

Attendance Policy





School attendance

School absenteeism and student attendance is a complex issue which includes a range of student behaviours including school refusal and truancy.

[Parents, caregivers](#) and [schools](#) can access strategies to improve student attendance through the Every day counts [resources](#).

Every day counts is a state wide initiative that aims to assist in improving student attendance at school through a shared commitment by students, parents, caregivers, schools and the community to improve students' attendance at school.

To do this, Every day counts promotes four key messages:

- 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
- truancy 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.

Staff at Beerwah State High School must follow and promote high expectations of student attendance. This message is communicated consistently to students and the school community. At Beerwah State High School, we communicate this through the school's website, newsletters, enrolment package and text messages.

Addressing student absenteeism

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.

A 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.

Responsibility of Staff

- **Record and follow up student absences**

Unexplained absences are not acceptable and must be followed up by form teachers, classroom teachers and HODs. 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.

Responsibility of HOYs

- **Monitor student non-attendance**

The school's attendance data will be analysed by HOYs to identify school and student absenteeism trends, in partnership with the Attendance Officer. Absence patterns will be investigated and their relationship to factors such as the day of the week, the class/subject/year level, gender/culture.

- **Provide intervention and support**

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. Schools may 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.

Exemptions from Compulsory Schooling and Compulsory Participation

Circumstances where **an exemption from schooling for a child or young person may be appropriate** include (but are not limited to):

- diagnosis of terminal medical condition;
- illness or hospitalisation for a prolonged period of time;
- 'carer' responsibilities;
- mental health condition.

Circumstances where **an exemption from schooling for a child or young person may not be appropriate** include (but are not limited to):

- reluctance to attend school;
- response to incidents at school such as bullying;
- employment (for compulsory school aged child) or desire to seek employment;
- difficulty with school curriculum;
- desire to become an apprentice or trainee but without an established training contract with an employer.

Roll Marking

Table 1 – Absence codes for full or part day absence

Type of Absence	Code	Explanatory notes
Entire day	A	Student was absent entire day.
Early (No Penalty)	E	<p>Student left early, but within the final 2 hours of scheduled schooling. This will not count as an afternoon/half day absence.</p> <p>If the student left earlier than 2 hours prior to the end of the scheduled school day, this will count as an afternoon/half day absence (see "P" code).</p>
Late (No Penalty)	L	<p>Student arrived late, but within 2 hours of scheduled schooling. This will not count as a morning/half day absence.</p> <p>If the student arrived after the first 2 hours of the scheduled school day, this will count as a morning/half day absence (see "M" code).</p>
Morning	M	Student was absent for the morning. This will count as a half day absence.
Afternoon	P	Student was absent during the afternoon. This will count as a half day absence.

Roll Marking

Table 2 – Absence reason codes for reasonable excuse

Reason why student is not physically present at school	Code	Explanatory notes	Counted as an absence*
School activity	A	Student is participating in an authorised school activity for school purposes. May include participation in school choirs, youth parliament, or community service, or attendance at a hospital school. Refer to the Guidelines.	No
Excursion	C	Student is participating in an excursion which occurs outside the school grounds and is conducted, organised and/or approved by the school. Excursions could include part-day, full-day or multi-day class visits to venues outside the school or school camps.	No
Off Campus activity	F	Student is participating in an authorised activity that is away from the school campus. These activities may include flexible arrangements, attendance at a TAFE or other training provider course, participation in a VET activity or participation in a school-based apprenticeship or traineeship. These activities will be regular and ongoing.	No
Holiday	H	The parent, or the student if they are living independently, 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 required. Refer to Exemptions from Compulsory Schooling and Compulsory Participation .	Yes
Illness Dental	I	The parent, or the student if they are living independently, has informed the school that the student is sick. This includes all references to ill health, medical reasons and dental appointments/procedures related to the student. If a medical certificate has been provided this should be noted in OneSchool and kept on file. If a student is unable to attend school for a period longer than 10 consecutive school days, an exemption is required. Refer to Exemptions from Compulsory Schooling and Compulsory Participation . A student may be absent from school if the student is, or is a member of a class of persons that is, subject to a direction or order given about an infections or contagious disease or condition.	Yes
Natural Disaster	N	Student is unable to attend school due to an extreme weather event or other natural disaster.	No
Other	O	The principal has determined that the excuse provided by the parent or student (where the student is an adult or where it would be inappropriate to ask the parent) is reasonable. Principals must use the Guidelines to determine reasonable excuses and document these reasons. This code may be used for religious observances, funerals, and legal matters.	Yes
Suspension 1 - 10 days	P	Student is suspended for 1 to 10 days under s285 of the EGPA.	Yes
Suspension 10 – 20 days	Q	Student is suspended for 10 to 20 days under s285 of the EGPA.	Yes
Suspension – recommended exclusion	R	Student is suspended with the recommendation for exclusion under s290 of EGPA.	Yes
Sport (Representative Sport)	S	Student is representing their school, district, region, state or nation at a sporting event recognised by the school.	No, if representing their school, district state or region. Yes, in all other circumstances
Sport (Non-representative)	O	Student is participating in sporting activities that are not endorsed by the school and is not representing the school, district, region, state, or nation.	Yes
Work experience	W	Student is participating in an approved work experience program.	No

*For absences less than 2 hours (i.e. E or L code from Table 1), the absence will not be counted irrespective of reason given.

Guidelines for determining whether excuses for student absences are considered reasonable excuses

Pursuant to s176(1) of the Education General Provisions Act (EGPA) 2006, 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. Pursuant to s239(1) of the Education General Provisions Act (EGPA) 2006 a 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.

A student who is participating in one of the following activities must be recorded as not physically present at the school site but will not be recorded as absent for the purpose of report cards or school attendance data:

School activity (Absence Reason Code A) – A student will not be considered absent when they are participating in an authorised activity for school purposes. Examples include students performing in school choirs, bands or dance groups, students participating in a youth parliament or council, or students participating in community service. Students attending a hospital school should also be marked with Code A. Upon discharge from hospital, the hospital school should advise the usual school of any variations in the student’s attendance. Code A should be replaced with Code I (Illness) for days when the student has not participated in the education program at the hospital school due to illness.

Excursion (Absence Reason Code C) – A student will not be considered absent when they are participating in an excursion which occurs outside the school grounds and is conducted, organised and/or approved by the school. Excursions include part-day, full-day or multi-day class visits to venues outside the school, and school camps.

Natural Disaster (Absence Reason Code N) – A student will not be considered absent if they are unable to attend school due to an extreme weather event or other natural disaster. 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.

Off Campus Activity (Absence Reason Code F) – A student will not be considered absent if they are participating in an authorised activity that is away from the school campus. These activities may include flexible arrangements, attendance at a TAFE or other training provider course, or participation in a school-based apprenticeship or traineeship. These activities will be regular and ongoing in nature.

Sport – Representative (Absence Reason Code S) – A student will not be considered absent when they are representing the school, district, region, state or country at a sporting event approved by the school. For non-representative sport, see below.

Work experience (Absence Reason Code W) – A student will not be considered absent when they are participating in a work experience program approved and organised by the school. Work experience programs are available for students 14 years or older. Schools must ensure appropriate work experience agreements have been completed before students participate in work experience.

Students undertaking these activities must be coded as attending one of these activities.

The following circumstances will be considered absences for which a reasonable excuse has been given:

Illness, dental treatments or procedures (Absence Reason Code I) – It is reasonable that a student may be absent from school when they are genuinely too ill to attend. On any single day of absence due to illness, or as soon as possible within 2 days of the student's return to school, a parent should provide the school with an explanation for the absence, in line with the school's agreed processes for notifying of student absence. This may take the form of a written explanation note containing the student's name, date(s) of absence(s) and reason for absence(s), a verbal explanation through either a phone call or visit to the school, or a medical certificate.

If the absence is more than 10 consecutive school days, an exemption is required. Refer to [*Exemptions from Compulsory Schooling and Compulsory Participation*](#).

Infectious or contagious disease (Absence Reason Code I) – It is a reasonable excuse for a child to be absent from school if the child is, or is a member of a class of persons, that is subject to a [direction or order given about an infectious or contagious disease or condition](#).

Holiday (Absence Reason Code H) – Holidays during terms should be actively discouraged. Parents should be encouraged to plan holidays during gazetted school holiday periods and student free days. If the absence is more than 10 consecutive school days, an exemption is required. Refer to [*Exemptions from Compulsory Schooling and Compulsory Participation*](#).

Religious observance (Absence Reason Code O) – In some circumstances it may be reasonable for a student to be absent to participate in a special religious observance. These absences should be documented through the provision of a written or verbal explanation from the parent.

Sport – Non-representative (Absence Reason Code O) – Principals should use their professional judgement to determine if it is reasonable for a student to be absent from school to participate in a sporting event where they are not representing their school, district, region, state or nation, taking into consideration the type of event and the organising sporting body.

Suspension – Suspension is a reasonable excuse for absence and the following applies:

- if a student is suspended for 10 days or less (**Absence Reason Code P**) the school's principal must take reasonable steps to ensure the student is given school work to complete during the suspension;
- if a student is suspended for 10 to 20 days (**Absence Reason Code Q**) the school principal must arrange for the student's access to an educational program that allows the student to continue with their educational program during the suspension;
- if the student is suspended with a recommendation for exclusion (**Absence Reason Code R**) the school principal must arrange for the student's access to an educational program that allows the student to continue with their educational program during the suspension.

Law of the Commonwealth (Absence Reason Code O) – It is a reasonable excuse for a child to be absent from school if a Law of the Commonwealth allows a child to carry on an activity other than attending school.

Funeral (Absence Reason Code O) – Attendance at a funeral or to attend to sorry business or sorry meetings may be considered as a reasonable excuse for absence. Parents should be encouraged to ensure their child misses as little school as possible. There may also be circumstances where a child is

kept out of school due to grief of a close family member. In such circumstances, the school 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.

Legal (Absence Reason Code O) – It is a reasonable excuse for a child to be absent from school where the child is required to attend court or fulfil other legal requirements.

The following circumstances will be considered absences for which there is NOT a reasonable excuse given:

Unexplained absence (Absence Reason Code U) – When no explanation for a student absence has been offered to the school by the parent, or the student if they are living independently.

Leisure activities (Absence Reason Code J - Unauthorised) – Undertaking a leisure activity such as shopping, visiting friends and relatives, or fishing, is not considered a reasonable excuse for an absence from school.

Any other reason for absence (Absence Reason Code J - Unauthorised) – The principal should use their professional judgement in determining whether other reasons given by the parent, or the student if they are living independently, are reasonable explanations for a student's absence. If the reason given is not a reasonable excuse, the principal should document the decision and record the absence with the Code J.