



ATTENDANCE POLICY AND PROCEDURE

Title	1.10-006 Attendance Policy and Procedure
Category	School Operations
Policy Owner	College Leadership
Approver	College Leadership
Related Documents	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Education (General Provisions) Act 2006 (Qld)</i>• Mueller College Enrolment Contract
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1. Rationale

Mueller College is committed to providing a safe and supportive learning environment to meet the educational needs of all students. We recognise that every day of attendance in school contributes towards student learning and that maximising school attendance enhances academic and social outcomes. Mueller College aims to provide an optimal learning and social environment which promotes and supports high expectations of student attendance.

Therefore, we expect each enrolled student to attend for the entirety of every school day unless there is a reasonable excuse¹.

Mueller College Attendance Policy aims to maximise student learning opportunities and performance by managing student absences and enforcing parent's obligations to ensure children are enrolled and attend school on every school day or participate full-time in their eligible option.

2. Principles of School Attendance

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

- All Mueller College students below or at compulsory school age (Prep - Year 10) attend school all day and on every school day.
- All students in the compulsory participation phase (Years 11 & 12) have the same attendance expectations as the compulsory phase and should attend school all day, on every school day.
- Regular monitoring, communication and implementation of support strategies for school attendance are important for maintaining regular school attendance for all students.
- Truancy can place a student in unsafe situations and negatively impact their education.
- Supporting optimal school attendance is the responsibility of everyone in the community.
- Chronic Absenteeism at Mueller College is deemed to be below 85% attendance over a 4 week period.

3. Responsibilities

School Responsibilities

- Regularly inform and update students, staff and parents/carers regarding the attendance policy and procedures. This policy is publicly available via the website and parent portal.
- Inform parents of their legal obligations about enrolment and attendance and implement a process for ensuring parental obligation for the compulsory and compulsory participation phases of schooling is met.
- Monitor student attendance and absence through accurate and regular roll marking.
- Notify parents/carers of an unexplained absence of their child, as soon as practicable on the day, and request a satisfactory explanation for their student's absence.
- Implement procedures to follow up unexplained or regular absences as soon as practicable with parents/carers.
- Provide students with schoolwork when they are absent from school, with a reasonable excuse, for an extended period.
- Discuss with students and their parents their personal attendance and offer support where absence has become chronic.
- Notify relevant authorities if non-attendance persists.

¹ See 4. Definitions

Parent Responsibilities

- It is the expectation, as stated in the enrolment contract, that parents support the application of the Attendance Policy with respect to their child.
- Ensure that their child attends school on every school day, on time and all 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 the educational program as timetabled, including excursions and school events.
- Contact the College via Parent Portal prior to any planned absences. For planned absences of a certain length the following processes should be followed:
 - **3 - 9 days:** Parents complete a student leave form and submit to the school (Primary Classroom Teacher or Secondary Year Level Coordinator (YLC)) prior to absence.
 - **10 - 110 days:** Complete the "Application for Exemption from Attendance" form and submit it to the school prior to the planned absence for approval.
 - **Please Note:** When planning absences during an assessment period, these applications include an application to modify assessment dates due to absence. Modifications are a school decision and an early finish to a school term, or missing advertised assessment dates may mean there is no assessment or credit able to be given for that semester.
- It is important to schedule appointments, unless absolutely necessary, outside of school hours.
- Under no circumstances should students be given access to Parent Portal to manage their own absence, irrespective of age or year level. Students who are found to be using Parent Portal may have their absences considered as truancy.

Student Responsibilities

- Students must attend school on every school day.
- Students must be on time and have all equipment needed.
- Never leave school during school hours without permission from parents/carers and following the appropriate school procedures.
- Report to Student Services or the Front Office to sign in if arriving at school after 8:30am (primary) or 8:35am (secondary).
- Ensure all missed schoolwork is completed.
- If an absence from school is planned, students must submit all assessment on or before the due date for that assessment.

4. Definitions

- **Reasonable Excuse:** Absences where the excuse provided is deemed reasonable by the Head of College, or delegate. These include illness, funerals, medical or dental appointments or other unforeseen events.
- **Unauthorised Absence:** Absences where the excuse is not deemed reasonable and therefore the absence is unauthorised include providing insufficient evidence for an absence (e.g. medical certificate), extended or consistent absences for family reasons or appointments, extended holidays.
- **Truancy:** The situation of children being absent from school without the permission from the school or parents.
- **Unexplained Absence:** When no explanation for a student absence has been offered to the school by the parent, or the student if they are living independently.
- **School Refusal:** When poor attendance is related to some anxiety or worry that the child or young person has about attending school. Parents and carers are usually aware that their child is not going and have been making efforts to alleviate the anxiety and to encourage them to attend school.

- **Regular (Chronic) Absenteeism:** Absenteeism is regular (chronic) if a student's attendance due to unauthorised or unexplained absence falls below a threshold of 85% over a four-week period. If a student's absenteeism is considered chronic the school will implement procedures for managing absenteeism.
- **Exemption:** Students can apply for an exemption from attendance if they have regular absences due to a reasonable or unauthorised reason, using a form provided by the school and pending Principal approval.

Definitions are provided by Queensland Department of Education Fact Sheet. Making every day count.

5. Procedures for Managing Attendance and Absenteeism

Attendance and Roll Marking

Start of the Day

- Attendance is marked by classroom teachers (Primary school) and Form Class teachers (secondary school) promptly and accurately in TASS. Students can only be marked present if they are physically present in the class at the time of roll marking.
- Students are expected to be at their classroom in time for the class to start promptly on the bell to start classes.

Roll Marking in Classes

- Rolls are marked in the Primary school at the start of the day.
- Rolls are marked in the Secondary school at the start of every new class. The rolls are only marked at the start of a double period and not remarked for the second lesson of the double, unless there is a break (morning tea or lunch) in between.
- Students who are present at school but absent from the class are noted, and Student Services are contacted immediately to inform them of absence. If a student has been marked absent but is present in the classroom, Student Services should be notified by email.
- Students who are late to class without a valid reason will receive an appropriate consequence and persistent lateness will be followed up by the primary classroom teacher or the Secondary YLC.

Late Arrivals and Early Departures

- Students who come late to school, or need to leave early, must sign in or out at the front office or Student Services. This requires parent permission, and a reason must be provided. These absences count towards the student's total absences.
- The student will go directly to their class after signing in and present the late slip to the teacher.
- Students who are late to school without a valid reason will receive an appropriate consequence and persistent lateness will be followed up by a YLC.
- Students who are unwell will report to the Health Room. If they subsequently need to go home early this departure will be processed by the Health Room staff and communicated to relevant teaching staff.

Parent Communication of Non-Attendance

- If a student is absent from school, parents should communicate this absence and the reason for absence before the start of the school day by using Parent Portal.
- A follow up reminder by SMS will be sent to parents seeking a reason for any unexplained absences. A further reminder is sent if the absence remains unexplained in the afternoon.

6. Extracts from *Education (General Provisions) Act*

Chapter 9 Compulsory Schooling

Part 1 Compulsory schooling requirements

Division 1 Parent's obligations

Section 176 Obligation of each parent

- (1) Each parent of a child who is of compulsory school age must—
 - (a) ensure the child is enrolled at a State school or non-State school; and
 - (b) ensure the child attends the State school or non-State school, on every school day, for the educational program in which the child is enrolled; unless the parent has a reasonable excuse.

Maximum penalty -

- (a) for a first offence—6 penalty units; or
 - (b) for a second or subsequent offence, whether or not relating to the same child of the parent— 12 penalty units.
- (2) Without limiting subsection (1), it is a reasonable excuse for a parent (the relevant parent) that—
 - (a) the child lives with another parent and the relevant parent believes, on reasonable grounds, that the other parent is complying with subsection (1); or
 - (b) in all the circumstances, the relevant parent is not reasonably able to control the child's behaviour to the extent necessary to comply with subsection (1).
- (3) Subsection (1) applies subject to parts 2 to 4.

Section 177 What is attendance

- (1) A child attends a State school or non-State school only if the child complies with the school's requirements about physically attending, at particular times, its premises or another place.
- (2) However, despite subsection (1)—
 - (a) a child enrolled in a program of distance education is taken to attend the school of distance education offering the program by completing and returning the assigned work for the program; and
 - (b) a child enrolled in an external program is taken to attend the State school or non-State school offering the program by complying with its requirements about communicating with or contacting the school for the purpose of participating in the program.

Section 178 Notice to, and meeting with, parent

- (1) This section applies if an authorised officer reasonably suspects—
 - (a) a child who is of compulsory school age—
 - (i) is not enrolled at a State school or non-State school; or
 - (ii) is not attending the State school or non-State school at which the child is enrolled, on every school day, for the educational program in which the child is enrolled; and
 - (b) parts 2 to 4 do not apply to the child.
- (2) The officer may give a parent of the child a notice in the approved form about the parent's obligation under section 176(1).
- (3) The officer may also meet with the parent to discuss the obligation.
- (4) If, despite the officer taking reasonable steps to meet with the parent under subsection (3), no meeting is held, the officer may give the parent a warning notice in the approved form.
- (5) For the Police Powers and Responsibilities Act 2000, section 16, an authorised officer acting under this section is a public official performing a function authorised by this Act.

(6) In this section— authorised officer means the chief executive or an officer of the department authorised by the chief executive for this section.

Chapter 10 Compulsory participation in education or training

Part 2 Participation in a program or course

Section 234 What is participation

- (1) A young person is participating in an eligible option only if the person is—
 - (a) enrolled with the provider in the relevant program or course; and
 - (b) complying with the provider’s attendance requirements for the program or course.
- (2) The provider’s attendance requirements for a program or course are the requirements about physically attending, at particular times, the provider’s premises, or another place.
- (3) However, despite subsection (2)—
 - (a) the provider’s attendance requirements for a program of distance education are to complete and return the assigned work for the program; and
 - (b) the provider’s attendance requirements for an external program are its requirements about communicating with or contacting the provider for the purpose of participating in the program or course.

Section 235 Full-time participation

A reference to full-time participation in an eligible option—

- (a) is a reference to participation in an eligible option at a level that is full-time under the requirements of the option; and
- (b) includes part-time participation in 2 or more eligible options to an extent that is at least equivalent to full-time participation in 1 option.

Example for paragraph (b)—

A young person is participating part-time in an educational program at a State school or non-State school (the *school program*) and part-time in a course of vocational education and training at a TAFE institute or statutory TAFE institute (the *VET course*).

The levels of participation are—

- 60% of full-time participation in the school program
- 40% of full-time participation in the VET course.

Section 236 Allowed absence

A young person’s participation in an eligible option is taken to continue during an absence allowed under the requirements of the option.

Example—

A person enrolled in an educational program at a State school is absent for a day because of illness.

Part 4 Parents' obligation

Section 239 Obligation to ensure participation

(1) 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.

Maximum penalty -

- (a) for a first offence—6 penalty units; or
 - (b) for a second or subsequent offence, whether or not relating to the same child of the parent— 12 penalty units.
- (2) Without limiting subsection (1), it is a reasonable excuse for a parent (the relevant parent) that—
- (a) the young person lives with another parent and the relevant parent believes, on reasonable grounds, the other parent is ensuring the young person participates full-time in an eligible option; or
 - (b) in all the circumstances, the relevant parent is not reasonably able to control the young person's behaviour to the extent necessary to ensure the young person participates full-time in an eligible option.