



# Greenbank State School Attendance Policy

Updated January 2018

## Rationale

Non-attendance and irregular attendance can be viewed as early indicators of the potential for disengagement from the education program. There is a correlation between under-achievement in primary school and non-attendance in later years and consequent lack of success in adult life. Absence from school can limit a student's achievement of essential knowledge and skills required for effective participation in work, relationships and families, and active citizenship.

### **This policy is based on the following principles:**

- Society has a responsibility to prepare young people for successful participation in learning and the broader community.
- Families, society, peers and educators and other significant adults influence the life choices of young people.
- Attendance has benefits and consequences that increase or decrease life choices.
- Individuals are able to accept responsibility for their participation in educational programs according to their level of development.
- Continuity of relationships and learning in an educational program is dependent upon attendance.
- Attendance is a shared responsibility between the staff of the school, parents/guardians, students and members of the wider community.
- Attendance is critically linked to the quality of the curriculum, teaching and learning and the development of relationships which then foster improved learning outcomes and increased wellbeing for individuals and groups.
- Participation in educational programs fosters the development of personal and social skills.

The early identification of, and intervention in, poor attendance is known to improve child and student learning outcomes. Students who have patterns of poor attendance are at risk, as they may not achieve their potential in educational and social development.



Greenbank State School is committed to providing a safe and supportive learning environment for all students to address their educational needs.

#### **Greenbank State School Attendance Policy aims to:**

- Improve student attendance and participation.
- Improve the learning outcomes of students as measured by the school and system assessment processes.
- Increase understanding of the importance of regular attendance by the community of educators, learners and families of each school student.
- Communicate clear messages to students and parents that attendance is vital.
- Communicate strategically the processes for identifying and following through on regular student absences.

#### **Greenbank State School expects:**

- Shared responsibility between parents/guardians and the school to ensure student attendance.
- Strong parental/guardian accountability for student non-attendance including explanations and communication when necessary.

### **School community beliefs about the importance of attending school**

It is important that students, staff and parents/guardians have a shared understanding of the importance of attending school. **Greenbank State School:**

- Is committed to promoting the key messages of The Department of Education and Training's [Every Day Counts](#).
- Believes all children should be enrolled at school and attend school all day and every school day.
- Monitors, communicates and implements strategies to improve regular student attendance at school.
- Believes high rates of absences from school can limit student achievement and growth in academic, social and emotional situations. The research clearly documents the impact attendance or non-attendance can have on future schooling, employability and life choices.
- Believes attendance at school is the responsibility of everyone in the community.

### **Responsibilities**

#### **School responsibilities:**

- Provide a relevant and dynamic learning program that seeks to engage all students and offers opportunity for success, thus encouraging regular attendance.
- The Principal and Staff communicate to parents/guardians and students the expectation of all student absences being explained **prior to or by 9.00 am** on the day of the student's absence.
- The school responds to student absences in accordance with procedures on Student Absences Flowchart (Appendix 1). A text message is sent to the primary parent of any student who is absent without explanation. Carers of students in out of home care receive a telephone call in the event a student is absent without explanation.



- Work with identified 'at risk' students and their parents/guardians to support improved attendance.
- Liaise with other agencies such as the Queensland Police Service, Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disabilities and local non-government organisations such as Mercy Family Services for assistance in addressing patterns of absenteeism and to support students and families.

#### **Student responsibilities:**

- Develop awareness of individual responsibility for regular attendance. This level of responsibility will be determined by the individual circumstances and the age of the child.
- Attend school every school day.
- Be punctual in arriving at school and for all associated lessons and activities.
- Engage appropriately in the education program as negotiated.

#### **Parents/Guardians responsibilities:**

- Establish the expectation and importance of attendance with their child.
- Enable their child to attend punctually and every day the education program is offered and to comply with the education program being offered.
- Provide explanation to the school (letter, email, telephone call) when the child is absent from school.
- Book all appointments and holidays outside of school hours/dates where possible.
- Provide information to the school that may assist planning for the child's learning; for example, medical conditions, developmental milestones and family issues.
- Work with the school on intervention strategies to improve attendance.
- Notify the school prior to 9.00 am on the day their child is absent. Notification of a student's absence can be made by:
  - sending an email ([admin@greenbankss.eq.edu.au](mailto:admin@greenbankss.eq.edu.au))
  - personal contact with office staff or classroom teacher
  - telephone contact (directly on 3380 3223 or message left on absence line, 3380 3260) to the office from parents explaining a student's absence prior to, or on the same day, as the student's absence
  - submitting an online form via the school website [www.greenbankss.eq.edu.au](http://www.greenbankss.eq.edu.au)
- Respond to text messages regarding absenteeism.
- If it is known that the child is going to be absent for a prolonged period of time due to illness or family matters, inform the school.



## Strategies

At Greenbank State School we promote 100% attendance by:

- Using strong verbal and visual communication with students, parents/guardians, staff and the wider school community about the importance of attendance every day. This point of contact starts during the initial enrolment process led by the enrolling Deputy Principal.
- Establishing and continuing liaisons between home and school.
- Monitoring student attendance closely and following up with parents/guardians and text message responses regarding student absenteeism.
- Rewarding improvement in attendance for students displaying chronic and patterned absenteeism.
- Contacting parents/guardians to celebrate improved attendance.
- Implementing a school-wide initiative to reward individual class 'best' attendance practices.
- Presenting Term certificates for students who achieve 95% or higher attendance.
- Presenting a wrist band each term for students who achieve 100% attendance.
- Presenting an annual reward for students who achieve 100% attendance for the school year.

## Responses to absences

At Greenbank State School, we are committed to:

- Maintaining a zero tolerance on unexplained absences.
- Working with the community to attain a 95% attendance rate.
- Sending and monitoring text message responses
- Deputy Principals conducting regular (at least fortnightly) checks of student absences. **All** unexplained or questionable explained absences will be followed up with a phone call to parents/guardians.
- Generating weekly Unexplained Absence Letters for parents/guardians to ensure unexplained absences are accounted for.
- Teachers notifying Deputy Principals of any concerns they have regarding student absences.
- Monitoring the content of text messages regarding student absenteeism.



When a student is absent without explanation, Greenbank State School will take the following action:

- Daily unexplained absence data is downloaded from OneSchool and uploaded to external SMS provider.
- Same day text messaging to parents/guardians to seek an explanation for unexplained absences.
- Text message responses are monitored, then downloaded from external SMS provider and uploaded to OneSchool.

If a parent does not reply to the text message sent:

- A OneSchool generated letter is sent home to parents/guardians at the beginning of the following school week seeking explanation for remaining unexplained absences.
- Deputy Principals will follow up with a phone call if there is no explanation after five (5) days.
- Continued failure to respond to communication regarding unexplained absences will result in a meeting with parents to discuss the importance of students attending school every day and if students are absent a reasonable excuse is to be provided.

When there is a questionable pattern of absences, Greenbank State School will take the following action:

- Deputy Principal contacts parent/guardian to arrange a meeting to address student absences.
- Teacher and Deputy Principal monitor student attendance.

If the situation does not improve (unexplained or pattern of absences), the following action will be taken:

- Further meetings will be arranged to discuss the student's absences and may include the Principal/Deputy Principal, Guidance Officer, Senior Guidance Officer, Class Teacher and Parent/Guardian.
- An Individual Attendance Plan will be developed and implemented if this is deemed to be appropriate. This plan will be developed in consultation with all stakeholders.
- Withdrawal from certain school activities such as interschool sport, school camps and excursions may be negotiated so that the student may complete missed work.
- If after two weeks (10 school days) there is no further improvement in attendance, Deputy Principal will complete a Notice (Form 4 – Failure to attend (s.178(2))) in OneSchool and send to both parents via registered post. Parents/Guardians will be invited to attend a meeting.
- A follow up Notice (Form 4 – Failure to attend (s.178(2))) will be generated in OneSchool and sent to both parents via registered post in the event of further intermittent unexplained absences or continued pattern of explained absences.



- If after sending the Notice (Form 4) there has been no change in circumstances within one week (5 school days), a Deputy Principal will complete a Warning Notice (Form 5 – Failure to attend (s178(4))) in OneSchool and send to both parents via registered post. Parents/Guardians will be invited to attend a meeting.
- Liaise with other agencies such as the Queensland Police Service, Department of Communities, Child Safety and Disabilities, and local non-government organisations for assistance in addressing patterns of absenteeism and to support students and families.
- If after sending the Warning Notice (Form 5) there has been no change in circumstances within one week (5 school days), Deputy Principal can request the Performance, Monitoring and Reporting Branch to conduct a search of information (approval for search to be given by an authorised officer in the region – Principal Advisor Education Services or Principal Advisor Regional Services or Director Regional Services) regarding enrolment and attendance to ensure the child is not enrolled at another state school (including School of Distance Education). Deputy Principal can also check with Home Education to ensure the child is not registered or provisionally registered for home education.
- Prosecution of one or both parents may occur if the parents do not fulfil their legal obligation in regard to the enrolment and attendance of their child at school. However, prosecution is considered to be a last resort for use when sustained alternative approaches to improving a student's attendance have not been successful.

## Responses to late arrivals and early departures

Greenbank State School is committed to ensuring all students arrive at school on time and remain at school every day. Similar procedures are followed for late arrivals and early departures as those for absences. Please refer to the procedures for monitoring student late arrivals and early departures (Appendix 2).

## 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\*](#)

# APPENDIX 1 – Procedures for Unexplained Student Absences

PRIOR TO 9.30 AM (10.30 AM ON FRIDAY)

## ADMINISTRATION OFFICERS

- Enter student absences on OneSchool from:
  - Phone calls from parents/guardians to office
  - Messages from parents/guardians on absence line
  - Emails from parents/guardians to admin email
- Enter student absences and mark rolls for relief teachers on OneSchool

## TEACHERS

- Enter any known absences on OneSchool when informed by parents/guardians
  - Mark rolls accurately
- ## RELIEF TEACHERS
- Mark paper roll and send to office to be entered on OneSchool

By 9.30 am (10.30 am on Tuesday) as possible:

**DEPUTY PRINCIPAL supervises ADMINISTRATION OFFICER to:**

- Ensures all rolls are marked and contacts any teachers who have not marked rolls as required
- Downloads *SMS/Text Message Export* report from OneSchool and uploads to *SMS For Schools* website to enable a text message to be sent to parents of students who are absent from school without explanation
- Immediately contacts the carer of a student in out of home care who is absent from school without explanation

**DEPUTY PRINCIPAL supervises ADMINISTRATION OFFICER to:**

- Downloads parent text message responses from *SMS For Schools* website and uploads absence data to OneSchool to update unexplained absences at the end of each day.

**IF THERE IS NO RESPONSE TO TEXT MESSAGE**

**DEPUTY PRINCIPAL supervises ADMINISTRATION OFFICER to:**

- Generates *Unexplained Absence Letter* from OneSchool and sends home at the beginning of each week to query unexplained absences from the previous week.

**IF THERE IS NO RESPONSE TO *Unexplained Absence Letter***

**DEPUTY PRINCIPAL**

- Contacts parents/guardians to discuss unexplained absences.
- Arranges a meeting with Deputy Principal, class teacher, Guidance Officer and Principal (if necessary).
- Completes a *Record of Contact* on OneSchool with referral to Deputy Principal, Guidance Officer and teacher.

**GUIDANCE OFFICER**

- Makes contact with student and parents/guardians

**IF THERE IS A PATTERN OF EXPLAINED ABSENCES**

**DEPUTY PRINCIPAL**

- Contacts parents/guardians to discuss absences.
- Arranges a meeting with Deputy Principal, class teacher, Guidance Officer and Principal (if necessary).
- Completes a *Record of Contact* on OneSchool with referral to Deputy Principal, Guidance Officer and teacher.

**GUIDANCE OFFICER**

- Makes contact with student and parents/guardians

**CONTINUED UNEXPLAINED OR PATTERN OF EXPLAINED ABSENCES 10 SCHOOL DAYS AFTER MEETING,**

**DEPUTY PRINCIPAL**

- Generates a **Notice (Form 4 – Failure to attend (s. 178(2))** in OneSchool and sends a copy to both parents/guardians (if applicable) via Registered Post, scheduling a meeting.
- Makes a copy of **Form 4** and records date, time and by whom the letter was posted. A copy is placed in the student's family file and a scanned copy is uploaded to OneSchool in *Record of Contact*.
- Arranges a meeting with parents/guardians, Deputy Principal, class teacher, Guidance Officer and Principal to develop an *Attendance Plan* (Appendix 3). A copy of the *Attendance Plan* is placed in the student's family file and uploaded to OneSchool in *Record of Contact*.

**GUIDANCE OFFICER**

- Maintains contact with student and parents/guardians

**CONTINUED UNEXPLAINED OR PATTERN OF EXPLAINED ABSENCES 5 SCHOOL DAYS AFTER MEETING,**

**DEPUTY PRINCIPAL**

- Generates a **Warning Notice (Form 5 – Failure to attend (s. 178(4))** in OneSchool and sends a copy to both parents (if applicable) via Registered Post, scheduling a further meeting. A signed copy of **Form 5** and records date, time and by whom the letter was posted. A copy is placed in the student's family file and a scanned copy is uploaded to OneSchool in *Record of Contact*.
- Arranges a meeting with parents/guardians to discuss student absences with Deputy Principal, class teacher, Guidance Officer and Principal to review the *Attendance Plan* (Appendix 3) A copy of the *Attendance Plan* is placed in the student's family and uploaded to OneSchool in *Record of Contact*.

**GUIDANCE OFFICER**

- Maintains contact with student and parents

**CONTINUED UNEXPLAINED OR PATTERN OF EXPLAINED ABSENCES 5 SCHOOL DAYS AFTER MEETING,**

**On advice from Principal, DEPUTY PRINCIPAL**

- Requests Performance, Monitoring and Reporting Branch to conduct a search for information (approval for search to be given by an authorised officer in the region – Principal Advisor Education Services or Principal Advisor Regional Services or Director Regional Services) regarding enrolment and attendance to ensure the child is not enrolled at another state school (including School of Distance Education)
- Checks with Home Education unit as to whether the student is registered or provisionally registered for home education.
- Completes record of contact on OneSchool with referral to Principal, Guidance Officer and teacher.

**PRINCIPAL:**

- Determines follow up action to be taken:
- Seeks approval for prosecution from Regional Director

## APPENDIX 2 – Procedures for Persistent Late Arrivals/Early Departures

### ADMINISTRATION OFFICER/S

- Oversees late arriving students are signed in, late notice issued and late arrival documented on OneSchool.
- Oversees early departing students are signed out by parent/guardian, classroom teacher notified and documented on OneSchool.



### DEPUTY PRINCIPAL

- Conducts regular checks of student late arrivals/early departures
- Contacts parents/guardians of students with a pattern of late arrivals and/or early departures.



### DEPUTY PRINCIPAL

Should a pattern of late arrivals and/or early departures continue:

- Makes further contact with parents/guardians to discuss late arrivals and/or early departures to arrange any support that may assist the student in arriving to school on time and/or remaining at school until the end of the school day.
- Monitors late arrival/early departure.
- Organises a rewards system to encourage student to attend school on time for the entire school day.

### GUIDANCE OFFICER:

- Discusses late arrival and/or early departure with students and parents/guardians and impact this has on student's academic and social/emotional welfare.



### DEPUTY PRINCIPAL

- Monitors daily attendance.
- Should further late arrivals and/or early departures continue:
  - Notifies Principal of further absences.
  - Generates a **Notice (Form 4 – Failure to attend (s. 178(2))** in OneSchool and sends a copy to both parents (if applicable) via Registered Post, scheduling a meeting.
  - Makes a copy of **Form 4** and records date, time and by whom the letter was posted. A copy is placed in the student's family file and a scanned copy is uploaded to OneSchool in *Record of Contact*.
  - Arranges a meeting with parents/guardians, Deputy Principal, class teacher, Guidance Officer and Principal to develop an *Attendance Plan* (Appendix 3). A copy of the *Attendance Plan* is placed in the student's family file and uploaded to OneSchool in *Record of Contact*.
  - Maintains contact with student and parent/s.

### GUIDANCE OFFICER:

- Maintains contact with student and parents/guardians.

### PRINCIPAL:

- Determines follow up action to be taken.



- In the event of continued late arrivals and/or early departures, the above process may be followed on more than one occasion in consultation with the Principal, depending on the circumstances.



### DEPUTY PRINCIPAL

- Should further late arrivals and/or early departures occur AND previous intervention does not result in an improvement in attendance:
  - Notifies Principal of further absences.
  - Generates a **Warning Notice (Form 5 – Failure to attend (s. 178(4))** in OneSchool and sends a copy to both parents (if applicable) via Registered Post, scheduling a further meeting.
  - Makes a copy of **Form 5** and records date, time and by whom the letter was posted. A copy is placed in the student's family file and a scanned copy is uploaded to OneSchool in *Record of Contact*.
  - Arranges a meeting to discuss student absences with parents/guardians, Deputy Principal, class teacher, Guidance Officer and Principal to review the *Attendance Plan* (Appendix 3) A copy of the *Attendance Plan* is placed in the student's family and uploaded to OneSchool in *Record of Contact*.
  - Completes record of contact on OneSchool with referral to teacher, Guidance Officer and Principal.
  - Maintains contact with student and parent/s.

### GUIDANCE OFFICER/SENIOR GUIDANCE OFFICER:

- Maintains contact with student and parent/s/guardians.

### PRINCIPAL:

- Determines follow up action to be taken.

**APPENDIX 3 – Individual Attendance Plan**

## **GREENBANK STATE SCHOOL Individual Attendance Plan**

*At Greenbank State School we believe every child counts every day*

At Greenbank State School, we believe each and every student can be successful when students, parents and the school work together to increase students' school attendance.

This agreement outlines the responsibilities of students, parents and the staff at this school in setting students up for successful learning.

Greenbank State School expects:

- Shared responsibility between parents/caregivers and the school to ensure student attendance.
- Strong parental/caregiver accountability for student non-attendance including explanations and communication when necessary.

By signing this agreement, students, parents and the school are making a commitment to each other that they will fulfil their roles and responsibilities for achieving the best possible learning outcomes for students.



### Student's Agreement

I want to learn new things every day and do my best at school.

In signing this agreement, I agree to:

- Arrive at school on time
- Be ready to learn
- Have a positive attitude
- Always do my best
- Ask for help when I need it
- Establish a good study routine so that I can complete schoolwork on time
- Do my homework
- Work with my teachers and parents to achieve my goals.

I have thoroughly read and understood the information contained in this agreement and will abide by it.

Student's name: \_\_\_\_\_

Class: \_\_\_\_\_

Student's signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### Parent's Agreement

I want to help my child to learn each and every day and to achieve success.

In signing this agreement, I agree to:

- Send my child to school every day, unless he/she is unwell
- Notify the school prior to 9.00 am on any day of student nonattendance
- Make sure my child arrives at school on time (school starts at 9.00 am)
- Make sure my child arrives at school ready to learn
- Encourage and support my child's learning at home
- Help my child to establish a good study routine so that he/she can complete schoolwork on time
- Talk with teachers about any problems that may affect my child's learning
- Be open and responsive to communication from my child's teachers or other school staff
- Encourage my child to do his/her homework and to ask for help at school if needed
- Reinforce the importance of education and that school is a place for learning.

I have thoroughly read and understood the information contained in this agreement and will abide by it.

Parent's/Guardian's name(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Parents/Guardians signature(s): \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_



## School's Agreement

The staff at Greenbank State School want to help each student to learn each and every day and to achieve the very best results that he/she can.

In signing this agreement, I agree that the staff at this school will:

- Provide quality teaching that is based on principles of effective learning and teaching
- Prioritise resources in the most effective way to advance each student's achievement
- Provide learning experiences and expectations that match each student's needs
- Implement fair and supportive behaviour management strategies in line with school policy
- Inform parents about their child's progress and behaviour
- Keep parents well informed of any student absenteeism
- Be available to talk with parents and be open and receptive to their issues and ideas
- Communicate both positive and negative feedback to parents about their child
- Constantly reflect on our practices and ensure we are doing all we can to meet the needs of each individual student.

I have thoroughly read and understood the information contained in this agreement and will abide by it.

Principal's name: \_\_\_\_\_

Principal's signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

