

# **ATTENDANCE**

# **POLICY**

## Attendance Policy

<b>Purpose:</b>	The purpose of this policy is to ensure Toogoolawa complies with legislation applying to compulsory school age and compulsory participation phase requirements for children and young people in Queensland. The policy outlines the importance of school attendance, the responsibilities of Toogoolawa School, students and parents/caregivers in regard to student attendance and school strategies to promote positive attendance.	
<b>Scope:</b>	This policy applies to Toogoolawa School, it's employees, students, parents and caregivers in regard to student attendance at Toogoolawa.	
<b>Status:</b>	For Board Approval	<b>Supersedes: v1.2</b>
<b>Authorised by:</b>	Board Chair	<b>Approval Date: November 25</b>
<b>References:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="#">Education (Accreditation of Non-State Schools) Act 2017 (Qld)</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Education (Accreditation of Non-State Schools) Regulation 2017 (Qld)</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Education (General Provisions) Act 2006 (Qld)</a></li> <li>• <a href="#">Education (General Provisions) Regulation 2017 (Qld)</a></li> </ul>	
<b>Reviewed:</b>	2 Years	<b>Next Review: November 2027</b>
<b>Responsibility:</b>	Principal	<b>Point of Contact:</b> Principal

### Policy

As a school dedicated to re-engaging students with education, Toogoolawa School is committed to supporting our students and their parents/caregivers in maintaining attendance rates above 85%.

Under [s176 of the Education \(General Provisions\) Act 2006](#), the parents of a child or young person, who is of compulsory school age or in the compulsory participation phase must ensure they are enrolled at a school and that they attend every school day for the educational program in which they are enrolled, unless the parent has a reasonable excuse.

This Attendance Policy aims to ensure all students are given the best opportunity to learn by outlining the responsibilities of the school, parents and students in managing attendance issues.

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

It is important that students, staff and parents/carer givers have a shared understanding of the importance of attending school. Toogoolawa School:

- is committed to promoting the key messages of Everyday 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 opportunities.
- believes attendance at school is the responsibility of everyone in the school and the wider community.

## **Responsibilities**

### **School responsibilities:**

- Use school management system, Sentral, to record and monitor student attendance and identify all unexplained absences (daily) and patterns of absenteeism for individual students.
- Notify parents/caregivers daily of unexplained absences via automated text messaging in the Sentral school management system.
- Follow up on all unexplained absences within two days.
- On the second day of continuous school absence, if the school has not been advised of the reason for the absence, the school will make contact with the parents or care givers. If the school is unable to contact the parents/ caregivers, the school will make contact with the students' emergency contact to ensure the welfare of the student. If the school is unable to make contact with an emergency contact of the students, the matter will be reported to the principal for further actioning.
- Record all communication with parents/caregivers regarding student absences.
- Follow all legislation regarding student absences alongside Independent Schools Queensland guidelines in managing student absences.
- Enforce the parental obligation that a child of compulsory school age or compulsory participation phase attends on every school day.
- Follow attendance plan processes for repeat student absences and patterns of absenteeism, lateness or early departures.
- Manage applications for exemptions from student attendance and follow exemption processes.
- Communicate effectively with the school community, students and their parents/caregivers regarding attendance expectations and processes at Toogoolawa School.
- Provide ongoing case management for chronic absentees including attendance support plans developed with students and their parents/caregivers.
- Provide an educational program that gives students a reason as to why they should attend every day.

### **Student responsibilities:**

- Attend school each day unless there is an acceptable reason for the absence.
- Arrive at school on time each day and attend for the full school day unless an acceptable reason is provided.
- Engage in support strategies to maintain positive attendance when required.

### **Parent/caregiver responsibilities:**

- Ensure their child is enrolled in a school and attends every school day, for the educational program the child is enrolled in.
- Ensure the child arrives at school on time each school day and attends for the full school day unless an acceptable reason is provided.
- Notify the school of any planned absences.
- Provide an explanation (preferably in writing), if not beforehand then within 2 days of the child's return to school, each time their child is absent from school. This may take the form of a medical certificate, written explanation or a verbal explanation to the school through either a phone call or visit to the school.
- Apply for an exemption from student attendance for absences between 10 and 110 school days.

- Work with the senior wellbeing officers to develop and action an individual attendance plan if the student is showing patterns of absenteeism. This includes meeting parent/caregiver requirements within the plan as agreed with the school.

**Strategies:**

At Toogoolawa School we promote 100% attendance by:

- Implementation of Attendance Policy and Attendance Plan
- Development of a safe and supportive school environment that promotes positive relationships including the implementation of programs to develop character, social skills, resilience and positive wellbeing for our students.
- Consistently recording and following up on unexplained absences and repeat absences of all students
- Monitoring school attendance data to identify absenteeism trends and individual students with high levels of absenteeism.
- Promote high expectations for school attendance to the school community by communicating that higher school attendance is associated with higher student achievement (in class, school newsletter, parent meetings, school website)
- Provide interventions for students and families for students with attendance rates lower than 85% including individual attendance support plans for High Concern (Level 3) students. See Appendix 3. This includes students with patterns of late arrivals or early departures.
- Provide strong support networks, both internal and external, for students and their families
- Reward system for students with positive attendance rates above 85%.
- Incentive system for students with low attendance rates who meet their attendance goals throughout the term.
- Create a strong family and community network that values attendance and supports students, parents and caregivers.

**Reporting and monitoring attendance:**

At Toogoolawa School, reports of absence or truanting are taken seriously. Students, parents, members of community and school staff may report an absence in the following ways:

- Parents/caregivers to contact the school via text: 043831006 or email: [office@toogoolawa.com.au](mailto:office@toogoolawa.com.au) to notify school of student absence.
- Parents/caregivers are to provide an explanation (preferably in writing), if not beforehand then within 2 days of the child's return to school, each time their child is absent from school. This may take the form of a medical certificate, written explanation or a verbal explanation to the school through either a phone call or visit to the school.
- Admin staff to record all absentee data in Sentral school management system along with all parent communication relating to absences.
- Frontline staff contacted regarding student absences are to notify admin staff of all information relating to student absences as soon as practicable.
- Front line staff are to notify parents/caregivers and students of the appropriate notification channels for absences when required.
- Lead Support Staff to monitor attendance data for patterns of non-attendance on a weekly basis and pass information to Senior Wellbeing Officer and Lead Support staff responsible for following up student attendance.
- Admin staff to follow up all unexplained absences within three days with a phone call or email to parents/caregivers.
- Lead support staff and Senior Wellbeing Officer to monitor Attendance Support Plan goals and outcomes.

## **Roll Call Procedures**

The roll call is to be completed by the relevant Support Staff or Teacher two times throughout the day at the commencement of each class or elective session.

### **Session 1 (Roll Call)**

8:30am

### **Session 2 (Roll Call)**

12:00pm

It is a Child Protection requirement to ensure that parents/guardians are notified if a student/s abscond from the school site or whilst on excursions. This must be completed either by a staff member or via administration immediately.

Relevant information is to be included in the student/s Sentral file and attendance. A text can be sent out as a notification to the parent/guardian about the unexplained absence.

Students who arrive late to any session throughout the day will require a late slip from reception prior to returning to class.

## **Appendices**

- Appendix 1: Exemptions from Student Attendance
- Appendix 2: Exemption Procedure
- Appendix 3: Attendance Intervention Procedure
- Appendix 4: Roll Marking and Attendance Policy Flowchart

### **Appendix 1: Exemptions from Student Attendance**

#### **What is an exemption from attendance?**

An exemption from attendance excuses parents from their legal obligation under the EGPA to ensure that their child:

- Is enrolled at or attends a school, if of compulsory school age, or
- Is participating full-time in an eligible option, if in the compulsory participation phase.

Parents may apply and exemptions may be granted under Chapter 9, Part 3 of the EGPA for students of compulsory school age. Full or partial exemptions for students in the compulsory participation phase may be granted under Chapter 10, Part 5 of the EGPA.

Exemptions may be granted by Principals for absences of between 10 and 110 schools' day in a year (a cumulative total for the year). Governing bodies must now keep a record of each decision made by the principal regarding an application for exemption for a period of at least 5 years.

Parents will not be liable for prosecution in relation to failure to enrol or attend:

- When an exemption has been granted; or
- While an application for exemption is being processed; or
- For a period of 14 days after an exemption decision is made; or
- Until the exemption application lapses.

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### **When should an exemption be sought?**

An exemption from compulsory schooling or the compulsory participation phase should be sought by parents when a student cannot attend or it would be unreasonable in all the circumstances for them to attend school or participate in an eligible option, for a period of **more than 10 consecutive school days**, due to the circumstances outlined below.

A partial exemption may also be available if a student in the compulsory participation phase cannot participate at school on a full-time basis.

### **Under what circumstances may an exemption be appropriate?**

Circumstances where an exemption from schooling for a child or young person may be appropriate include (but are not limited to):

- Diagnosis of terminal medical condition;
- Illness or hospitalisation for a prolonged period of time;
- 'Carer' responsibilities;
- Mental health condition;
- Extended travel;
- Cultural or religious reasons; and
- Family reasons.

### **When might an exemption be inappropriate?**

Circumstances where an exemption from schooling for a child or young person may not be appropriate include (but are not limited to):

- Reluctance to attend school;
- Response to incidents at school such as bullying;
- Employment (for compulsory school aged child) or desire to seek employment;
- Difficulty with school curriculum; and
- Desire to become an apprentice or trainee but without an established training contract with an employer.

If the circumstances above exist, support and advice is available from Student Services at ISQ.  
Process for granting an exemption

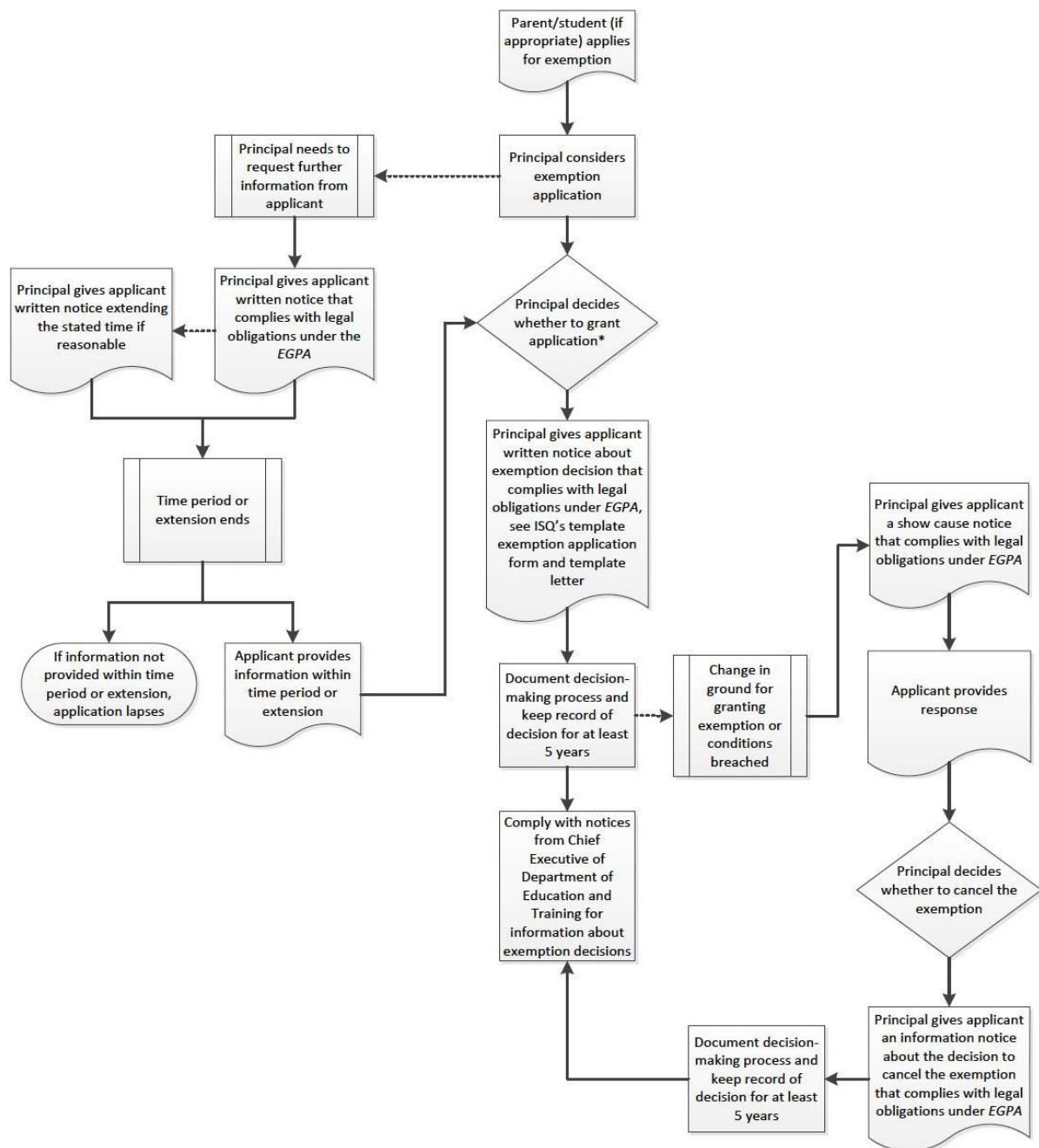
See ISQ's flowchart below for details on the Exemption Procedure.

### **More Information or Advice**

This advice is provided with the acknowledgement that not all the facts of the situation are known to Independent Schools Queensland. Independent Schools Queensland is able to provide more detailed advice upon request.

School Services Team on 07 3228 1515 or [office@isq.qld.edu.au](mailto:office@isq.qld.edu.au)

## Appendix 2: Exemption Procedure





### **Appendix 3: Attendance Intervention Procedure**

#### **Purpose:**

As a school dedicated to re-engaging students with education, Toogoolawa School is committed to supporting our students and their parents/care givers in maintaining attendance rates above 85%. It is important that students, staff, and parents/carer givers have a shared understanding of the importance of attending school. Toogoolawa School:

- is committed to promoting the key messages of Everyday Counts
- believes all children should be enrolled at school and attend school all day, every school day.
- believes in understanding individual student and family needs.
- monitors, communicates, and implements strategies to improve regular school attendance.
- believes non-attendance and truanting can place a student in unsafe situations and impact on their future employability and life opportunities.
- believes attendance at school is the responsibility of everyone in the school and the wider community.

#### **Attendance Intervention Procedure:**

**A weekly attendance report and Attendance spreadsheet updated each Friday on the Long week and Thursday on the short week informs the following:**

- Students with attendance rates lower than 70% for the term: **High concern**
- Students with attendance rates between 70% and 80%: **Significant concern**
- Students with attendance rates between 80% and 85%: **Attendance observation**

## Appendix 4: Roll Marking and Attendance Policy Flowchart

Stage 1: Roll Marking & Unexplained Absences		
All teaching and support staff are required to record the roll two times a day at 8:30am and 12:00pm as per legislation and to ensure the safety and wellbeing of all students.		
Unexplained absences are monitored daily by the administration (office staff). Daily unexplained absence messages sent out to families through Sentral.	Whole school attendance data is captured daily by teachers and support staff and analysed both daily and weekly by TIBET Leaders who liaise with relevant staff to ensure all students are accounted for.	Support Staff observe attendance patterns. TIBET Leaders offers support to families and encourages improved attendance – consult attendance intervention process.

Stage 2: Weekly Absence Reports	
Reports produced weekly highlight the whole school cohort, class, and individual student attendance rates.	This data is analysed weekly by the TIBET Leaders, Senior Wellbeing Officer and School Counselor who produce reports categorising students who fall below minimum attendance benchmarks into observation, significant concern, or high concern categories in line with the Attendance Intervention Process. This data informs specific intervention strategies, categorises absentee types, patterns of absenteeism and informs weekly management discussions.

Stage 3: Meetings
TIBET Leaders use the weekly absence reports to liaise with students and parents/caregivers and conduct parent meetings to discuss absences. Attendance support plan to be developed outlining attendance goals, support strategies and responsibilities of all parties. All communications to be recorded in correspondence notes on Sentral.

Stage 4: Letters	
School sends Failure to Attend Letter 1, 2 or 3 by email – signed by Principal.	Letters states legal obligations of parents/caregivers regarding enrolment and attendance. School to retain signed copy and add to student file.

Stage 5: Intervention Strategies
Interventions may include home visits, a specialised service for those families suffering from hardship or having difficulties with the young person, morning wake-up calls for students who require one-on-one prompting and encouragement, attendance support plans for students who may be suffering from mental health issues etc.

Stage 6: Termination of enrolment / refer to child safety and final letter to Queensland Police Service (QPS)	
If possible, investigate if the child is enrolled at another school, program or undertaking home schooling. If no information is obtained then proceed with final step.	Principal sends letter of termination to parent/caregiver and refers matter to Child Safety and QPS for possible prosecution. Use Failure to Attend Referral to Qld Police. School to retain signed copy of letter and add to student file.

## Attendance Codes:

Reason	Code	Meaning	Considered reasonable	Counted as an absence
School Activity	<b>A</b>	Student is participating in an authorised school activity for school purposes.	YES	NO
Attendance not required	<b>B</b>	Student is not required to attend school on this day as it is not included in their educational program	YES	NO
Excursion	<b>C</b>	Student is participating in an excursion that occurs outside the school grounds and is conducted, organised and/or approved by the school.	YES	NO
Sorry Business	<b>D</b>	Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander students participating in Sorry Business. I.e; Cultural activities related to a recent family bereavement	YES	YES
Off campus activity	<b>F</b>	Student is participating in an authorised activity that is away from the school campus. These activities will be regular and ongoing in nature.	YES	NO
Family reasons	<b>G</b>	Student is absent due to family circumstances beyond the influence of the student. The parent is aware that their child is absent and an explanation has been provided to the school. <i>Where these absences are persistent and regular, principals should discuss the situation with the parent and/or student to determine if additional supports and/or strategies are required to strengthen engagement and improve attendance.</i>	YES	YES
Holiday	<b>H</b>	The parent/carer has informed the school that the student/family is taking a holiday. Note that holidays during the school term should be discouraged	YES	YES
Illness and medical appointments	<b>I</b>	The parent/carer has informed the school that the student is sick. <i>Where these absences are persistent and regular, schools may request that documentary evidence (e.g. medical certificate) is provided. If a medical certificate has been provided, this should be noted in and kept on file. If a student is unable to attend school for a period longer than 10 consecutive school days, an exemption is available</i>	YES	YES
Unauthorised	<b>J</b>	The excuse given for a student absence is deemed as unreasonable by the principal. The reason (with any supporting evidence) as to why an explanation is considered to be unreasonable must be documented.	NO	YES
Natural Disaster	<b>N</b>	Student is unable to attend school due to an extreme weather event or other natural disaster. <i>This code may be used whether or not the student is continuing with school work while absent from school, and may be used for full or part-day absences.</i>	YES	NO
Other	<b>O</b>	The principal has determined that the excuse provided by the parent/carer is reasonable, however the existing absence reason codes are not suitable to use for the excuse provided	YES	YES
Short Suspension	<b>P</b>	Student is suspended for 1 to 2 days.	YES	YES
Long Suspension	<b>Q</b>	Student is suspended for 3-5 days, or for a student with charge-related reasons who has not enrolled at a school of distance education or engaged in an educational program	YES	YES
Suspension pending exclusion	<b>R</b>	Student is suspended pending an exclusion decision by the principal.	YES	YES
Sport (Representative)	<b>S</b>	Student is representing their school, district, region, state or nation at a sporting event which is recognised by the school (refer to <a href="#">Queensland School Sport</a> for the full list of	YES	NO

		representative sports). <b>NOTE:</b> <i>If non-representative sport, use Code O (Other).</i>		
Unexplained	<b>U</b>	No reason has been given for the student's absence.	NO	YES
Work Experience	<b>W</b>	Student is participating in a work experience program approved and organised by the school.	YES	NO
Exemptions	<b>Z</b>	Student has been granted an exemption from schooling. Refer to <a href="#">Exemptions from compulsory schooling and compulsory participation</a>	YES	NO

\*NOTE- In School suspensions are to be marked as 'present'\*