



Goomeri State School P-10

Student Absence Policy

All student absences at Goomeri State School P-10 must be explained by contacting the school on 41696200, or an email sent to admin@goomeriss.eq.edu.au or by a parent written note handed into the school office.

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

Prosecution of one or both parents may occur if the parent(s) do not fulfil their legal obligation in regard to enrolment and attendance of their child at school. An *authorised officer* from either the school or region can seek consent from the Director-General to prosecute for failure to enroll or attend. 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 satisfactory reason for these absences. Parents should provide a reason for a child's absence as soon as possible after the absence.

Early identification of students, whose attendance is not regular, is crucial to minimising student absences.

When a student is absent, **or plans to be absent, for more than 10 consecutive school days** for any reason, the parent must comply with their obligations in respect to compulsory schooling or compulsory participation by either:

- seeking an exemption from their obligation, or
- by negotiating with the principal to make an alteration to a student's educational program; or by seeking to arrange a flexible arrangement for the student.

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At Goomeri State School P-10, unexplained student absences are collated weekly and letters sent home requiring parents to explain the absence(s). If an absence is not explained then the parents are contacted and asked to supply a reason. If a parent cannot be contacted and the student remains absent then the enforcement of attendance process is begun following the steps outlined below:

1. School identifies unexplained or unsatisfactory absences or patterns of absences for example:
 - when a student is absent for three or more consecutive school days
 - where there is a persistent pattern of unexplained absences or absences without reasonable excuses
 - where a student's attendance is reasonably considered unsatisfactory by the principal.
2. Authorised officer at the school contacts both parents and determines if there is a reasonable excuse for not ensuring their child is attending school.

3. School offers support to family to ensure child's attendance improves. All efforts, including records of meetings and conversations, must be documented in OneSchool (e.g. phone calls, home visits, contact with local police, referral to Youth Support Coordinator or other support worker).
4. 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) to both parents outlining parents' legal obligation and inviting both parents to attend a meeting to discuss the situation.
5. Authorised officer at the school keeps a copy of the Notice (Form 4) and records date, time and by whom letter was posted.
6. 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) advising parents of their legal obligations and offering a meeting to discuss support available to address failure to attend.
7. Authorised officer at the school keeps a copy of the Warning Notice (Form 5) and records date, time and by whom letter was posted.
8. If there is no change in attendance a week (5 school days) after the Warning Notice (Form 5) was sent, authorised officer:
 - requests Performance, Monitoring and Reporting Branch to conduct a search (approval for search to be given by Regional Director or Assistant Regional Director) for information regarding enrolment and attendance to ensure the child is not enrolled at another state school (including School of Distance Education); and
 - checks with Home Education Unit whether the child is registered or provisionally registered for home education; and
 - advises Regional Office they wish to seek the Director-General's consent to prosecute.

Prep is the first year of schooling in Queensland and it is expected that students who are enrolled in Prep attend full-time. However, the prosecution process does not apply to students in Prep unless they are of compulsory schooling age.