

# STUDENT ATTENDANCE POLICY

## Purpose

To ensure all children enrolled at Goornong Primary School attend school, when fit and able, every day the school is open for instruction.

## Rationale

Regular school attendance enables students to maximise their full educational potential and to actively participate and engage in their learning. It is important that children develop habits of regular attendance at an early age. Students who are regularly absent from school are at risk of missing out on fundamental aspects of their educational and social development.

Daily school attendance is important for all children and young people to succeed in education and to ensure they don't fall behind both socially and developmentally. Children and young people who regularly attend school and complete Year 12 or an equivalent qualification have better health outcomes, better employment outcomes, and higher incomes across their lives.

## School Procedures

Goornong Primary School has a number of procedures in place to maximise the level of student attendance. These strategies include:

- Explaining to parents the importance of regular attendance and punctuality at parent/teacher forums, in the newsletter and in our enrolment information pack.
- All teachers marking the attendance roll for each half of the day for their class as a legal requirement, with attendance data recorded electronically by office staff using the CASES 21 management system.
- Reporting to parents on the number of absences for their child.
- Having an expectation that parents provide a reason for all absences whether by sending a note or by contacting the school. Two unexplained absences to result in a phone call home to determine the reason (see Appendix 1).
- Providing a meaningful and engaging curriculum and a safe and supportive learning environment, where students feel valued and experience success.
- Awards and certificates to students who achieve 100% attendance over a term.
- For absences where there is no exemption in place, the parent/guardian must provide an explanation on each occasion to the school. The school will determine if the explanation provided is a reasonable excuse for the purposes of the parent meeting their responsibilities under the *Education and Training Reform Act 2006*.
- Advising parents/guardians promptly of unexplained absences.
- Working with families to put in place attendance plans for students whose attendance has the potential to impact on their social and academic progress.
- Following DET attendance guidelines and engaging the DET attendance officer where student absence is putting a student at 'high risk' of not achieve their social and academic potential.

**Evaluation:**

<b>Date Reviewed</b>	25.07.16
<b>Approved By</b>	School Council
<b>Approval Authority (Signature &amp; Date)</b>	
<b>Communication Procedures</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Parents – Via school office.</li><li>▪ Staff – Via Induction pack.</li></ul>
<b>Next Review Date</b>	16.06.17 or as necessary.

## Appendix 1: Student Absence Flow Chart

A student is absent from school for two consecutive days (one day for 'attendance risk' students) without an explanation from the parent.



### Step One

Classroom teacher to contact the parent **on** the second absence day to talk about the importance of regular school attendance and ask for the reason of the absence (record this contact on *Student Unexplained Absence Record* in roll).



### Step Two

If the classroom teacher has no concern, classroom teacher is to record the reason for the absence in the classroom roll.

### Step Two

If the classroom teacher has a concern, this is to be reported to the school principal via email.



### Step Four

The student is flagged as 'attendance risk' and attendance is monitored. DET procedures implemented if attendance deteriorates.



### Step Three

School principal to follow-up with parent/carer and initial strategies put in place to improve the student's attendance.



every day counts  
ATTEND TODAY -  
ACHIEVE TOMORROW!

## **Appendix 2: SAMPLE NEWSLETTER ENTRY - ATTENDANCE AT SCHOOL—EVERY DAY COUNTS**

The Education Department's motto is that "every day counts" as there is strong link between consistent attendance at school and a child's social & academic development.

We understand that there are times when students need to miss school, such as when they're ill. However, it is important that parents understand that attendance patterns are established early—a child regularly missing days in kindergarten or in the early years of school creates habits which can be very difficult to break.

Our school's goal is to have an average of less than 10 days absent per child per year.

At our school, we encourage parents to return an Absent Note (these are sent home in the packs at the beginning of the year) or contact their child's teacher when an absence occurs.

We also encourage parents to meet with their child's teacher if they are having attendance issues so we can work together to get your child to school each day.

### **Appendix 3: Codes for Student Absences**

<b>Code</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Further details of types of absence</b>
100	Present	
111	Late arrival at School	Arrived late with parent approval**
112	Early departure from School	Departed early with parent approval**
200	Medical	Parent approved** and gave this health related reason
201	Illness	Parent approved** and gave this health related reason. Includes: sent home unwell, sports injuries
202	Accident	Parent approved** and gave this health related reason Includes: injury at school
203	Counselling	Student receiving counselling externally.
205	Medical Appointment	Parent approved** and gave this health related reason. Includes: speech pathologist, optometrist.
206	Hospitalised	Parent approved** and gave this health related reason.
207	Quarantine	Parent approved** and gave this health related reason. Includes: school sores, head lice, chicken pox.
208	Refusal	Parent approved** and gave this reason. Use when parent is working with the school to address the issue underlying the school refusal.
209	Dentist	Parent approved** and gave this health related reason; Includes: orthodontist.
210	Medical/Welfare	Includes: welfare activities, custody problem, DHS intervention, foster care, court attendance. Note: Possible overlap with 200 Medical and 203 Counselling.
211	Bereavement	Includes: funeral, death in family, absence due to a death. Guidelines specify that principals should usually approve these absences.
401	Suspension	Suspended and not permitted to attend school.
500	Unexplained	No parent approval** and no reason from parent or student. May be used on first day of absence and changed once explanation is provided. Unexplained is the default absence code when marking attendance in CASES21.
600	Educational	Students attending an educational activity organised by the school. Includes: Alternate setting, language centre, social adjustment centre, music class, Brain Gym, attending a poetry competition, external examinations.
604	Excursion	Excursion which is curriculum related.
605	Special Event	Includes: special school students attending Variety Club event.
606	Camp	Camp which is curriculum or school related.
607	Other Educational Activity	Includes: orientation day (e.g. Yr 6 students attending sec school), exchange program/student, transition days.
611	Sports	Includes: sporting activity out of school, sports day, training for sports day.
701	Exit	Student is exiting, but until paper work is processed, any absences recorded under Exit.
802	Exempt	Includes: End of year and some students (e.g. Yr. 11 & 12) permitted to leave school early, Prep attendance not required, Prep transition start, student is part-time and therefore not required to be there some of the time (e.g. home schooling student with partial enrolment at school, part-time at a special school and part-time at a regular school, member of school community dies and students told can stay home or attend funeral as they wish, transition to adult setting, approved exemption for short-term employment in the entertainment industry under Min Order 411.

804	Extended Family Holidays	Parent approved** and gave this reason. Used where parent has requested approval and principal has granted. If this process is not followed, then record under Parent Choice Unauthorised. Includes: student is taken out of school during term to go on a family holiday.
805	Religious/Cultural Observance	Parent approved** and gave this reason Includes: student is kept away from school for a religious or cultural observance reason.
806	Parent Choice Unauthorised	Includes where : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ the parent has provided no explanation for the absence</li> <li>▪ the student was absent due to participating in leisure or social activities (such as a shopping trip, or visiting friends or relatives)</li> <li>▪ approval had not been sought in advance or in accordance with school policy</li> <li>▪ the conditions of approval have not been met (e.g. Student Absence Learning Plan for a family holiday not completed).</li> </ul>
807	Parent Choice School Approved	Parent approved** gave a reason that is not health related, or religious/cultural observance, or family holiday and sought approval from the principal. <b>Includes:</b> special circumstances, unavoidable cause, unforeseen circumstances, and family member ill.
901	Industrial Action	Taken by school staff affecting students being able to attend school
902	Facility Damage	Includes: power was going off for a day and students told to stay home. Damage from Storms etc.
903	Weather	Extreme weather conditions
904	Staff Meeting	Includes: curriculum day, planning day, student free day, report writing day, parent teacher interviews, prep interviewing/testing day
910	Natural Disaster – Bushfire	Bushfire
911	Natural Disaster – Flood	Flood
912	Natural Disaster – Earthquake	Earthquake
919	Natural Disaster - Other	Other Natural Disaster