



Procedure

Managing student absences and enforcing enrolment and attendance at state schools procedure

Version: 5.4 | **Version effective:** 26/04/2023

Audience

All state schools

Purpose

Procedure for managing student absences and enforcing parents' obligations to ensure children are enrolled and attend school on every school day or participate full-time in their eligible option.

Overview

Each parent of a child who is of compulsory school age has the legal obligation to ensure their child is enrolled and attends a school, on every school day for the educational program in which the child is enrolled, unless the parent has a reasonable excuse.

A child should be enrolled in and attend school from the beginning of the school year in the year that they turn compulsory school age (six years and six months).

Each parent of a young person in the compulsory participation phase has the legal obligation to ensure that the young person is participating full-time in an eligible option, unless the parent has a reasonable excuse.

Parents may be prosecuted if they do not fulfil their legal obligations in regard to enrolment and attendance of their child at school, or participation in an eligible option. An authorised officer from either a school or region can seek consent from their regional director to refer a case to the Queensland Police Service to consider prosecution. However, there are a range of [circumstances where the legal obligations of parents do not apply](#).

From time to time a student may be absent from their educational program. Parents comply with their compulsory schooling or compulsory participation obligation by providing a [reasonable excuse](#) for these absences, unless the student is an adult or it is not appropriate to contact the student's parents, in which case an explanation should be sought directly from the student. Parents should provide a reason for a child's absence before or on the day of the absence, or as soon as practicable.

Early identification of students whose attendance is not regular is crucial to minimising student absences. Schools must notify parents of an unexplained absence of their child as soon as practicable on the day of the student's absence (allowing time for parents to respond prior to the end of the school day), with continued follow up as practicable with parents. Schools and regions may need to work closely with other agencies to support parents to meet their obligations in regard to the enrolment and attendance or participation of their child.

There is no legal obligation for parents regarding attendance where a student is not yet of compulsory schooling age, and accordingly, the prosecution process does not apply in this circumstance. However, it is expected that if these students are enrolled in school, they will attend full-time. Where there are attendance issues with enrolled students who are below compulsory schooling age, schools should emphasise the importance of attending every school day through discussions with parents, referring to the [Every day counts in Prep factsheet](#) and [Information for families on starting school](#), or by using the [template letter to parents – Prep attendance](#).

Schools should treat a student's enrolment as having ended, and record it as such, only in [certain circumstances](#). For students who are older than the compulsory schooling age, attendance is one factor which may be considered when making decisions about cancelling a student's enrolment (refer to the [Cancellation of enrolment](#) procedure).

For principals in the communities of Aurukun, Coen, Doomadgee, Hopevale and Mossman Gorge, additional processes apply in respect of failure to enrol or attend under sections 40 and 41 of the [Family Responsibilities Commission Act 2008 \(Qld\)](#).

Responsibilities

Authorised officers in schools (principals, deputy principals, and heads of campus)

- inform parents of their legal obligations about enrolment and attendance
- implement strategies to manage student enrolment and absences
- monitor student absences
- notify parents/carers of an unexplained absence of their child as soon as practicable on the day of the student's absence (allowing time for parents to respond prior to the end of that school day)
- if notifications are sent using an automated process (e.g. through an external electronic attendance management or text messaging system), ensure transmission reports are checked to confirm notifications have been successfully sent to parents and there are no errors in transmission
- if notifications sent to parents (as part of the same day student absence notification process) are retained in an external electronic attendance management system, evidence of these notifications must also be captured in OneSchool's Record of Contact when the process for enforcing attendance is being undertaken
- continue to follow up unexplained absences as practicable with parents/carers
- continue to work with regional office staff and other local resources to engage with the student and their family with the aim of returning the student to school
- manage processes for enforcing parental obligation in regard to:
 - [attendance](#)
 - [compulsory participation](#)

Authorised officers in regions (principal advisor education services, principal advisor regional services, and director regional services)

- manage processes for enforcing parental obligation in regard to:
 - [enrolment](#)
 - [attendance](#)
 - [compulsory participation](#)
- approve requests from schools for searches on enrolment information from Performance Monitoring and Reporting in relation to the enforcement of attendance process
- seek advice from Legal Services Branch if considered necessary, and record this in OneSchool as appropriate
- keep a central record of prosecutions relating to failure to enrol or failure to participate that have been referred to the Queensland Police Service. Record prosecutions for failure to attend in OneSchool and prosecutions for failure to enrol in HPRM, including any outcomes
- monitor attendance data using the [OneSchool performance dashboard](#) (DoE employees only) for chronic student absenteeism.

Regional directors

- decide whether to consent to prosecute for failure to enrol, or failure to attend or participate, including for Independent Public Schools in their region.

Child Protection Investigation Unit, Queensland Police Service

- notify the region of the outcomes of failure to enrol, failure to attend, and failure to participate cases referred to the Queensland Police Service for prosecution.

Home Education Unit

- conduct searches to confirm whether a child is registered or provisionally registered for home education, if requested by schools, in relation to the enforcement of attendance process.

Performance Monitoring and Reporting

- conduct searches for information regarding enrolment and attendance to ensure a child is not enrolled at another state school (including a school of distance education), if requested by schools (with approval from an authorised officer in the region) in relation to the enforcement of attendance process.

Parents

- ensure their child of compulsory school age is enrolled and attends a school, on every school day for the educational program in which the child is enrolled, unless the parent has a reasonable excuse.
- ensure their child in the compulsory participation phase is participating full-time in an eligible option, unless the parent has a reasonable excuse.

Process

Enrolment

When a region identifies or is notified that a compulsory school age child may not be enrolled in school, the authorised officer may take steps to enforce the parental obligation that a child of compulsory school age is enrolled at a school, including:

- confirming enrolment status and assessing reasons for non-enrolment
- offering support to the family (if required) to enrol their child
- issuing notices, and
- seeking consent from the regional director to prosecute.

Authorised officers are to follow the steps outlined in [Processes for enforcing the parental obligation that a child of compulsory school age is enrolled in a school](#).

Attendance

When a school identifies unexplained or unsatisfactory absences or patterns of absences, an authorised officer may take steps to enforce the parental obligation that a child of compulsory school age attends on every school day, for the educational program in which the child is enrolled. Steps may include:

- assessing reasons for absence and determining if they are reasonable or not
- offering support to the family to improve attendance or implement alternative arrangements
- issuing notices, and
- seeking consent from the regional director to prosecute.

Authorised officers are to follow the steps outlined in [Processes for enforcing the parental obligation that a child of compulsory school age attends on every school day, for the educational program in which the child is enrolled](#).

Participation

When a school/region identifies or becomes aware of a young person in the compulsory participation phase who is not participating full-time in an eligible option, an authorised officer may take steps to enforce the parental obligation that a young person in the compulsory participation phase participates full-time in an eligible option. Steps may include:

- confirming obligation to participate, and assessing reasons for non-participation
- offering support to improve participation or implement alternative arrangements
- issuing notices, and
- seeking consent from the regional director to prosecute.

Authorised officers are to follow the steps outlined in [Processes for enforcing the parental obligation that a young person in the compulsory participation phase participates full-time in an eligible option](#).

Definitions

Term	Definition
As soon as practicable	As soon as possible and practical, taking into account all of the facts and circumstances in the individual case.
Attendance	<p>In primary, secondary and special schools, attendance is complying with the school's requirements for physically attending the school (or another location) on school days and for school hours.</p> <p>For schools of distance education, attendance means completing and returning the assigned work for the program as set by the school. Assigned work may include scheduled online lessons, scheduled contact with teachers, face-to-face school events/activities, worksheets (or send-backs) and/or formative and summative assessment pieces.</p> <p>Each school of distance education determines reasonable attendance requirements, considering the circumstances and needs of individual students and the educational program in which they are enrolled.</p> <p>All schools are to ensure that attendance requirements are outlined in their enrolment agreement and published on their website.</p>
Authorised Officer	Refer to the relevant Instrument of Authorisation .
Compulsory participation phase	<p>A young person's compulsory participation phase starts when the young person stops being of compulsory school age (i.e. turns 16 or completes Year 10, whichever comes first) and ends when the person:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • gains a Certificate of Achievement, Senior Statement, Certificate III or Certificate IV; or • has participated in eligible options for 2 years after the person stopped being of compulsory school age; or • turns 17 years of age. <p>See (Education (General Provisions) Act 2006 (Qld) s.231).</p>
Compulsory school age	<p>A child is of compulsory school age if the child is at least 6 years and 6 months, and less than 16 years.</p> <p>However, a child is no longer of compulsory school age if the child has completed Year 10.</p> <p>See (Education (General Provisions) Act 2006 (Qld) s.9).</p>

Term	Definition
Eligible option	<p>An eligible option (Education (General Provisions) Act 2006 (Qld) s.232) is a recognised education or training program or course, offered by a recognised provider, which will enable a young person to gain a Certificate of Achievement, Senior Statement, and/or a Certificate III or IV. Eligible options and providers are:</p> <p>Eligible option: An educational program provided under the Education (General Provisions) Act 2006 (Qld) Provider: a State school</p> <p>Eligible option: An educational program provided under the Education (Accreditation of Non-State Schools) Act 2017 (Qld) Provider: a non-State school</p> <p>Eligible option: A course of study under the Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency Act 2011 (Cwlth) Provider: a registered higher education provider</p> <p>Eligible option: A Vocational Education and Training (VET) course under the National Vocational Education and Training Regulator Act 2011 (Cwlth) Provider: a registered training organisation</p> <p>Eligible option: An apprenticeship or traineeship under the Further Education and Training Act 2014 (Qld) Provider: a registered training organisation</p> <p>Eligible option: A departmental employment skills development program under the Further Education and Training Act 2014 (Qld) Provider: the chief executive administering the <i>Further Education and Training Act 2014</i> (Qld)</p>
Parent/carer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A parent of a child is any of the following persons— • the child’s mother • the child’s father • a person who exercises parental responsibility for the child. <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. However, a person standing in the place of a parent of a child on a temporary basis is not a parent of the child. 3. A parent of an Aboriginal child includes a person who, under Aboriginal tradition, is regarded as a parent of the child. 4. A parent of a Torres Strait Islander child includes a person who, under Island custom, is regarded as a parent of the child. 5. Despite subsections (1), (3) and (4), if— <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a person is granted guardianship of a child under the Child Protection Act 1999 (Qld); or

Term	Definition
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a person otherwise exercises parental responsibility for a child under a decision or order of a federal court or a court of a State; <p>6. then a reference in this Act to a parent of a child is a reference only to a person mentioned in paragraph (a) or (b).</p> <p>See (Education (General Provisions) Act 2006 (Qld) s.10)</p>
Participation	<p>The young person is participating in an eligible option only if the person is enrolled with the provider in the relevant program or course, and is complying with the provider's attendance requirements for the program or course.</p> <p>The provider's attendance requirements for a program or course are the requirements about physically attending, at particular times, the provider's premises or another place.</p> <p>However, the provider's attendance requirements for a program of distance education are to complete and return the assigned work for the program; and the provider's attendance requirements for an external program are its requirements about communicating with or contacting the provider for the purpose of participating in the program or course.</p> <p>See (Education (General Provisions) Act 2006 (Qld) s.234)</p>
Unexplained absence	<p>When no explanation for a student absence has been offered to the school by the parent or the student if they are independent.</p>

Legislation

- [Child Protection Act 1999 \(Qld\)](#)
- [Education \(Accreditation of Non-State Schools\) Act 2017 \(Qld\)](#)
- [Education \(General Provisions\) Act 2006 \(Qld\)](#) Chapter 9 Parts 1, 3, 4; Chapter 10 Parts 1- 5; Section 426
- [Education \(General Provisions\) Regulation 2017 \(Qld\)](#) Part 4
- [Family Responsibilities Commission Act 2008 \(Qld\)](#)
- [Further Education and Training Act 2014 \(Qld\)](#)
- [Human Rights Act 2019 \(Qld\)](#)
- [Information Privacy Act 2009 \(Qld\)](#)
- [National Vocational Education and Training Regulator Act 2011 \(Cwlth\)](#)
- [Right to Information Act 2009 \(Qld\)](#)
- [Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency Act 2011 \(Cwlth\)](#)

Delegations/Authorisations

- [Delegation of the Director-General's Powers under the *Education \(General Provisions\) Act 2006 \(Qld\)* - refer to sections 179, 242 and 432](#)
- [Instrument of Authorisation - Director-General's Powers under the *Education \(General Provisions\) Act 2006 \(Qld\)*](#)

Policies and procedures in this group

- Nil

Supporting information for this procedure

- [Alteration to a student's education program](#)
- [Circumstances where the legal obligations of parents do not apply](#)
- [Director-General's Guideline for authorised officers on how to determine whether parents have a reasonable excuse for the purposes of ss.176 and 239 of the *Education \(General Provisions\) Act 2006 \(Qld\)* – 01/2021](#)
- [Form 1 – Failure to enrol \(s178\(2\)\) – Notice](#)
- [Form 2 – Failure to enrol \(s178\(4\)\) – Warning Notice](#)
- [Form 7 – Failure to participate \(s241\(2\)\) – Notice](#)
- [Form 8 – Failure to participate \(s241\(4\)\) – Warning Notice](#)
- [Letter template for regions to non-state schools checking if a student is enrolled \(compulsory schooling\)](#)
- [Processes for enforcing the parental obligation that a child of compulsory school age attends on every school day, for the educational program in which the child is enrolled](#)
- [Processes for enforcing the parental obligation that a child of compulsory school age is enrolled in a school](#)
- [Processes for enforcing the parental obligation that a young person in the compulsory participation phase participates full-time in an eligible option](#)
- [QPS referral letter – failure to attend](#)
- [QPS referral letter – failure to enrol](#)
- [QPS referral letter – failure to participate](#)
- [Same day student absence notification – checklist for principals](#)
- [Same day student absence notification – example of the process for a large school](#)
- [Same day student absence notification – example of the process for a medium-sized school](#)
- [Same day student absence notification – example of the process for a small school](#)
- [Same day student absence notification – flowchart](#)
- [Same day student absence notification – sample communications for schools](#)
- [Template 3 – Failure to enrol – General Briefing Note](#)

- [Template 9 – Failure to participate – General Briefing Note](#)
- [Template letter to parents – Prep attendance](#)

Other resources

- [Cancellation of enrolment procedure](#)
- [Enrolment in state primary, secondary and special schools procedure](#)
- [Exemptions from compulsory schooling and compulsory participation procedure](#)
- [Flexible arrangements involving an alternative education provider procedure](#)
- [Home education in Queensland procedure](#)
- [Management of contagious conditions procedure](#)
- [Refusal to enrol – Risk to safety or wellbeing procedure](#)
- [Roll marking in state schools procedure](#)
- [Addressing student absenteeism – Five step approach for schools](#)
- [Every day counts](#)
- [Every day counts in Prep factsheet for parents](#)
- [Guide to using OneSchool's performance dashboard – attendance monitoring](#) (DoE employees only)
- [Information for families on starting school](#)
- [Tips for regional office staff: Notices and general briefing notes for failure to attend](#) (DoE employees only)
- [Tips for school staff: Notices and general briefing notes for failure to attend](#) (DoE employees only)
- [Same day student absence notification – frequently asked questions](#)
- Forms 4 and 5 and Template 6 (General Briefing Note) are available to DoE employees in OneSchool (Enforcement of Attendance)

Contact

For further information, please contact your [closest regional office](#).

Review date

10/01/2023

Superseded versions

Previous seven years shown. Minor version updates not included.

5.0 Managing student absences and enforcing enrolment and attendance at state schools

4.0 Managing Student Absences and Enforcing Enrolment and Attendance at State Schools

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