



## Merrimac State School Attendance Policy

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

Parents/carers of children who are of compulsory school age must ensure that the children are enrolled, attending and participating full-time in the education programs in which the child is enrolled unless the parent has a reasonable excuse, in accordance with the *Education (General Provisions) Act 2006* and the *Family Responsibilities Commission Act 2008 (Qld)*.

It is important that students, staff and parents/carers have a shared understanding of the importance of attending Merrimac State School;

- is committed to promoting the key message 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 attendance at school is the responsibility of everyone in the community

### RESPONSIBILITIES

#### Student responsibilities;

- attending school each day when healthy to do so,
- attending to their learning every minute of every day

#### Parent responsibilities;

- ensuring their child is enrolled at school and regularly attends the education program provided at Merrimac State School
- ensuring their child arrives each day for the commencement of learning at 8.50am sharp
- contacts the school prior to any planned absence and of the morning of any unplanned absence via the following channels;
  - Phone 5569 1555 Option 1
  - Email [admin@merrimacss.eq.edu.au](mailto:admin@merrimacss.eq.edu.au)
  - Email the class teacher as a courtesy

#### School responsibilities;

- encourages all students to attend school, when healthy to do so,
- monitors and identifies absences outlined in SMS-PR-036: Roll marking in State Schools,
- accurately marks attendance twice daily,
- communicates with parents when absences are unexplained,
- follows Education QLD policy and procedures for enforcing enrolment and attendance in SMS-PR-043 Managing Student Absences and Enforcing Enrolment and Attendance at State Schools.

In line with Queensland Health directive s 362B of the Public Health Act, if an educator or staff member suspects a child in their care is unwell with a contagious illness they must notify the parent or guardian. The parent or guardian must collect the child as soon as possible, and the child must not return to school until they are well or enough time has passed that they are not contagious.

## STRATEGIES

Merrimac State School utilises the following to promote Every Day Counts;

- implementation of the School Attendance Policy
- Human resources (Principal, Deputy Principal, Head of Inclusive Learning, Guidance Officer, Family Support workers)
- consistent and regular follow ups for unexplained absences
- Regular promotion of attendance rates in School Newsletters
- Individual, Classroom and Year level incentives at the end of each semester.

## RESPONSES TO ABSENCES

When a student is absent without explanation or a pattern of absences has been identified, Merrimac State School will take the following actions;

- Parent/carer contacted by SMS by 11am to notify of an unexplained absence and request they justify the unexplained absence by return text
- when a student has 3 continual unexplained absences, a member of the Leadership Team will attempt to make contact with the parent to;
- check on the wellbeing of the student and family
- ascertain return date
- ascertain medical issue and/or medical advice/clearance
- offer support to the family
- If, after 3 weeks, the student is still not attending school regularly, the school will follow the processes for Managing Student Absences as outlined in the Education (General Provisions) Act 2006 – SMRE-PR-043. This includes the reporting of persistent and/or unexplained absences to Education Queensland, The Queensland Police Service and the Department of Child safety.
- The Principal is able to seek advice from South East Regional Office Legal & Administrative Law Branch regarding consent to prosecute parents/carers.

## ATTENDANCE EXEMPTIONS

Exemptions for non-attendance must be approved by the Principal. In the event of extenuating circumstance (ie, death in the family, temporary relocation overseas due to parent/carer work commitments), a parent/carer may apply for an Exemption for approval by the Principal. Approval for absences more than 10 days must be submitted using the [Long Absence form](#) to the Principal prior to the commencement of the absence.

## LATE ARRIVAL/EARLY DEPARTURE

Every attempt must be made to ensure your child is present school, when healthy to do so, every minute of every school day. Learning commences at 8.50am at Merrimac State School. Students are encouraged to arrive from 8.30am to ensure they are organised for class on time. Students who arrive at school after the second bell are to report directly to the school office to obtain a late slip. This will ensure parents/carers do not receive an SMS text saying their child is absent. Parents must advise their child to go to the office for a late slip.

The school appreciates that in some rare circumstances specialist appointments may take place during school time or of an afternoon before final bell at 2.55pm. Parents must communicate accordingly with Administration ahead of the scheduled collection time. Parents should be aware that class interruptions can be very disruptive to all students learning. Regular early pickups will be monitored to determine the validity of the early departures.

