

Yarraman P-9 P-9 State School Attendance Policy



2023



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Rationale

Yarraman P-9 State School is committed to providing safe and supportive learning environments for all students which address individual educational needs. Yarraman P-9 State School expects all children should be enrolled at school and attend on every school day. High absenteeism can place students in unsafe situations and negatively impact their future opportunities.

Yarraman P-9 State School's attendance policy aims to ensure every child attends school regularly by actively employing targeted strategies to improve student attendance. Yarraman P-9 State School acknowledges that under Queensland law, parents/carers must ensure each child of school age is enrolled and attends school all day every school day unless the child has a reasonable excuse.

Individual student attendance targets

- 85% to 100% attendance
- 0 unexplained absences
- 0 absences without reasonable excuse

School community beliefs about the importance of attending school

Yarraman P-9 State School believes attendance at school is the responsibility of everyone in the community. It is important that students, staff and parents/carers have a shared understanding of the importance of attending school. Regular school attendance will mean each child gets a better chance at life. Children who go to school all day every school day, learn better, make friends, are happier, and have a brighter future.

Responsibilities

School Responsibilities

It is the responsibility of the school to:

- inform parents of their legal obligations about enrolment and attendance
- implement strategies to manage student enrolment, absences, high 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 reasonably considered unsatisfactory.
 - notify parents of an unexplained absence of their child as soon as practicable on the day of the student's absence (allowing time for parents to respond prior to the end of the school day)
- continue to follow up unexplained absences as practicable with parents



- continue to work with regional office staff 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 regard to attendance

Student Responsibilities

It is the responsibility of the student to:

- attend school all day, every day (unless when a reasonable excuse prevents attendance)
- arrive at school on or before 8:40am ready for learning
- leave the school no earlier than 2:45pm to maximise learning time
- ensure individual attendance remains above 85%

Parent/carer Responsibilities

It is the responsibility of the parents/carers to:

- ensure each child of school age is enrolled and attends school all day, every school day unless the child has a reasonable excuse ensure student meets student responsibilities
- provide reasonable explanations of student absence on the morning of a student being absent
- provide supporting evidence (medical certificate, specialist reports) relating to a reasonable excuse when absence is more than three consecutive days and/or attendance falls below 85%
- avoid going on holidays during school terms and seek prior approval from the Principal for holidays exceeding 10 consecutive school days
- seek appropriate support from, and communicate regularly with, teachers and school support staff for students refusing to attend school or experience anxiety about school
- make satisfactory attempts to engage with professionals outside of the school according to individual needs

Managing student absences and enforcing enrolment and attendance at state schools

Under s.176(1) of the [Education \(General Provisions Act\) 2006 \(Qld\)](#) (EGPA)

(<https://www.legislation.qld.gov.au/view/html/inforce/current/act-2006-039>) each parent of a child who is of compulsory school age must ensure that the child is enrolled (<https://ppr.qed.qld.gov.au/pp/enrolment-in-state-primary-secondary-and-special-schools-procedure>) 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 s.239(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 in question is considered to be independent and is no longer practically subject to the parental authority of the parents; and
- 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; and ○ they have provided false, misleading or incorrect information intentionally.

Responses to absences

When a student is **absent without explanation for 3 or more days**, Yarraman P-9 State School will take the following actions:

- make reasonable contact with the parents/carers to determine a reasonable excuse for the unexplained absences.

When a student is **absent without explanation for 3 or more days and has an attendance rate of below 85%**, Yarraman P-9 State School will take the following actions:

- send an unexplained absence [letter](#) providing the family with 3 school days to provide a reasonable excuse for the unexplained absences

When a **pattern of absences has been identified**, Yarraman P-9 State School will take the following actions:

- make reasonable contact with the parents/carers to discuss circumstances
- work in partnership with the parents/carers to develop an [Attendance Improvement Plan](#) which responds to the needs of the student while outlining clear goals and timelines for students and parents/carers
- refer students to school support staff (Guidance Officer and Social Worker). Support staff may consider whether student protection is a factor
- refer students and parents/carers to relevant professionals and support agencies outside of the school such as the Youth Engagement Hub South Burnet

Continued patterns of absences

When a **continued pattern of absences has been identified (10 school days)**, and after a unexplained letter has been sent, Yarraman P-9 State School will take the following actions:

- Attempt to contact the parent/s and the Authorised officer send by regular and registered post, a **Notice (Form 4 – Failure to attend (s.178(2))** which is generated in OneSchool, to parent/s outlining the legal obligation and inviting parent/s to attend a meeting to discuss the situation. **NOTE: Separate notices should be generated to each parent if they are residing at different addresses.**
- Authorised officer at the school keeps a signed copy of the Notice (Form 4), records date, time and by whom letter was posted, and retains the registered post delivery confirmation receipt from Australia Post.
- If after sending the Notice (Form 4):
 - a meeting occurred with the parent/s, but there is no change in circumstances within one week (5 school days) of this meeting; or
 - a meeting did not occur with the parent/s, 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 regular and registered post a **Warning Notice (Form 5 – Failure to attend (s178(4))** which is generated in OneSchool, advising parents of their legal obligations and offering a meeting to discuss support available to address failure to attend.

- **NOTE:** *Where attendance initially increases after Form 4 has been sent but then decreases or becomes irregular and considered to be unsatisfactory, an authorised officer at the school can send Form 5. There is no requirement to resend Form 4 and commence the process again.*
- Authorised officer at the school keeps a signed copy of the Warning Notice (Form 5), records date, time and by whom letter was posted, and retains the registered post delivery confirmation receipt from Australia Post.
- If there is no change in attendance a week (5 school days) after the Warning Notice (Form 5) was sent, an authorised officer at the school may seek the regional director's consent to prosecute.
- Before seeking the regional director's consent to prosecute, an authorised officer at the school:
 - requests Performance, Monitoring and Reporting to conduct a search for information (approval for search to be given by an authorised officer in the region – principal advisor education services or principal advisor regional services or director regional services) regarding enrolment and attendance to ensure the child is not enrolled at another state school (including a school of distance education); and
 - checks with Home Education Unit (by email) whether the child is registered or provisionally registered for home education and retains this confirmation.
 - An authorised officer in the region checks whether the child is enrolled in any [non-state school](#).
- Consent to prosecute should only be sought:
 - if the compulsory schooling requirement applies;
 - after reasonable attempts have been made to contact and assist parent/s to ensure the child achieves regular attendance; and
 - there is no [reasonable excuse](#) for the child not attending school.

Where there is no reasonable excuse for the student'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](#).

Strategies to Improve Student Attendance

School Attendance Officers	Attendance Committee
Administrative Officers	Head of Department - Junior Secondary Head of Department – Curriculum Principal

Develop a positive school culture

Yarraman P-9 State School believes students are more likely to attend and achieve at school if they feel accepted, valued, respected and included. Yarraman P-9 State School is committed to developing a positive school culture by:

- establishing appropriate policies that support a safe and caring environment including the Yarraman P-9 State School Wellbeing Program – The Resilience Project
- encouraging positive, respectful relationships between staff and students
- implementing inclusive education programs for students with diverse learning needs
- greeting and saying good afternoon to students by name each day
- encouraging parents/carers to be involved in the school through the P&C and volunteer programs
- create highly structured learning environments that promote predictable and safe learning

Communicate high expectations of attendance

Yarraman P-9 State School believes that the promotion of the importance of attendance to students, parents/carers, staff and other members of the community leads to improved student attendance for all students. Yarraman P-9 State School is committed to communicating high expectations of attendance by:

- publicising year level attendance during parade weekly
- link between attendance and Rewards Day
- students owning and understanding their individual attendance as a part of the wellbeing program and from class. Student document their attendance weekly.
- discussing reasonable and unreasonable excuses for student absence to students and parents/carers through newsletters and enrolment interviews
- promoting the links between school attendance and student achievement in all classrooms
- communicating the impact of absences in student report cards
- identifying clear responsibilities for the school, students and parents/carers with regards to attendance
- encouraging staff to consistently reinforce attendance expectations to students and parents/carers and their engagement with the attendance data in class dashboard

Record and follow up student absences

Yarraman P-9 State School believes that 'consistent and persistent' follow up proactively supports students attend every day, while maintaining accountability on the part of the school, student and parents/carers. Pimpama State School is committed to recording and following up student absences by:

- ensuring teachers mark class rolls every morning and afternoon in Role Marker
- establishing clear processes for recording absences and managing unexplained absences
- a dedicated attendance phone line for parents/carers to notify the school on the morning a student is absent
- a dedicated attendance text messaging system for parents/carers to respond and give reason for a student absence
- identifying clear responsibilities for the school, students and parents/carers with regards to daily absence recording
- contacting parents/carers seeking an explanation for unexplained absences via phone and text.

Monitor student non-attendance

Yarraman P-9 State School believes understanding a student's attendance pattern and trend enables staff to focus their attention on specific attendance issues. Yarraman P-9 State School is committed to monitoring student attendance via Class Dashboard in OneShcool. The following metrics have been established to categorise attendance.

Eligibility for Rewards Day <90%

Acceptable Attendance <85%

Irregular absenteeism (Attendance between 65%-85%)

Chronic absenteeism (Attendance below 65%)



Internal Procedures to Improve Student Attendance

Recording absences

Recording absence with a reasonable excuse

- Attendance Officer/s review absence line to determine reasons for absence.
- If the reason is known, the Attendance Officer/s determines if a reasonable excuse is given based on the [*Director-General's Guidelines for authorised officers on how to determine whether parents have a reasonable excuse \(Appendix C\)*](#).
- Reasonable excuses are coded in OneSchool using the following reason codes:

Reason	Code	Description	Examples	Considered Reasonable	Counted as absence
School activity	A	<p>Student is participating in an authorised school activity for school purposes.</p> <p>NOTE: If used for attendance at hospital school, upon discharge from hospital, the hospital school should advise the usual school of any variations in the student's attendance. Replace Code A with Code I (Illness and medical appointments) for days when the student has not participated in the education program at the hospital school due to illness.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Performing in school choir, band or dance group<input type="checkbox"/> Participating in youth parliament or council, or in community service<input type="checkbox"/> Attending a hospital school	Yes	No
Attendance not required	B	<p>Student is not required to attend school on this day as it is not included in their educational program.</p> <p>This may include part-time students, or students whose educational program does not require their attendance on particular days.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><input type="checkbox"/> Year 12 students with a four day timetable<input type="checkbox"/> Exam blocks where students are not required to attend on days with no exams<input type="checkbox"/> Students suspended with charge related reasons and who have enrolled at a school of distance	Yes	No

Reason	Code	Description	Examples	Considered Reasonable	Counted as absence
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> education or an educational program <input type="checkbox"/> Students in a youth detention centre 		
Excursion	C	Student is participating in an excursion that occurs outside the school grounds and is conducted, organised and/or approved by the school.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Includes part-day, full-day or multi-day class visits to venues outside the school School camps <input type="checkbox"/> 	Yes	No
Sorry Business	D	<p>Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander students participating in Sorry Business.</p> <p>Parents should be encouraged to ensure their child misses as little school as possible. Schools should work with families to encourage them to have the child attend school to maintain a sense of normalcy. These situations should be handled with respect and sensitivity and should be underpinned by the interests of the child.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Cultural activities related to a recent family bereavement Grief for a close family member <input type="checkbox"/> 	Yes	Yes
Off campus activity	F	Student is participating in an authorised activity that is away from the school campus. These activities will be regular and ongoing in nature.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Flexible arrangements <input type="checkbox"/> Attendance at a TAFE or other training provider course <input type="checkbox"/> Participation in a school-based apprenticeship or traineeship <input type="checkbox"/> Attendance at a Positive Learning Centre 	Yes	No

Family reasons	G	<p>Student is absent due to family circumstances beyond the influence of the student. The parent is aware that their child is absent and an explanation has been provided to the school.</p> <p>Where these absences are persistent and regular, principals should discuss the situation with the parent and/or student to determine if additional supports and/or</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Moving house <input type="checkbox"/> Transport issues <input type="checkbox"/> Family member is ill or in hospital	Yes	Yes
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Reason	Code	Description	Examples	Considered Reasonable	Counted as absence
		strategies are required to strengthen engagement and improve attendance.			
Holiday	H	<p>The parent, or the student if they are living independently (available to DoE employees only), has informed the school that the student/family is taking a holiday. Note that holidays during the school term should be discouraged. If the absence is more than 10 consecutive days, an exemption is available. Refer to Exemptions from compulsory schooling and compulsory participation.</p>		Yes	Yes

Illness and medical appointments	I	<p>The parent, or the student if they are living independently (available to DoE employees only), has informed the school that the student is sick.</p> <p>Where these absences are persistent and regular, schools may request that documentary evidence (e.g. medical certificate) is provided. If a medical certificate has been provided, this should be noted in OneSchool and kept on file.</p> <p>If a student is unable to attend school for a period longer than 10 consecutive school days, an exemption is available. Refer to Exemptions from compulsory schooling and compulsory participation.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> All references to ill health or reasons related to the health of the student (including mental health), <input type="checkbox"/> Absences to attend medical/dental/health professional appointments during school hours <input type="checkbox"/> School refusal (i.e. student refusing to go to school due to a fear of attending school or anxiety about leaving home) <input type="checkbox"/> Absence is subject to a direction or order given about an infections or contagious disease or condition 	Yes	Yes
Natural disaster	N	<p>Student is unable to attend school due to an extreme weather event or other natural disaster.</p> <p>This code may be used whether or not the student is continuing with school work while absent from school, and may be used for full or part-day absences.</p>		Yes	No

Reason	Code	Description	Examples	Considered Reasonable	Counted as absence
Other	O	The principal has determined that the excuse provided by the parent or student (where the student is independent , an adult, or where it would be inappropriate to ask the parent) is reasonable, however the existing absence reason codes are not suitable to use for the excuse provided.	<input type="checkbox"/> Religious observances <input type="checkbox"/> Funerals <input type="checkbox"/> Legal matters (i.e. attending court) <input type="checkbox"/> Non-representative sport events / sports events not endorsed by the school	Yes	Yes
Short suspension	P	Student is suspended for 1 to 10 days under s.283 of the EGPA.		Yes	Yes
Long suspension	Q	Student is suspended for 11 to 20 days under s.283 of the EGPA, or for a student with charge-related reasons who has not enrolled at a school of distance education or engaged in an educational program.		Yes	Yes
Suspension pending exclusion	R	Student is suspended pending an exclusion decision by the principal.		Yes	Yes
Sport (Representative)	S	Student is representing their school, district, region, state or nation at a sporting event recognised by the school. NOTE: If non-representative sport, use Code O (Other).		Yes	No
Work experience	W	Student is participating in a work experience program approved and organised by the school.		Yes	No

Exemptions	Z	<p>Student has been granted an exemption from schooling. Refer to Exemptions from compulsory schooling and compulsory participation.</p> <p>Refer to Guidelines for recording attendance of students who are enrolled but not attending school and cannot be located, and students who have been granted an exemption from schooling</p>		Yes	No
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Recording absence without a reasonable excuse

- If the reason is deemed unreasonable, the Attendance Officer/s contact the parent/carers (via phone or email) to provide further clarification about the reason.
- Further clarification is discussed with the Deputy Principal.
- Reasonable excuses are coded in OneSchool using the reason codes above. ▪ Unreasonable excuses are coded in OneSchool as **J – unauthorised**.

Recording absence without a known reason (unexplained)

- Attendance Officer/s Code as **U (unexplained)**. This includes late arrivals and early departures.
- Attendance Officer/s contact the parents/carers (via SMS or phone call) requesting a reason for absence.
- If a reason is provided, determine if the reason given is reasonable or unreasonable and code in OneSchool as appropriate. ▪ If a reason for absence is not given, code on OneSchool remains as **U (unexplained)**

Reason	Code	Description	Examples	Considered Reasonable	Counted as absence
Unexplained	U	No reason has been given for the student's absence.		No	Yes
Unauthorised	J	The excuse given for a student absence is deemed as unreasonable by the principal. The reason (with any supporting evidence) as to why an explanation is considered to be unreasonable must be documented in OneSchool.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Leisure activities• Shopping• Visiting friends and relatives• Celebrating birthdays• Fishing □ Truancy Any other reason for absence that the principal does not consider to be reasonable	No	Yes

Recording part day absences

- Early departures (before 2:45pm) and late arrivals (after 8:40am) are coded in OneSchool using the following codes.

Type of Absence	Code	Explanatory notes	Counted as half day absence
Early (No Penalty)	E	Student left early, but within the final 2 hours of scheduled schooling. This will not count as an afternoon/half day absence.	No
Late (No Penalty)	L	Student arrived late, but within 2 hours of scheduled schooling. This will not count as a morning/half day absence.	No
Morning	M	Student was absent for the morning. This will count as a half day absence.	Yes
Afternoon	P	Student was absent during the afternoon.	Yes