



Silkstone State School Attendance Policy

2016

Rationale

All schools in Queensland are committed to providing safe and supportive learning environments for all students which address their educational needs.

Research shows that regular attendance is integral to successful academic, employment and social outcomes. Accordingly, it is important that students, staff and parents/carers have a shared understanding of the importance of regular school attendance.

Silkstone State School's attendance policy aims to provide information relevant to the schools procedures for the management of student attendance.

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. Silkstone State School:

- is committed to promoting the key message 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.

Responsibilities

School responsibilities:

- Regularly inform students, staff and parents/carers about the Silkstone State School Attendance Policy and Procedures (including the Policy and Procedures for late arrival, early departure and truanting) and make this publicly available through the school's website and newsletters.



- Monitor student attendance daily through marking the roll at the beginning of each day and each afternoon.
- Notify parents/carers of any unexplained absence, requesting a satisfactory explanation for their child's absence.
- Discuss individual attendance with families and offer support and help to parents and students when school attendance has become a problem.
- Provide students with school work when they are absent for legitimate extended periods of time.
- Notify the relevant authorities if non-attendance persists.

Student responsibilities:

- Under the Education (General Provisions) Act 2006, students must attend school each day. They must be on time and have all necessary equipment.
- Never leave school during school hours without permission from parents/carers or the school and without obtaining the appropriate Exit form from the Office.
- Report to the office if arriving to school after 9:10am and provide a note from parents/carers explaining their lateness.
- Ensure all missed school work is completed.
- Regularly discuss attendance with Class Teacher or Deputy Principal's. Ensure absence records are accurate and all absences have been explained by parents/carers.





Parent/carer responsibilities:

- ensure that their child attends school on every school day for the program in which they are enrolled.
- Provide a satisfactory explanation for all absences, that is, any time during which a student is not attending or participating in their educational program.
- Contact the school prior to any planned absence either by phone or email. Where this is not possible, parents must provide the reason for any absences prior to 10:00a.m. on the day of absence, or within 2 days of the student's return to school. This should take the form of a medical certificate for regular illness absences or a satisfactory explanation for the absence.
- Contact Administration if student absence is to be for an extended period of time (e.g. family reasons or illness) and request school work.
- Contact Administration if a student is refusing to attend school. Initiate or attend meetings to see support and discuss their child's attendance or participation in their educational program.
- Complete an Exit form at the office to collect their student if their student is required to leave school early.
- Provide a written note or email (signed and dated) from parents/carers explaining their lateness.
- Advise the school of any changes to address or phone numbers to ensure school records are accurate. Up to date data is essential in an emergency.

Strategies

At Silkstone State School we promote 100% attendance by:

- providing academic programs suited to the need of individual students and Australian Curriculum guidelines.
- acknowledging students, classes and year level cohorts with high attendance through positive incentives and public forums such as assemblies, newsletters and the school facebook site.
- tracking trends in student attendance and working closely with families of students who have high absenteeism to provide support mechanisms that lead to improvement in attendance.





Responses to absences

At Silkstone State School:

- Absences for which a satisfactory reason has been provided are considered explained absences, and the student's enrolment is viewed as continuous.
- An absence for which a satisfactory reason has not been provided is considered an unexplained absence.

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** – 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.
- **Excursion** – 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.
- **Sport – Representative** – 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.

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

- **Illness** – It is reasonable that a child 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 through either a phone call or visit to the school, or a medical certificate. If the absence is more than 10 consecutive days, an exemption is required.
- **Infectious or contagious disease** – It is a reasonable excuse for a child to be absent from school if the child is, is subject to a direction or order given about an infectious or contagious disease or condition.
- **Medical or dental treatments or procedures** – In some circumstances it may be reasonable for a student to be absent to attend a medical or dental appointment during school hours, however, parents are encouraged to make these appointments out of school hours if possible.





- **Holiday** – Holidays during terms are 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.
- **Religious observance** – 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** – Principals will 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 5 days or less the school's principal will take reasonable steps to ensure the student is given school work to complete during the suspension;
 - If a student is suspended for more than 5 days or is suspended with a recommendation for exclusion the school principal will arrange for the student's access to an educational program that allows the student to continue their educational program during suspension.
- **Funeral** – 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 will work with families to encourage them to have the child attend school to maintain a sense of normalcy. These situations will be handled with respect and sensitivity and will be underpinned by the interests of the child.
- **Legal** – 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** – When no explanation for a student absence has been offered to the school by the parent.
- **Leisure activities** – Undertaking a leisure activity such as shopping, visiting friends and relatives, or a party, is not considered a reasonable excuse for an absence from school.
- **Any other reason for absence** – The principal will use their professional judgement in determining whether other reasons given by the parent 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.

Procedures for unexplained absences:

- When students are absent without explanation for 3 days, class teachers are encouraged to make contact home, reminding parents/carers of their obligations to ensure their child attends school on every school day and the requirement for providing satisfactory explanations of all absences. Deputy Principals and the Principal will support class teachers to make this contact when requested.
- Where there is a continuation of unexplained absences, pattern of absences, or absences without satisfactory reasons, parents will be required to attend a meeting with the Deputy Principal/Principal to address issues contributing to these absences and to discuss implementation of appropriate strategies and support mechanisms.
- Where unsatisfactory attendance still continues, the Principal may commence processes associated with Enforcement of Compulsory Schooling and Compulsory Participation.

Reporting and monitoring attendance

At Silkstone State 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:

- Contacting administration on (07) 3437 2111 preferably before 10:00am or the absentee line on (07) 3437 2166.
- Writing a signed and dated note for their child to hand in or send an e-mail to the class teacher.

Silkstone State School will maintain attendance records and monitor attendance of enrolled students through implementing the following procedures:

- Students are required to be at school by 8:50am to ensure they go to class in adequate time.
- Students continually late to class will be referred to the Deputy Principal.
- Class rolls will be marked by staff at the beginning of each day as well as after second break.

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](#)

