



FOREST LAKE STATE HIGH SCHOOL

Attendance Policy

1. Statement of Purpose

Under the Education (General Provisions) Act 2006, and as outlined in departmental policy, a parent of a child of compulsory school age is *obliged to ensure that their child attends school on every school day* for the educational program in which they are enrolled. A parent of a young person in the compulsory participation phase is obliged to ensure that the young person is participating full-time in an eligible option.

Forest Lake State High School expects students to attend every day unless illness or a serious family emergency prevents this. The school expects that families make every effort to schedule appointments, family activities/vacations outside of school hours and/or during school vacation time.

2. 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. Forest Lake State High School endorses the messages that:

- Getting the maximum benefit from school optimises life choices;
- There is a strong link between regular attendance and higher levels of achievement;
- Through regular attendance the life skills of self-discipline, punctuality and being organised significantly improve;
- Attending regularly leads to stronger friendships that can be maintained over a longer period of time;
- The higher the attendance, the greater the understanding of learning and satisfaction about being at school;
- Being away from school can place a student in unsafe situations; and
- Believes attendance at school is the responsibility of everyone in the community.

3. Responsibilities

3.1 School responsibilities

- Mark rolls and track students attendance accurately and in a timely manner;
- Ensure parents/guardians are notified of an unexplained absence of their child as soon as practicable on the day of the student's absence via electronic communication (allowing time for parents/guardians to respond prior to the end of the school day);
- Ensure continued follow up occurs as practicable with parents regarding their child's unexplained absence;
- Promptly report attendance issues to parents and other key stakeholders;
- Clearly communicate school expectations regarding attendance to students, parents/caregivers and the community;
- Implement failure to attend procedures, where appropriate; and
- Provide challenging and meaningful learning experiences to ensure student engagement in their course of learning.

3.2 Student Responsibilities

- Attend school every day, all day;
- Be on time and prepared to learn;
- Catch up on all work missed whilst absent; and
- Provide a parent/guardian signed and dated note stating the reasons for the absences to their Roll Mark teacher on their first day after return to school if the parent/guardian has not previously advised the office about this absence.

3.3 Parent and Caregiver Responsibilities

- Ensure their child attends school every school day;
- Ensure their child arrives at school on time every day;
- Minimise disrupting their child's school day so their child has the best opportunity to learn;
- Provide their current contact details to the school to enable effective notification;
- Provide an explanation (preferably in writing) for each absence, either before or on the day of the absence, or as soon as practicable. This may take the form of:
 - A medical certificate;
 - A written explanation provided to the school via a note, email or text message containing the student's name, date of absence(s) and reasons for absence(s);
 - A verbal explanation to the school through either a phone call or a visit to the school; or
 - Any other form of communication agreed by the Principal.
- Ensure their child follows the school's recommended processes and procedures for late arrival and early departure;
- Notify the school if their child will be late using the school's recommended communication processes. This may take the form of:
 - Accompanying the child to school;
 - Phoning the school;
 - Emailing or sending a text message to the school; or
 - Providing the child with a signed and dated note.
- Support the implementation of tailored intervention strategies when required to address persistent absence.

Strategies

At FLSHS we promote 100% attendance by:

- Clearly communicating to parents their legal obligations regarding to school attendance;
- Communicating our belief in each student's ability to fulfil our attendance expectations and requirements;
- Regularly displaying student attendances rates for the students to self-monitor their own progress through the term/semester/year;
- Communicating school expectations clearly and frequently to students, parents and the community;
- Raising awareness throughout the community of the importance and power of education in regards to improving the future opportunities and pathways for all students;
- Providing challenging learning programs that engage students and promote student enjoyment in learning;
- Closely monitor student attendance, late arrivals and early departures ; and

- Recognising individual student, class and cohort attendance as an integral component of the school's PRIDE program.

Responses to absences

At Forest Lake State High School we are committed to achieving **95%** student attendance by **2021**. We will achieve this target by:

- Improving our communication around attendance expectations so that unexplained absences are less than **10%** of total absences **each week**;
- Displaying student attendance percentages weekly, so that students can track their own attendance progress;
- Providing challenging and engaging learning experiences so that students want to be in classes and therefore reduce late arrivals and early departures each week;
- Linking attendance and on-time arrival to attendance and/or participation in non-curriculum school events, like camps, excursions, the Year 12 Formal; and
- When a student is absent for three days or a pattern of absences has been identified, Forest Lake State High School will take action to notify the parent/caregiver in writing about these absences and investigate any emerging pattern of concern.

Attendance impacts and consequences

At Forest Lake State High School whenever a decision about consequences is made for a student, each case will be judged independently and unconditionally on its own merit, keeping in mind equity, diversity and disability issues. Therefore, the consequences or impacts of unexplained or unauthorised absences may include the following:

Impacts:

- Reduced levels of attainment in class;
- Essential lessons being missed producing gaps in student learning;
- Assessment items incomplete or not submitted; and
- Semester credit not awarded as a result of not being at school enough to complete mandatory content elements of courses being studied.

Consequences:

- Removal of Semester credit for a subject studied;
- Compulsory lunchtime or after school detentions;
- Follow-up by school personnel or representatives of external agencies, for example the Youth Support Co-ordinator;
- Possible cancellation of enrolment for students who have met the compulsory phase of schooling requirements, that is completed Year 10 or are 16 years of age or older;
- Students potentially may not achieve a Queensland Certificate of Education (QCE) on completion of Year 12; and
- Instigation of legal proceedings by Education Queensland for parents/guardians whose child is of compulsory school age or has not met the requirements of the compulsory participation phase.

Reporting and monitoring attendance

At Forest Lake State High School, reports of absences or truancy are taken seriously. Students, parents/guardians, members of the community and school staff may report absences in the following manner:

School Staff

- Will use the current technologies to record and monitor student absences, and
- Report persistent absences to the respective Head of Department for further follow-up and/or referral to the relevant Deputy Principal.

Parents/Guardians and the Community

- Phone the school office (3714 2333, Option 4), preferably on the first day of absence(s) and provide an acceptable reason for the absence;
- Respond to the SMS text message sent each day advising parents/guardians of student absence(s);
- Ensure that any change to address and contact details is provided in a timely manner; and
- Send a signed, dated note with the student on the first day following their absence.

Related resources

Every Day Counts

<http://education.qld.gov.au/everydaycounts/>

Managing Student Absences and enforcing enrolment and attendance at state schools (SMS-PR-043)

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

Roll Marking in State Schools (SMS-PR-036)

<http://ppr.det.qld.gov.au/education/management/Pages/Roll-Marking-in-State-Schools.aspx>