



ATTENDANCE POLICY

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to

- ensure all children of compulsory school age are enrolled in a registered school and attend school every day the school is open for instruction
- ensure students, staff and parents/carers have a shared understanding of the importance of attending school
- explain to school staff and parents the key practices and procedures we have in place to
 - support, monitor and maintain student attendance
 - record, monitor and follow up student absences.

SCOPE

This policy applies to all students at Plenty Parklands Primary School (PPPS).

This policy should be read in conjunction with the Department of Education and Training's [School Attendance Guidelines](#). It does not replace or change the obligations of PPPS, parents and School Attendance Officers under legislation.

Protecting the safety and well-being of children through the reporting and monitoring of absenteeism is the responsibility of both parents/carers and schools. **Parents have a legal obligation to notify the school of their child's absence and schools are required to notify parents on the day of an unexplained student absence.** This responsibility needs to be underpinned by shared understandings and expectations about the procedures for the promotion, monitoring and follow-up of student attendance as outlined in this Policy.

DEFINITION

Parent – includes a guardian and every person who has parental responsibility for the child, including parental responsibility under the *Family Law Act 1975* (Cth) and any person with whom a child normally or regularly resides.

POLICY

Schooling is compulsory for children and young people aged from 6 to 17 years (unless an exemption from attendance or enrolment has been granted).

Daily attendance is important for all children and young people to succeed in education and to ensure they do not fall behind both socially and developmentally. School participation maximises life opportunities for children and young people by providing them with education and support networks. School helps people to develop important skills, knowledge and values that set them up for further learning and participation in their community.

Students are expected to attend during normal school hours every day of each term unless:

- there is an approved exemption from school attendance for the student
- the student has a dual enrolment with another school and has only a partial enrolment in, or
- the student is registered for home schooling and has only a partial enrolment for particular activities.

All students should attend school all day, every day when we are open for instruction and we are committed to working with our school community to encourage and support full school attendance.

Our school will identify individual students or cohorts who are vulnerable and whose attendance is at risk and/or declining and will work with these students and their parents to improve their attendance through a range of interventions and supports.

Our school's expectations are that:

- students are committed to attending school every day, arriving on time and are prepared to learn. Our students are encouraged to approach a teacher and seek assistance if there are any issues that are affecting their attendance.
- our parents are committed to ensuring their child/children attend school on time every day when instruction is offered, to communicating openly with the school and to providing valid explanations for any absence.
- parents will communicate with their child's teacher about any issues affecting their child's attendance and work in partnership with the school to address any concerns.
- parents will provide a reasonable explanation for their child's absence from school and endeavour to schedule family holidays, appointments and other activities outside of school hours.

Supporting and promoting attendance

Our *Student Wellbeing and Engagement Policy* supports student attendance.

The Department collects information on student attendance through extraction of data from CASES21 and publishes attendance rates in each school's Annual Report.

Recording attendance

PPPS must record student attendance twice per day. This is necessary to:

- meet legislative requirements
- discharge our duty of care for all students

Attendance will be recorded using Compass by the home group teacher/specialist teacher or Classroom Relieving Teacher (CRT) at the start of the school day and after lunch.

Student Attendance

- A student is present for the morning roll if they are in class at 9.00 a.m.
- If a student arrives to class anywhere between 9.01 a.m. and 10.00 a.m., they will be marked late on the morning roll and this will require parent approval on Compass with a reason.
- The teacher is to record the time the child arrives in class on Compass.
- If a child arrives late to school, they need to be signed in at the office.
- If a child is leaving early, they need to be signed out at the office.
- If a child is returning to school they need to be signed in and then back in at the office.
- If a student arrives in class after 10.00 a.m., they will be marked absent on the morning roll and this will require parent approval on Compass with a reason.

When a child has any unapproved absences or late arrivals, parents will receive an alert on their Compass home page letting them know this, and allowing them to add a Note or Approval.

Attendance: Attendance Note/Approval Required

Ron was recorded as 'not present' or 'late' without explanation.

[Click here for more information](#)

Clicking on this notification will take the parent to the Unexplained tab for that child's attendance, where they can add a Note or Approval for one or more absences. To add a note or approval, they select one or more of the absences listed, then select the 'Explain with Note/Approval' button. Notes or approvals cannot be edited by parents after they've been created. If necessary, amendments can be made by the school office staff.

If students are in attendance at a school approved activity, the teacher in charge of the activity will ensure that they are recorded as being present.

Once a term in week 3 or 4, we will send home letters to families where there are unexplained absences and/or lateness for which parents have not provided a reason on Compass. These letters are to be completed and returned to the office so that student attendance records can be updated. If a parent reason is not provided for an absence or lateness, the alert will remain on the parent's Compass homepage and they will continue to receive the absence/lateness letters every term.

Recording absences

For absences where there is no exemption in place, a parent must provide an explanation on each occasion to the school.

Parents should notify the school of absences by:

- Providing parent approval on Compass for an absence or a lateness. This can be done in advance of the absence or on the morning of the absence prior to 10.00am.

Unexplained absences

- If a student is absent on a particular day and the school has not been previously notified by a parent, or the absence is otherwise unexplained, we will notify parents by an email notification via Compass at 10.15 a.m. each day.
- If a response is not received from a parent on the day of absence, the school will attempt to make contact with the parents or with any emergency contact/s nominated on the student's file held by the school.
- If the parents have been contacted and the student's safety has been established, but no explanation has been provided within 10 school days, the absence will be recorded as an unexplained absence and be noted in the student's file.
- We will keep a record of the reason given for each absence. The principal will determine if the explanation provided is a **reasonable excuse** for the purposes of the parent meeting their responsibilities under the *Education Training Reform Act 2006* and the School Attendance Guidelines.

If we consider that the parent has provided a **reasonable excuse** for their child's absence, the absence will be marked as '**excused absence**'.

If the school determines that no reasonable excuse has been provided, the absence will be marked as '**parent choice unauthorised**'.

The Principal has the discretion to accept a reason given by a parent for a student's absence. The Principal will generally excuse:

- medical and dental appointments, where out of hours appointments are not possible or appropriate
- bereavement or attendance at the funeral of a relative or friend of the student, including a student required to attend Sorry Business
- school refusal, if a plan is in place with the parent to address causes and support the student's return to school
- cultural observance if the parent/carer notifies the school in advance
- family holidays where the parent notifies the school in advance.

Managing non-attendance and supporting student engagement

Where absences are of concern due to their nature or frequency, or where a student has been absent for more than five days, we will work collaboratively with parents, the student, and other professionals, where appropriate, to develop strategies to improve attendance, including:

- establishing an Attendance Student Support Group
- implementing a Return to School Plan
- implementing an Individual Education Plan
- implementing a Student Absence Learning Plan for students absent for an extended period
- arranging for assistance from relevant staff from within the school and/or external providers.

We understand from time to time that some students will need additional supports and assistance and in collaboration with the student and their family, we will endeavour to provide this support when it is required.

Referral to School Attendance Officer

If we decide that we have exhausted strategies for addressing a student's unsatisfactory attendance, we may, in accordance with the School Attendance Guidelines refer the non-attendance to a School Attendance Officer in the North West Region, for further action.

If, from multiple attempts to make contact with a parent, it becomes apparent that a student will not be returning to the school, the principal may make a referral to a School Attendance Officer if:

- the student has been absent from school on at least five full days in the previous 12 months where:
 - the parent has not provided a reasonable excuse for these absences; and
 - measures to improve the student's attendance have been undertaken and have been unsuccessful
- the student's whereabouts are unknown and:
 - the student has been absent for 10 consecutive school days; or
 - no alternative education destination can be found for the student.

MORE INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

- [School Attendance Guidelines](#)
- School Policy and Advisory Guide: [Attendance](#)

EVALUATION

This policy will be reviewed in line with best practice, DET guidelines and the law.

REVIEW CYCLE

This policy was last updated in **June 2018** and is scheduled for review on **June 2021**.

Endorsed by School Council in June 2018.