Attendance Policy

Forest Lake State High School

Rationale

All schools in Queensland are committed to providing safe and supportive learning environments for all students which address their educational needs.

Forest Lake State High School expects students to attend school every day of the school year. If students are unable to attend school it is for reasons of sickness, bereavement or events of cultural significance only.

Forest Lake State High School attendance policy aims to:
- raise the understanding of the importance of attending school every day
- reduce the number of full and part day absences due to late arrivals and early departures; and
- highlight the role of the community, parent, students and school staff in ensuring that each student attends school every day, all day.

School community beliefs about the importance of attending school

It is important that students, staff and parents/carers have a shared understanding of the importance of attending school. Forest Lake State High School:
- is committed to promoting the key messages of Every Day 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 choices; and
- believes attendance at school is the responsibility of everyone in the community.

Responsibilities

School responsibilities:
- mark rolls and track student attendance accurately and in a timely manner
- promptly report attendance issues to parents and other key stakeholders
- clearly communicate school expectations regarding attendance to students, parents and the community
- provide challenging and meaningful learning experiences to ensure student engagement in a course of learning; and.
- provide work and assessment to students who will be legitimately absent for an extended period of time.

Student responsibilities:
- attend school every day, all day. Be on time and prepared to learn.
if a parent/caregiver has not advised the office, provide a parent/caregiver signed and dated note stating reasons for absences to their Roll Mark Teacher on their first day of return to school following an absence

catch up on work missed whilst absent

negotiate, as necessary, a revised date for handing in assessment items if the due date has lapsed. In years 11 and 12, a medical certificate may be required to support an extension.

Parent responsibilities:

- promote attendance at school with students by only allowing absences to occur for sickness, bereavement, or events of cultural significance
- support the implementation of tailored intervention strategies when required to address persistent absence; and
- communicate reasons for absences to the school in a timely manner.

Strategies

At Forest Lake State High School we promote 100% attendance by:

- clearly communicating parent’s legal obligation regarding school attendance
- communicating our belief in student’s ability to fulfil attendance expectations and requirements
- communicating school expectations clearly and frequently to students, parents and the community
- raising awareness throughout the community on 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 monitoring 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 92% student attendance by December 2012. We will achieve this target by:

- connecting with our community and improving the lines of communication so that unexplained absences are less than 8% of total absences each week
- providing challenging and engaging learning experiences so that students want to be in classes and therefore reduce late arrivals and early departures to less than 10% per week
- linking attendance and on-time arrival to attendance and/or participation in non-core school events, for example camps, excursions, Year 12 Formal.

When a student is absent without explanation for 3 days or a pattern of absences has been identified, Forest Lake State High School will take the following actions:

- thoroughly investigate reasons for patterns of absence
- send a letter home listing all absences and if the absences are unexplained request reasons for the absence
- request interviews with parents and students where attendance issues exist and develop individually targeted strategies to address attendance issues
• engage the services of community organisations when required to ensure attendance at school is improved and maintained.

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
• assessment items incomplete or not submitted; and
• semesters of credit not awarded as a result of not being present at school enough to complete mandatory content elements of courses being studied.

**Consequences:**
• removal of semesters of credit
• compulsory lunch time detentions
• follow up by school personnel or representatives of external agencies, for example Youth Support Coordinator, or police
• possible cancellation of enrolment for students who have met the compulsory phase of schooling requirements, that is, completed year 10 or 16 years or older.
• students potentially will not achieve a Queensland Certificate of Education (QCE) on completion of year 12; and
• instigation of legal proceedings by Education Queensland for parents whose student 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 absence or truancy are taken seriously. Students, parents, members of the community and school staff may report an absence in the following ways:

**School Staff**
• record student attendance in Roll Mark periods and request notes from students who have been absent.
• maintain a class roll for each class. Follow up absences in classes with individual students and their parent/s. Parent contact must be recorded in OneSchool/Student Profile/Contacts; and
• report persistent absences to Year Level HOD for further follow up and/or referral to the relevant deputy principal or student coordinator

**Parents and the Community**
• phone the office (37142333 Option 4), preferably on the first day of an absence. An acceptable reason must be provided for the absence.
• send a signed and dated note which includes the reason for the absence with the student on the first day of school following the absence. This note can be handed to the Roll mark teacher or the office.
Related resources

Every Day Counts

Departmental Policies

SMS-PR-017: Enforcement of Compulsory Schooling and Compulsory Participation Phase
http://education.qld.gov.au/strategic/eppr/students/smspr017/

SMS-PR-043: Managing Student Absences and enforcing enrolment and attendance at state schools.

Process: Enforcing parental obligation

SMS-PR-036: Roll Marking in State Schools
http://education.qld.gov.au/strategic/eppr/students/smspr036/