

ALEXANDRA HILLS
STATE HIGH SCHOOL

ATTENDANCE POLICY



Rationale

Alexandra Hills State High School is committed to providing a safe and supportive learning environment for all students which facilitates their educational needs.

We aim to maximise student learning opportunities and performance by ensuring that students attend school regularly and without unnecessary absences.

At Alexandra Hills State High School a key priority is for every student to **attend school all day every day**. Alexandra Hills State High School expects that 95% whole school day attendance is the minimum acceptable level.

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. Alexandra Hills 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
- 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.

Procedures

Alexandra Hills State High School promotes the cooperation of all stakeholders (students, parents, staff and community) to ensure that every student attends school on every school day unless grounds exist where it is unreasonable to do so. To achieve this vision, Alexandra Hills SHS:

- **Establishes and maintains a positive school culture** as a basis for successful engagement in education
- **Communicates and emphasises the importance of absences from school** at year level assemblies, in form classes, welfare programs, the school website, newsletters and

social media forums and at parent nights discussing acceptable and unacceptable reasons for being absent

- **Uses ID Attend lesson by lesson attendance** monitoring and recording following the electronic roll marking procedures during the school day
- **Communicates and contacts parents / guardians via a text message** before 11.30am when a student is absent from school
- **Regularly monitors and reviews individual attendance data** and sends individual attendance % home via email each term
- **Distributes attendance data regularly** to Deputy Principals, Year Level Coordinators and form teachers for discussion with students
- **Implements attendance incentives for students** with 100% and 95% or more whole school day attendance
- **Acknowledges excellence in student attendance and** celebrates attendance achievements
- **Displays and communicates attendance priorities and expectations** eg “Attendance Matters” posters in form classes
- **Provides rich learning experiences** in all classrooms that encourage students to learn
- **Provides support for students who are at risk of poor attendance** to improve school engagement

The roles and responsibilities of specific school staff to promote attendance include:

(i) **The Form Class Teachers’ responsibilities to student well-being and engagement:**

a) Student well-being – Care for student’s social and emotional development

- Teaching the student school and community values – Being a Safe, Respectful Learner, Student Responsibilities and Classroom expectations
- Each day creating a sense of belonging and welcoming the student to school
- Encouraging participation and involvement in learning and school events
- Fostering an enjoyment of school
- Providing a point of student advocacy and support

b) Student Attendance – Care for student’s engagement with their course of study

- Maintaining communication regarding the importance of attending school all day every day unless grounds exist where it is unreasonable to do so
- Reinforcing school policies and procedures regarding explaining absences within two days before or following the absence
- Reinforcing the school’s Planned Student Extended Absence procedure for students planning on being absent for 3 or more days
- Marking the official form roll and / or ID attend roll each morning
- Maintaining communication with the Attendance Officer regarding absences / late arrivals and notes explaining past and future absences from school
- Taking an interest in students’ academic performance, in regards to progress, completion of homework (through school study planner check), problems with studies and curriculum achievements
- Contacting parents when students are not attending, encouraging them to return to school

(ii) **The Attendance Officer’s responsibilities:**

- Record student late arrival and early leave requests. **Students arriving late for school are to report to the attendance window with student ID card and a signed parent note for a printed Late Slip which is to be presented to the classroom teacher.**

Students requiring an early departure must present a note from their parent /guardian outlining the reason for the early departure to the relevant Deputy Principal before school . The note which will be signed by the Deputy Principal must be presented at the attendance window (with a student ID card) when signing out for early departure.

- Update attendance and absence information daily including recording absence reasons
- Support school processes by producing consecutive days absence reports and any associated communication with parents as required
- Communicating with the relevant year level Deputy Principal regarding attendance concerns ie 3 day consecutive absences
- Send letters home regarding unexplained absences and attendance percentage two times per term
- Monitor daily the accuracy and timeliness of staff roll marking in ID Attend
- Record attendance / absence records of contact with parents / caregivers in OneSchool

(iii) The Administration Officers' responsibilities:

- Respond to and sign students into and out of sick bay when required. In circumstances where a student needs to leave due to illness or any other issue, a standard Education Queensland procedure is applied where the office staff will contact the parents, explain the situation and ask for approval / request for the student to go home and / or be collected from the administration office.

(The parent may grant permission if they accept the liability. It is the parent's decision as to whether or not they feel the student is to leave school and has appropriate supervision at home. Only registered independent students may give their own permission to leave school early)

- Record all relevant communication with parents regarding student attendance / leaving the school grounds.

(iv) The Truancy Officer's responsibilities:

- Use data and information from ID Attend daily to follow up single and multiple period absences from classes the previous day
- Document information and outcomes of student absence follow ups via ID Attend
- Report any issues of concern to the relevant Deputy Principal

(v) The Head of Department Student Wellbeing & Engagement's responsibilities:

- Monitor overall school and student attendance using attendance checks every three weeks
- Promote attendance in the general school by providing data regularly to form teachers, Year Level Coordinators, Specialist class teachers and Heads of Department to increase an awareness of attendance
- Reinforce regularly to staff the school's **Attendance Promotion policy** regarding minimum 95% student attendance for involvement and inclusion in extra-curricular activities, non-assessment excursions, International and Ski trips, sporting teams / games, work experience / traineeships and end of semester / year celebrations
- Provide attendance incentives (with the Year Level Coordinators) to encourage and improve daily attendance
- Instigate the process of sending individual attendance data (**Attendance Strength Check** document) to parents on a regular basis ie term / semester with report card
- Provide the Year Level Coordinators with absenteeism data each term for discussion (reasons for absences and strategies for improving attendance) with students at risk of disengaging from school

- Provide the Deputy Principals with chronic absenteeism data each term for analysis and further support
- Reinforce to students the school's **Planned Student Extended Absence** procedure and follow up with students upon return from extended absence

(vi) The Deputy Principals' responsibilities:

- Meet regularly using data provided from the Head of Department Student Wellbeing & Engagement) to identify and discuss students with less than 80% attendance and follow up in a timely manner
- Use attendance / consecutive days absence information from the Attendance Officer to instigate the sending of absence letters
- Follow up 3 day consecutive absence letters to ensure a return to school occurs
- Monitor parental responses to the above processes by providing support to students whose attendance improves or continuing with the attendance enforcement processes

(vii) The attendance monitoring team of Deputy Principals, Head of Department Student Wellbeing & Engagement, Guidance Officer/s, Head of Department Junior & Senior Secondary and Attendance Officer responsibilities:

- Work with all stakeholders to facilitate student engagement to improve attendance
- Meet when required to review processes and respond to complex individual cases

Student responsibilities:

- Attend school unless reasonable and valid grounds exist where it is unreasonable to do so
- Arrive at school and class on time and provide reasons for lateness as appropriate
- Remind parents to email, phone or return a note when absent from school. Student are to bring a note advising of reasons for absence within two school days before or after the absence
- Remain in the school grounds unless given permission to leave
- Follow the Planned Extended Student Absence process if an absence of 3 or more days is forthcoming

Parent responsibilities:

The Education (General Provisions Act) states that each parent of a child of compulsory school age has the obligation to **ensure their child is attending school on every school day, for the educational program in which the child is enrolled** unless they have a reasonable excuse. Parents must not keep their child away from school for minor reasons.

Parents should also:

- Establish and maintain viable contact details, including emergency contact
- Support their student to attend school every day unless grounds exist where it is unreasonable to do so
- Ensure their student arrives at school on time every day
- Minimize disruption to the student's school day so they have the best opportunity to learn.
- Avoid holidays during school time but contact the school at least two weeks prior to any planned absence and complete the Extended Student Absence Process.
- Provide an explanation within two days of the students' return to school after an absence.

This may take the form of:

- * A medical certificate
- * A written explanation or email containing the student's name, dates and reasons for absence
- * A verbal explanation through either a phone call or visit to the school.

Parents should contact the school by either:

Phoning the Absence Line on **3820 1402** and leaving a message explaining their child's absence or

emailing the Attendance Officer at studentabsences@alexandrahillsshs.eq.edu.au **stating the child's full name, year level and a short reason for the absence.**

Reporting and monitoring attendance

At Alexandra Hills State High 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:

- A written explanation or email containing the student's name, dates and reasons for absence

- A verbal explanation through either a phone call or visit to the school
- Making an appointment with the relevant Deputy Principal or Guidance Officer

Parents should contact the school by either:

- Phoning the Absence Line on 3820 1402 and leaving a message explaining their child's absence or
- Emailing the Attendance Officer at studentabsences@alexandrahillsshs.eq.edu.au stating the child's full name, year level and a short reason for the absence.

Support for Families

If your child does not want to go to school, or is missing school without your permission, contact the relevant Deputy Principal immediately for assistance and support.

Alexandra Hills State High School has a range of welfare and attendance staff and support services to help guide students with attendance concerns.

Alexandra Hills SHS Responses to Absences

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

- **The parent or carer will be contacted by the Attendance Officer** (by phone or mail /email) to determine if there is a reasonable excuse for the absence/s
- **All contact and attempted contact with parents regarding student absences will be recorded in OneSchool attendance.** This includes (where deemed necessary by the Principal) the reporting of persistent and/or unexplained absences to Education Queensland, the Queensland Police Service and the Department of Child Safety. **Referral to relevant staff** (Deputy Principal Yr 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, Guidance Officer, Head of Department Student Welfare)

When a student is absent without explanation for **3 consecutive days, 5 consecutive days** or where a pattern of absences has been identified, the **Attendance Officer (in conjunction with Deputy Principal)** will take the following actions:

- **Run a consecutive day absence report** and forward to all members of the attendance team for advice to guide next actions
- **Maintain an attendance follow-up spreadsheet** to identify student that receive consecutive days absence letters
- **Produce relevant letters for consecutive days absences.** Email letter to relevant carers where possible and mail where not active email address exists.

- **Record all outgoing correspondence in OneSchool.**
- Maintain an “Attendance follow up folder” to retain copies of all 3 / 5 day letters sent, for use by the attendance team when supporting the student return to school process
- **Record any carer responses to correspondence into contacts** through OneSchool. Where absences re explained **change absence codes as required** and remove the relevant 5 day letters from the follow-up folder
- **Produce the Attendance Enforcement letters (Notice Form 4 – Failure to attend and Warning Notice Form 5 – Failure to attend)** as requested by relevant **Deputy Principals**
- Specifically inform the Deputy Principal where 5 consecutive days of absence have occurred after the Form 5 process has been instituted

Where a pattern of absences has been identified the Attendance Team will take the following actions:

- Apply the *Department of Education procedure – Managing Student Absences and Enforcing Enrolment and Attendance at State Schools – Process for enforcing parental obligation that a child of compulsory school age attends on every school day, for the education program in which the child is enrolled*
- Meet to identify support strategies to be put in place to re-engage student /have student return to school

Where the above processes have not resulted in improved attendance the Deputy Principals will take the following action:

- Commence attendance enforcement processes

At Alexandra Hills SHS the consequences of unexplained / unauthorised absences might include the following:

- Carer contact through a member of the Attendance team
- 3 and 5 day consecutive pattern of absence letters
- Home visits to seek information and offer support to families and as appropriate
- After 10 days of consecutive absence provision of Exemption Applications and advice regarding this process
- Receipt of Enforcement letters (Form 4 and 5) where parents are not meeting their parental responsibilities as identified under the education act
- Possible cancellation of enrolment (for students in the post-compulsory phase of education)

Some related resources

Every Day Counts

<http://education.qld.gov.au/everydaycounts/index.html>

Departmental Policies and Procedures

[Managing Student Absences and Enforcing Enrolment and Attendance at State Schools](#)

[Roll Marking in State Schools](#)

