EVERY DAY COUNTS

Rational

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

Blackwater State High School expects Students are expected to be in fulltime attendance at school every day during the school year. Consistent attendance at school is a significant factor in achieving better academic and social outcomes. New concepts and skills are taught and reinforced each day by the teachers. If students miss the introduction or the reinforcement of these concepts and skills, they are likely to have gaps in their learning.

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 student attendance.

Blackwater State High School:
- Is committed to promoting the key messages of the Queensland State-wide initiative Every Day Counts which 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
  - Truanting 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

Aims

To provide students with the ability to achieve to the best of their ability and to create a clear, inclusive and simple attendance policy that promotes high expectations of student attendance.

At Blackwater State High School, we are committed to achieving the following targets in improving attendance:
- A 92% average attendance rate for students in 2016.

It is important that students, staff and parents/carers have a shared understanding of the importance of attending school. Blackwater 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.

Responsibilities

Parent 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. Where this is not possible, parents must provide the reason for any absences prior to 10.00 a.m. on the day of absence, or within 2 days of the student's return to school. This may take the form of a medical certificate or a satisfactory explanation for the absence.

Contact the Attendance Officer or the Year Level Co-ordinator if student absence is to be for an extended period of time (eg family reasons or illness) and request school work.

Contact a School Guidance Officer or Deputy if a student is refusing to attend school. Initiate or attend meetings to seek support and discuss their child's attendance or participation in their educational program.

Provide a written note (signed and dated) to the form teacher, if their child requires a Leave Pass to leave school early.

Provide a written note (signed and dated) from parents/carers explaining their lateness.

Advise the school of any change of address or phone numbers to ensure school records are accurate. Up to date data is essential in an emergency.

School responsibilities:

- Regularly inform students, staff and parents/carers about the Blackwater State High 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, newsletters and enrolment package.
- Monitor student attendance daily through marking the roll at the beginning of each day in Form Class, marking teacher rolls each lesson.
- Notify parents/carers of any unexplained absence, requesting a satisfactory explanation for their child's absence.
- Notify the Wellbeing HOD SS when concerned that the explanation for student absence is unsatisfactory.
- Discuss individual attendance with students 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 an appropriate Leave Pass from the Office.
- Report to the office if arriving to school after 8.50 am and provide a note from parents/carers explaining their lateness.
- Ensure all missed school work is completed.
- Regularly discuss attendance with Form teacher. Ensure absence records are accurate and all absences have been explained by parents/carers.

Procedures

At Blackwater State High School we promote 100% attendance by:

- Ensuring that all parents and students are made aware of the attendance policy
- Communicating with parents via SMS, phone & mail when students are not in attendance at school.
- Reporting attendance details on student report cards
- Students will receive formal acknowledgement from the principal if they achieve 95-100% attendance on a Semester basis.
Reporting and Monitoring Attendance

At Blackwater State High School, student absence, lateness or truanting are taken seriously.

Attendance
If students are absent from school at any time, parents/carers should advise the school by 10.00 am and provide a satisfactory explanation for the absence. They can do this by:

- Phoning the school administration, preferably before 10.00 am
- Writing a note to their child’s Form teacher

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

- Students are required to be at school by 8.50 am to ensure they go to Form Class or Parade(s) in adequate time. Student attendance is taken for the first time in Form Class.
- Students continually late to Form Class will be referred to the Year Level Head of Department.
- Class rolls will be marked by staff at the beginning of each lesson. Teachers will only mark students as being in attendance if students are physically present in the classroom.

Lateness

- Students who arrive late to school after 8.50 am are required to report to the Office, present their ID card and read the daily notices which are posted on the notice board. If a student has no valid reason for the lateness, they will be given a lunch time detention. It is expected that students who are late will provide a note from their parents/carers explaining their lateness.
- Students will be issued with a Late Pass to present to the class teacher.
- Students who continually arrive late to school will be required to attend an interview with the Year Level Head of Department and their parents. Suspension and cancellation of enrolment may be considered for students who fail to respond.

Leaving school during the day

- Students are not permitted to leave school during school hours without providing a dated and signed letter of permission from parents/carers.
- This letter must be signed by the Form teacher and taken to the Office at first break. An appropriate Leave Pass will be issued to the student.
- Appointments to doctors, dentists or other urgent appointments should be the only reasons students leave early. Appointment cards, doctor’s letters or medical certificates will be required.

Truancy

- The Attendance Officer will generate an Attendance Variance Report and provide this Report to the Deputy Principal (Attendance). Names of all students on this report will be listed on the Student Notices and interviewed by the Deputy Principal (Attendance). Students found to be truanting will be disciplined under the school’s Responsible Behaviour Plan for students.

Responses to Absences

The Principal is able to seek advice from Central Office Legal & Administrative Law Branch regarding consent to prosecute parents/carers. At Blackwater State High School reports of absence or truanting are taken seriously.

Absences for which a satisfactory reason has been provided are considered explained absences, and the student’s enrolment is viewed as continuous. Undertaking a leisure activity such as shopping, visiting friends and relatives, fishing or camping, is not considered a satisfactory explanation for an absence.

An absence for which a satisfactory reason has not been provided is considered an unexplained absence.
Procedures for unexplained absences:

- Parents/carers with mobile phone numbers recorded in the school’s database will be notified each day of an unexplained absence via text message. Parents are required to respond to these text messages by contacting the Attendance Officer by phone. Parents/carers are asked to immediately contact the Attendance Officer on the absence line if they believe their child is in attendance.
- When students are absent without explanation for 3 consecutive days,
- When students are absent without explanation for 2 or more days in any given fortnight, an Absence Letter will be mailed home, reminding parents/carers of their obligations to ensure their child attends school on every school day and the requirement for providing satisfactory explanations for all absences. Parents are asked to provide the reason for the unexplained absences, sign and return the Absence Report to the child’s Form teacher. Alternatively, they may phone the Attendance Officer.
- Where there is a continuation of unexplained absences, or absences without satisfactory reasons, parents will be required to attend a meeting with the 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.

The Principal is able to seek advice from Central Office Legal & Administrative Law Branch regarding consent to prosecute parents/carers.

Some related resources

Every Day Counts

Departmental Policies

SMS-PR-017: Enforcement of Compulsory Schooling and Compulsory Participation Phase
http://education.qld.gov.au/strategic/eppr/students/smspr017/

SMS-PR-029: Managing Student Absences
http://education.qld.gov.au/strategic/eppr/students/smspr029/

SMS-PR-036: Roll Marking in State Schools
http://education.qld.gov.au/strategic/eppr/students/smspr036/