, in accordance with Managing Student Absences and Enforcing Enrolment and Attendance at State Schools. However, prosecution is seen as a last resort and schools are encouraged to implement strategies to assist parents and students with attendance issues prior to taking further action.

Class	*Break Times*
▪ Class teacher to make regular contact with parent/care by phone or email ▪ Establish a daily/weekly communication book ▪ Plan for classroom incentive e.g. free time, iPad, when attendance meets certain criteria (e.g. 5 consecutive days, a class reward such as a game) ▪ Differentiation of learning program ▪ Set classroom responsibility	▪ Meet with a 'check-in' teacher ▪ Play roster providing structured activities
Other	*Home*
▪ Refer students to Student Services Team to identify reasons for absences/lateness and to develop strategies to improve attendance ▪ Consider establishing support programs that respond to specific essential needs if these are affecting attendance (e.g. uniform library, breakfast program, walking bus, shoe exchange) ▪ Schedule interesting before school activities that encourage students to get to school on time ▪ Help students who are at risk of poor attendance to build and maintain a relationship with a key person in the school ▪ Refer students and families to relevant professionals outside of the school according to individual needs.	▪ Earlier bedtime ▪ Using an alarm clock ▪ Establishing a reward chart ▪ Provide a medical certificate ▪ Notify school promptly about absence ▪ Invite parents to assist in developing a re-entry plan that addresses practical issues such as getting an alarm clock, negotiating transport, or changing family routines. ▪ Encourage parents to seek support from, and communicate regularly with, teachers and other school staff.