Rationale

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

Research shows that in Queensland, higher student attendance is associated, on average, with higher student achievement. Additionally, attending school every day helps children to build social and emotional skills such as communication, teamwork and resilience.

Mountain Creek State High School’s attendance policy aims to ensure students are actively engaged in school and attend every day to ensure optimal individual outcomes and student engagement. We have high expectations of student attendance.

Mountain Creek State High 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. Mountain Creek 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
- believes attendance at school is the responsibility of everyone in the community.
Responsibilities

School responsibilities:

- Regularly inform students, staff and parents/carers about the Mountain Creek State High School Attendance Policy and Procedures (including the Policy and Procedures for late arrival, early departure, truanting and missed assessment due to absence) and make this publically available through the school’s website newsletters and enrolment package and enrolment process.
- Monitor student attendance daily by marking electronic rolls each session.
- Notify parents/carers of any unexplained absence, requesting a satisfactory explanation for their child’s absence.
- Follow-up any unexplained absences as soon as practicable, but within three days of any unexplained absence.
- Discuss individual attendance with students and offer support and help to parents and students when school attendance has become an issue.
- Provide students with school work when they are absent for legitimate extended periods of time.
- Notify the relevant authorities if non-attendance persists.

Student responsibilities:

- Under the Education (General Provisions) Act 2006, students must attend school each day. They must be on time and have all of the necessary equipment.

- Never leave school during school hours without permission from parents/carers or the school and without obtaining an appropriate Leave pass from a sub school (Years 8, 9, 10, 11 & 12)

- Report to the student’s sub school if arriving to school late and provide a note from parents/carers explaining lateness or reason for early departure.

- Ensure all missed school work is completed.

- Discuss attendance with HOSS (Head of School) if there are issues or concerns. Ensure absence records are accurate and all absences have been explained by parents/carers.
Parent/carers responsibilities:

School absenteeism and truancy can impact significantly on students' learning and wellbeing.

Under the law, you must make sure your child is enrolled and attends school on all school days unless there is a reasonable excuse.

If your child does not want to go to school, or is missing school without you knowing, contact your school immediately for assistance and support.

You need to:

- Ensure that your child attends school every day for the program in which they are enrolled.
- Complete an exemption if your student will be absent for more than 10 consecutive days.
- Engage regularly with school staff (every 3 days) for extended periods of absence and notifying the school of extenuating circumstances.
- Ensure absence records are accurate and all absences have been explained by parents/carers.
- Advise the school of any change of address or phone numbers to ensure school records are accurate. Current data is essential in an emergency.

You need to provide a satisfactory explanation to the school (if it is a note it must be signed and dated):

- If your student arrives late or needs to depart early from school
- If your student is going to be absent from school as a result of illness or injury.
- Contact the school prior to any planned absence. Where this is not possible provide the reason for any absences. This should take the form of a medical certificate if a student is missing assessment for medical reasons.
- Contact the HOSS or sub school if a student absence is to be for an extended period of time (eg for family reasons or illness) and request school work
- Contact a school HOSS or Year level Deputy Principal if a student is refusing to attend school. Initiate or attend meetings to seek support and discuss their child's attendance or participation in their educational program.
- Engage with outside service providers to support your student's school engagement
At Mountain Creek State High School we promote 100% attendance by:

- Implementation of a HOSS structure to monitor student’s attendance
- Using a text messaging system to inform parents of student’s absenteeism without explanation.
- Dealing with truancy in a timely manner with follow up consequences.
- Students who are continually late will have consequences initially implemented by the teacher of the class they are late to and then further consequences may be implemented by a sub school HOSS and/or Deputy Principal for repeated offences.
- Staff will mark the roll at the beginning of every session. Staff will only mark students as being in attendance if students are physically present in the classroom.
- If students are absent from school at any time, parents/carers should advise the school and provide a satisfactory explanation for the absence. They can do this by writing a signed and dated note or phoning the school:
  
  - Contacting the sub school (Years 8, 9, 10, 11 & 12):
    1. Bribie 5457 8450
    2. Fraser 5457 8460
    3. Moreton 5457 8470
    4. Stradbroke 5457 8480

Lateness

Students who arrive late to school are required to report to their relevant sub school (years 8 -12). If a student has no valid reason for the lateness, they will by followed up by their class teacher and HOSS if there are ongoing issues and consequences may be implemented.

- Students will be issued with a Late Pass to present to the class teacher.
Leaving School During the Day

- Students are not permitted to leave school during school hours without providing a dated and signed letter of permission from parents/carer OR a parental/carer phone call.
- An appropriate leave pass will be issued to the student.
- Student who leave school for medical appointments when assessment is due are required to obtain a medical certificate.

Truancy

- Student attendance will be monitored daily through an electronic marking system – ID Attend. This is regularly monitored by teacher and HOSS.
- Students found to be truanting will be disciplined under the school's Responsible Behaviour Plan for Students.

Responses to absences

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

- HOSS will contact parent by phone or email.
- If there is no improvement a letter may be sent to the parent outlining concern with attendance.
- A meeting with parents/carers re issues of concern re attendance.
- School offers support to family to ensure child’s attendance improves.
- Authorised officer at the school considers whether an exemption from schooling, flexible arrangement or alteration to a student’s education program, is appropriate and required.
- If the child is still not attending regularly after three weeks (15 school days) of the first attempt to contact parents, an authorised officer at the school sends by registered post, a Notice (Form 4 -- Failure to attend (s.178(2))) to both parents outlining parents’ legal obligation and inviting both parents to attend a meeting to discuss the situation.
• If after sending the Notice (Form 4):
  • a meeting occurred with the parents, but there is no change in circumstances within one week (5 school days) of this meeting; or
  • a meeting did not occur with the parents, and there is no change in circumstances within one week (5 school days) of sending the Notice;

an authorised officer at the school sends by registered post a [Warning Notice (Form 5 – Failure to attend (s178(4)))] advising parents of their legal obligations and offering a meeting to discuss support available to address failure to attend.

At Mountain Creek State High School the consequences or impacts of unexplained or unauthorised absences might include, but are not limited to the following:

• Detentions to complete work that has been missed.

• Meetings with student and parents/carers

• Meetings with relevant support staff or outside agencies

• Suspension

• Where unsatisfactory attendance still continues the Principal may commence process associated with Enforcement of Compulsory School and Compulsory Participation.

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**Reporting and monitoring attendance**

At Mountain Creek State High 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/carers with mobile phone numbers recorded in the school’s database will be notified each day of an unexplained absence via text message. Parents are required to respond to this text message by contacting the relevant sub school or main office. Parents/carers are asked to immediately contact the school on the absence lines if they believe their child is in attendance.
Some related resources

**Every Day Counts**

**Departmental Policies and Procedures**

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

**Roll Marking in State Schools**