



VICTORIA POINT STATE HIGH SCHOOL

ATTENDANCE POLICY



The Code of
**School
Behaviour**

Better Behaviour
Better Learning

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Research shows that the three building blocks for school success are attendance, attachment and achievement (National Centre for School Engagement). Strong attendance and attachment are essential prerequisites for achievement. Students should want to come to school, and they are more likely to become engaged when:

- *they have positive relationships with school personnel*
- *welcoming school climates exist school-based supports and resources are available*
- *they feel safe because issues of bullying and student harassment are effectively addressed.*

Student Advocacy, 2008, ‘Strengthening School Attendance Policies/Practices to Address Educational Neglect and Truancy

RATIONALE

At Victoria Point State High School students are required to attend school on every day that it is open, unless otherwise advised. Student absence adversely affects the educational engagement and achievement for students. The school must account for every absence of every student and record the attendance data using Daymap. All students who are absent from school must provide a letter, a note, or a phone call from their parent or caregiver explaining the reason for the absence.

The information which follows is designed to clarify aspects of attendance including:

- Acceptable and unacceptable reasons for absence.
- Responsibilities as a parent/caregiver.
- School procedures for following up student absences.
- School procedures for following up student lateness and early departure.

REASONS FOR STUDENT ABSENCE

The school is responsible for monitoring student absence and accountable for establishing and recording the reason for student absence. This information is recorded in the school's *Daymap* system and Education Queensland's OneSchool system.

Acceptable reasons for student absences include:

- Sickness
- Danger of being affected by an infectious or contagious disease
- Temporary or permanent infirmity
- Unavoidable and sufficient cause e.g. bereavement within the family or of a close friend; or family trauma
- Attending a school organised activity, e.g. excursion, camp, work experience, sporting event, cultural event

Examples of unacceptable reasons for absence are:

- Truancy
- Leisure activities, such as shopping expeditions with or without caregiver
- Family arrangements, such as helping at home or at parent/caregiver's place of work
- Part-time or casual work, including travel to and from such work
- Appointments which could be made out of school hours, including driving lessons/tests, interviews

REASONS FOR STUDENT LATENESS

The school is also responsible for monitoring student lateness and accountable for establishing and recording the reason for student lateness. This information is recorded in the school's Daymap data system and Education Queensland's OneSchool system.

Examples of acceptable reasons for lateness are:

- Transport difficulties on the way to school
- Other unavoidable family and personal reasons, as advised

Examples of unacceptable reasons for lateness are:

- Truancy
- Sleeping in
- No reason provided
- Appointments which could have been made out of school hours, including driving lesson/test, interview
- Other avoidable and insufficient reasons

NOTE: Lateness on compassionate grounds, e.g. family trauma, will be followed up by school Guidance Officers for the sake of the welfare of students. In these cases consequences will not be given.

PARENT AND CAREGIVER'S RESPONSIBILITIES

It is the parents/caregiver's responsibility to ensure that their child/children, of any age, attend school every day unless there are acceptable reasons for their absence. For students under the age of sixteen (under 16) *Compulsory Schooling* is a legal requirement. For students over the age of sixteen (over 16) *Compulsory Participation* is a legal requirement for Youth Allowance, Abstudy, etc.

Left Student

It is the parents/caregiver's responsibility to ensure that the school is notified of changed circumstances that impact on the enrolment of their child/children, of any age. Parents/caregivers are requested to provide an exit date and reason to enact the cease of a student's enrolment. This information will be recorded as a contact in the student's OneSchool profile and their enrolment status will be changed to left.

Short term absences – daily absences

Parents/caregivers are asked to contact the school Attendance Line - 3820 5878 before 8.00am or after 3.45pm or email student.absence@vpshs.eq.edu.au on the day of the absence, or to provide a written note to be presented at Student Services on the day of return to school detailing the reason for the student's absence/s. A medical certificate or appointment card for specialists may be provided in order for the absence to not have an impact on the student's approved attendance rate.

Long term absences - 3 or more consecutive days

Parent/caregivers are asked to contact the school Attendance Line - 3820 5878 before 8.00am or after 3.45pm or email student.absence@vpshs.eq.edu.au before the absence, if possible, or on the third day at the latest to explain the student's absence. In addition, a written note, stating the reason for the absence, needs to be presented at Student Services on the day of return to school.

If the reason is sickness, parents/caregivers must provide a Doctor's Certificate (for 3 days or more), regardless of the students age and/or year level where the absence has impacted on the completion or submission of student assessment (as detailed in the Assessment Policy – refer to the Student Planner).

Very long term absences

Occasionally requests are made by parent/caregivers for students to be absent for very long periods, e.g. to accompany parent/caregivers on an overseas trip. Parent/caregivers are asked to discuss with the child/children's Year Level Deputy Principal, the implications of long term absences from the school, before plans are confirmed. Final approval for any long period of student absence needs to be sought from the Principal in the form of an Approved Form Exemption from Compulsory Schooling and Compulsory Participation.

When students are unavoidably absent for a long period of time, where possible the school will provide details of work for students to go on with, if requested.

If a student has a very long term absence due to medical reasons, then a medical certificate must be provided at Student Services, stating all days absent from school, with the reason from the medical practitioner, on the first day of return to school. No academic exemptions or assessment extensions will be approved without a medical certificate.

Lateness and Early Departure

It is the parents/caregiver's responsibility to ensure that their child/children, of any age, are in attendance as per the school's scheduled hours of operation – unless there are acceptable reasons for their absence. At Victoria Point State High School the school hours for class attendance are Monday to Friday - 8.45am to 2.45pm - for all year levels, unless a flexible learning agreement is approved for individual students or the student's timetable advises otherwise e.g. off campus.

Please refer to legislation governing schooling in Queensland, the *Education (General Provisions) Act 2006*, Chapter 9: Part 1 - Division 1 - Section 176 which explains the parents' obligations for compulsory school attendance.

SCHOOL RESPONSIBILITIES - MONITORING STUDENT ATTENDANCE AND LATENESS

It is the responsibility of the school to monitor students' absence from school or class, their engagement in their studies and their academic achievement.

Students who have been absent from school are required to report to Student Services on the first day of their return to school with a letter or note in their Student Planner if the parent/caregiver has not previously contacted the school regarding the reason for the student's absence. The student may also have to present a Doctor's certificate if academic exemptions or assessment extensions are being requested. A medical certificate or appointment card for specialists may be provided in order for the absence to not have an impact on the student's approved attendance rate. The Student Services administrator will update *Daymap* to record reason for the absence.

Students who are late to school are required to report to Student Services immediately on their arrival at school with a letter or note in their Student Planner if the parent/caregiver has not previously contacted the school regarding the reason for the student's lateness. A medical certificate or appointment card for specialists may be provided in order for the absence to not have an impact on the student's approved attendance rate. The Student Services administrator will record in *Daymap* the arrival time and reason for lateness, and issue the student with a *Late Slip*.

The student is to immediately report to the relevant subject on their timetable. Before entering the classroom the student is to present their *Late Slip* to the class teacher. This is to be done with minimal disruption to the classroom learning environment.

Students who are to leave school before the scheduled school finish time of 2.45pm are to report to Student Services immediately on their arrival at school with a letter or note in their Student Planner if the parent/caregiver has not previously contacted the school regarding the reason for the student's early departure. The Student Services administrator will record in *Daymap* the requested time and reason for early departure, and issue the student with a *Leave Request*.

The student is to present the *Leave Request* to the class teacher at the beginning of the scheduled subject from which they are to make an early departure. The student is to exit the class at the time indicated on the *Leave Request* with minimal disruption to the classroom learning environment, and report immediately to Student Services to sign out and be issued with a *Leave Pass*. The student must then promptly exit the school grounds.

Student attendance is recorded during Family Group class at the beginning of each day and throughout the day by teachers of timetabled classes. All student attendance data is electronically recorded in *Daymap*. Text messages are sent to parent/caregivers' mobile phones by 11am if a student is recorded as an *Unexplained Absence during Family Group*, i.e. the parent/caregiver has not previously advised the school of the reason for the student's absence or the student is not in their timetabled class for Family Group.

The Engagement team and Attendance Officer will monitor student patterns of attendance and contact parents/caregivers where concern may arise with a student's attendance and engagement in their studies. Where a pattern of regular or chronic absenteeism is identified the Dean of Students, Youth Support Coordinator – HOD Engagement and/or relevant Year Level Deputy Principal will be advised, the school may also begin the Enforcement of Compulsory Schooling and Compulsory Participation Provision process as per the Queensland Education (General Provisions) Act 2006, Reprint current from 1 January 2018.

UNACCEPTABLE WHOLE DAY STUDENT ABSENCES

Where a whole day absence is proposed, or has occurred, and the reason is not acceptable, the following will occur:

Short term absences – daily absences

Students have a timetabled Family Group class each school morning where attendance is officially recorded. Text messages are sent to parent/caregivers' mobile phones by 11am if a student is recorded as an *Unexplained Absence during Family Group*, i.e. the parent/caregiver has not previously advised the school of the reason for the student's absence or the student is not in their timetabled class for Family Group.

Parents or Caregivers of Student's whose approved attendance is sitting below 50% and are absent that day (and do not have a re-engagement plan in place with the school) will be contacted by the Youth Support Coordinator for Engagement to clarify current circumstances and offer available support where required.

Long term absences - 3 or more unexplained days

The Engagement team and Attendance Officer will review each year level's attendance records ongoing. Parents/caregivers of any student that has *unexplained Absence/s* from school for 3 or more days will be contacted by the Attendance Officer using Daymap. Parents/caregivers will be asked to provide a responsible explanation for their child/s unexplained absences. This contact with the parent/caregiver will be recorded in OneSchool and Daymap.

Where a pattern of regular or chronic absenteeism is identified by the Attendance Officer, Youth Support Coordinator and or HOD Engagement will be notified to follow up these students. The classroom teacher will be advised and make arrangements to contact the Parent/Caregiver to follow up with missed work and discuss options to catch up on their return. This may include attending tutorials in the students own time.

Where a parent/caregiver has reported school avoidance or school refusal the individual student may be referred to the STAR (Students at Risk) Team to be followed up with the relevant support staff for that individual's circumstances and/or situation.

Very long term absences

Repeat offenders will be referred to the relevant Deputy Principal. For students over the age of sixteen (over 16) and Compulsory Schooling, the Year Level Deputy Principal will issue individual students the first letter in the process of Cancellation of Enrolment. Failure to attend a school meeting and continual whole day unexplained absences may result in a second letter in the Cancellation of Enrolment process. Failure to again attend the school meeting within five (5) days will result in the individual student's enrolment being cancelled.

For students under the age of sixteen (under 16) and governed by Compulsory Schooling, the Year Level Deputy Principal will begin the *Enforcement of Compulsory Schooling and Compulsory Participation Provisions: Process for Persistent Truancy or Absenteeism for Children of Compulsory School Age*, as per the Queensland Education (General Provisions) Act 2006, Reprinted as in force on 5 November 2010, Reprint No. 3.

Under these provisions parents/caregivers failing to follow recommendations and the student's attendance fails to improve as stated on each letter may result in higher authorities being alerted, such as the Director General of Education who will be asked to consent to prosecution.

Very long term absences - 15 or more consecutive days and contact is unable to be made

For students under the age of sixteen (under 16) and governed by Compulsory Schooling, any student that has *Unexplained Absence/s* from school for 15 or more consecutive days and contact is unable to be made with Parents/caregivers, the student's enrolment will be marked *Inactive*. The student may apply for re-enrolment at the school under the established enrolment process.

UNACCEPTABLE PART-DAY STUDENT ABSENCES

The classroom teacher is responsible for marking a roll at the beginning of each lesson and monitoring all students attendance enrolled in the specific subject area. If a student has missed 3 or more consecutive lessons or is having continual sporadic absences from the lesson, then the classroom teacher may use their professional discretion to contact the parent/caregiver in order to forward class work to be completed by the student before return to school. This contact with the parent/caregiver is to be recorded in OneSchool.

The Engagement team will track chronic unacceptable part-day absences of students through STAR referrals as well as attendance reports. Contact with the parent/caregiver will be made and possible referral back to the Wellbeing Team for further investigation if required.

Repeat offenders, who are over the age of Compulsory Schooling (i.e. over 16) will be referred to the Year Level Deputy Principal and will be issued with the first letter in the Cancellation of Enrolment process. Failure to attend the school meeting and continual whole/part-day unexplained absences may result in a second letter in the Cancellation of Enrolment process being issued. Failure to again attend the school meeting within seven (7) days will result in the individual student's enrolment being cancelled.

For students under the age of Compulsory Schooling (i.e. under 16), the Deputy Principal may wish to issue Compulsory Schooling Letters. Parents/caregivers failing to follow recommendations stated on each letter may result in high authorities being alerted (i.e. Queensland Police Services, Department of Child Safety, etc.).

UNACCEPTABLE REASON AND NO PERMISSION FOR LATENESS TO SCHOOL

Students arriving late to school, with or without a note from their parent/caregiver outlining the reason for being late to school are required to report directly to Student Services on arrival at school. Students will be issued with a *Late Slip* and may be asked to contact home to inform their parent/caregiver that they are late. A consequence may be applied.

The student is to then immediately attend the relevant subject on their timetable. Before entering the classroom the student is to present their *Late Slip* to the class teacher. This is to be done with minimal disruption to the classroom learning environment.

Persistently late students (more than two times per term) will be referred to the Youth Support Co-ordinator for the student to contact home. Once a student reaches more than five lates per term the student will be referred to HOD Engagement or the Year level Deputy Principal.

UNACCEPTABLE REASON AND NO PERMISSION FOR LATENESS TO CLASS

Students arriving late to class, without appropriate permission, are to be managed at an appropriate time during the lesson so as to minimize disruption to the teaching/learning process, marked on Daymap along with the time of arrival and issued with a consequence by the classroom teacher. This may include a lunch-time detention or an activity to catch up on work missed or to ensure completion of a class task.

Repeat offenders or those who fail to comply with the consequences issued by the class teacher's scheduled lunch-time detention or catch-up activity will be referred to the Head of Department – Curriculum as per the Responsible Behaviour Pathway.

The Head of Department – Curriculum will further explore consequences with the student. The parent/caregiver will be contacted via telephone and this contact recorded by the Head of Department in *OneSchool*. If this behaviour continues then the student will be referred to the HOD Engagement as per the Responsible Behaviour Pathway.

Students who are late to class with genuine reason, e.g. student had a Guidance Officer or a Deputy Principal appointment, are to show their *Appointment Slip* to the classroom teacher upon arrival to class. This is to be done with minimal disruption to the classroom learning environment.

RELATED LINKS

Queensland Education (General Provisions) Act 2006, Reprint current from 1 January 2018
<https://www.legislation.qld.gov.au/view/html/inforce/current/act-2006-039>

Queensland Child Employment Act 2006, Reprint current from 1 March 2017 to date
<https://www.legislation.qld.gov.au/view/html/inforce/current/act-2006-002>

Managing Student Absences and Enforcing Enrolment and Attendance at State Schools
<http://ppr.det.qld.gov.au/education/management/Pages/Managing-Student-Absences-and-Enforcing-Enrolment-and-Attendance-at-State-Schools.aspx>

Education Queensland, What is meant by “compulsory schooling”.
<http://ppr.det.qld.gov.au/pages/search.aspx?k=compulsory%20participation>

Education Queensland, What is meant by the “Compulsory Participation Phase”.
<http://ppr.det.qld.gov.au/pages/search.aspx?k=compulsory%20participation>

Education Queensland, Application for Exemption from Compulsory Schooling for up to 1 school year (state school), <http://ppr.det.qld.gov.au/pages/search.aspx?k=exemption>

Education Queensland, Flexible Arrangement for School Students,
<http://ppr.det.qld.gov.au/pages/search.aspx?k=flexible%20arrangement>

VPSHS Assessment Policy – refer to school website – www.vps.shs.eq.edu.au

VPSHS Student Planner