

Middlemount Community School

Attendance Policy

According to the Education (General Provisions) Act 2006, “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.” (Chapter 9, Part 1)

The Impact of Attendance on Student Outcomes

If your child is going to have an unavoidable extended absence, we ask that you consider the following:

- Long absences from school make “catching up” for students very difficult. While teachers do what they can to assist your child, our daily timetables are already very full and there is little “spare” time for catching students up.
- Long absences can cause additional stress and challenge the confidence of a student on their return to school, as they try to keep up with other students
- Research shows that poor school attendance is associated with:
 - ✓ lower academic achievement including literacy and numeracy
 - ✓ early school leaving
 - ✓ leaving school with fewer qualifications
 - ✓ reduced opportunities for students to learn and access educational resources, further limiting achievement
 - ✓ further absenteeism in higher year levels
 - ✓ increased alcohol, tobacco, and substance use in adolescents.

Explained Absences

From time to time a student may be absent from their educational program. Parents comply with their compulsory schooling or compulsory participation obligation by providing a satisfactory reason (<http://ppr.det.qld.gov.au/education/management/Pages/Roll-Marking-in-State-Schools.aspx>) for these absences, unless the student is an adult or it is not appropriate to contact the student’s parents, in which case an explanation should be sought directly from the student. Parents should provide a reason for a child’s absence as soon as possible after the absence. Explanations for student absences can only be given by a parent or guardian.

Unexplained Absences

Students with unexplained absences will receive a letter to take home, each term. We ask that parents provide explanations for the listed absences and return the letter to the office. This will help us to keep our records up to date.

Exemptions from Compulsory Schooling and Compulsory Participation

Parents can apply for an exemption when their child cannot attend or it would be unreasonable in all the circumstances for their child to attend school or participate in an eligible option for a period of more than 10 consecutive school days.

Situations where an application for an exemption may be made include:

- Illness
- Family reasons
- Cultural or religious reasons

If your child is exempted from compulsory schooling, parents are excused from your obligation in relation to compulsory schooling or compulsory participation.

The school principal is not responsible for providing an educational program to your child, however they may provide advice on other educational options available.

Applying for an exemption

Parents are encouraged to discuss with the school whether an application for exemption is a suitable option. The school can provide you with an application form for an exemption. It is important that supporting documentation and evidence are attached to the application.

When a decision about the exemption has been made, you will be informed in writing whether or not the exemption has been granted and if any conditions have been imposed. If you are not satisfied with the decision made, you can make a submission for the decision to be reviewed.

Long Absences (more than three days)

If your child is going to be unavoidably absent from school we ask that parents follow these guidelines.

Primary students

1. Notify your child's teacher and the office at least one week prior to the absence.
2. Speak with the teacher to discuss your child's learning needs during the absence. Teachers are not responsible for providing an educational program during a long absence and will do so only if:
 - The nature of the work being covered can be easily and conveniently provided to the student. In primary, only basic English and Maths will be provided.
 - One week's notice is given so that the teacher can prepare appropriate learning materials. Shorter notice than this makes it very difficult for a teacher to develop meaningful work.
 - Work is collected in person by the parent. Work can only be emailed if prior arrangements have been made and the nature of the work allows it to be emailed.
3. Ensure that your child completes the set work during the absence.

4. Speak with your child's teacher when your child returns to school. If your student requires additional catch-up work, the teacher will seek your support to ensure that this is completed at home as homework.

Assessment tasks will not be given as take home work, unless the teacher deems this appropriate. Where students have missed work or assessment, they will be given a result based on the available information. This may mean an absent student will receive an "N".

Secondary students

1. Notify the Secondary Head of Department, Chris Savage (csava35@eq.edu.au) and the office at least one week prior to the absence.
2. Speak with Mr Savage to discuss your child's learning needs during the absence. He will discuss with you the assessment due during and after the absence and notify teachers. Teachers are not responsible for providing an educational program during a long absence and will do so only if:
 - The nature of the work being covered can be easily and conveniently provided to the student.
 - One week's notice is given so that the teacher can prepare appropriate learning materials. Shorter notice than this makes it very difficult for a teacher to develop meaningful work.
 - Students in years 8-12 are expected to speak with their teachers and collect all classwork and assessment tasks which are due during and after the absence.
3. Ensure that your child completes the set work during the absence.
4. Speak with Mr Savage again after the absence to ensure that your student has been able to meet all the necessary assessment requirements.

Senior Phase students are reminded that significant absences from school may result in them not qualifying for the Queensland Certificate of Education. All of our senior phase students have signed agreement requiring a minimum 85% attendance.

These guidelines are designed to ensure that an absence has minimal impact on a child's learning and that students are able to re-engage with curriculum confidently on their return to school.

Roll Marking Procedures

Rolls are marked twice daily, during the following periods:

	Primary	Secondary
8.25am – 8.40am	Class teacher, using oneschool.	Care group teacher – during care group time, using oneschool.
1.25pm - 1.30am	Class teacher, using oneschool.	Care group teacher – in secondary undercover area, using paper based rolls. These must be signed, dated and sent to the office.

Students who arrive after 8.40am and 1.35pm must be sent to the office to collect a late note.

Roles and Responsibilities

Role	Responsibilities
Class Teacher/Care Group teacher	<p>Mark rolls on oneschool</p> <p>Ensure students who are late (after 8.40am and 1.30pm) collect late notes.</p> <p>Collect written/verbal explanations for absences from parents and send to the office via the communication folder.</p> <p>Contact parents when a student is absent for three days (on the third day) for an explanation and record this in the communication folder.</p>
Office staff	<p>Check roll marking status every morning and afternoon and send reminder emails to teachers. Report all unmarked rolls at 3pm to the Deputy Principal.</p> <p>Enter data from secondary afternoon rolls into oneschool each day.</p>
Attendance Officer	<p>Ensure that paper based secondary rolls are printed and up to date.</p> <p>Check roll marking progress each morning and afternoon and contact teachers immediately when rolls have not been marked.</p> <p>Print a weekly report of unexplained absences and contact parents to obtain explanations. Goal – 0 unexplained absences.</p> <p>Print a fortnightly report of students who have attendance rates below 90% and report to Deputy Principal. Goal – 100% of students attend >85%.</p> <p>Contact parents of all students who arrive late for explanations.</p> <p>Make immediate contact with parents of “at risk” students who have been marked absent.</p>
Junior/Senior Secondary Coordinators	<p>Monitor students who have been identified as attending less than 90%. Make daily contact with students, ensure student is “caught up” with work and is on track with assessment. Discuss reasons for absences and refer to Wellbeing team if necessary.</p>
Youth Support Coordinator	<p>Case manage secondary students, referred by the Deputy Principal, who are attending less than 85%.</p>
Deputy Principal	<p>Ensure that for students who are attending less than 90%:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents are contacted and necessary actions/supports put in place to improve attendance and these are documented on oneschool • referrals to YSC or JS/SS coordinators are made <p>Ensure that students who arrive late at school have valid reasons (liaise with Attendance Officer) and repeat offenders make time up at lunchtimes.</p>

Principal

Manage "Exemptions" process. Case manage students whose attendance has fallen below 80%.

