



Record and follow up student absences

Record and follow up student absences

All schools are required to mark rolls daily in accordance with departmental procedures.

Timely follow-up is a key preventative strategy in reducing absenteeism. Schools are to notify parents of an unexplained absence on the day of the student's absence. This makes it harder for students to miss school without being caught. It also enables parents who may not be aware that their children are absent to take action.

'Consistent and persistent' follow up is a key strategy employed by many schools that have seen significant improvements in attendance.

Ideas¹

- Establish a dedicated attendance email inbox or phone line, depending on procedures for parents to notify of absences.
- Decide how parents must notify the school of an absence. Some schools require parents to write a note or fill in a form as a deterrent to unnecessary absences, while other schools will accept an email or phone call. These requirements could be clearly articulated in a school attendance policy.
- Contact parents (either personally or electronically) seeking an explanation for unexplained absences.
- Meet with parents to discuss reasons for their child's high levels of unexplained absences or lateness and to identify practical strategies for getting students to school on time.
- Consider purchasing and implementing a text messaging system to alert parents when students are absent.
- Set a target of zero unexplained absences.
- Consider the data for patterns of absence that require further attention, such as: three or more consecutive unexplained absences; five unexplained absences in a year; two Mondays or Fridays as unexplained absences; or an attendance rate below the school's attendance benchmark in the previous year.
- Ensure casual and relieving teachers are provided with rolls for relevant classes.

¹ These ideas have been collected from Queensland schools, nationally, and internationally. Schools will need to consider local circumstances, priorities, age of students etc in determining which (if any) of these ideas might be useful in the local context.



Useful links

- DoE Procedure: [Roll marking in state schools](#)
- DoE Procedure: [Managing student absences and enforcing enrolment and attendance at state schools](#)
- Parent information sheet: [Anxiety about going to school](#)
- Parent information sheet: [How can I get my teenager to go to school?](#)