Tagai State College: Attendance Policy

Rationale

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

Tagai State College expects
- all students to attend every school day unless the student has an acceptable excuse
- all absences to be explained within 3 days of absence …

Tagai State College attendance policy aims to ensure all students are able to achieve the Tagai State College Service Guarantee.

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.

Tagai State College
- 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.
- believes attendance is improved where there is a school culture of support, good relationships between all members of the school and community
believes increased attendance leads to increased likelihood of academic success and social and emotional competence.
believes regular lateness to school will impact on student’s academic success. Lateness is defined as 30 mins after the official school commence time in the case of a primary campus and after the commencement of session 1 at the secondary campus.

Responsibilities

Tagai State College responsibilities

- Clear system of accountability known by all staff and students.
- Supervisors of each campus regularly discuss absences and review campus data.
- Tagai Community Engagement Officer and Tagai Behaviour Support Teacher will liaise with families, campus attendance staff, YUMI Education Support Services and other external agencies and community members to identify students who are disengaged/ing from primary or secondary education and living in any of the Torres Strait communities. The model of referrals and service delivery is formalised and known. Feedback on status of referral is integral in this system.
- Weekly monitoring of attendance data from all campuses.
- Tagai Educationally At Risk Students (TEARS) group meets twice per term and takes referral for students whose needs are not able to be met at the campus level. Referrals are made to Tagai specialist staff, government and non-government agencies including Police.
- Specialist support staff act preventatively and responsively to student’s social and emotional wellbeing and skill development where possible.
- Induct and support Tagai leaders in Attendance system including the Day 8 system to support enrolment and attendance.
- Address absences for cultural obligations with sensitivity and in partnership with families and community.

Campus responsibilities:

- Roll procedures clear, consistent, documented and monitored by HOC or delegate.
- Campus staff who have a role in attendance procedures eg Family Liaison Officer, monitor attendance and identify any trends, follow-up on student absence for students enrolled in the campus and for students disengaged from the campus.
- Campus Educationally At Risk Students (CEARS) group meets regularly and takes referrals for students at educational risk due to poor attendance including patterns of non-attendance.
- SP4 process initialized if lack of attendance or truanting places student at risk of harm or suspected risk of harm.
- Students will be case managed and individual support plans, transition plans and special provisions are developed to respond to student need and utilize the pastoral care role of staff and specialist staff to support student’s social and emotional wellbeing.
For Campuses with a School wide positive behaviour support implementation team, attendance data is to be monitored and systems developed to respond to areas of improvement and to acknowledge achievement and goals reached.

- Involve the families and community in all aspects of attendance and send clear messages to community on the importance of Every Day Counts, procedures for families to follow, expectations and goals around attendance, and acknowledgement of success.
- All staff to role model being on time, prepared and organised to work.
- Keep record of contact on student’s profile on One School
  - student is not enrolled.
  - prep students not regularly attending
  - student is absent without acceptable reason and all reasonable attempts to engage the student have failed
  - trend of non-attendance is identified
- HOC to monitor lateness to school and case manage students for whom lateness is an ongoing or regular issue.

Student responsibilities:

- Attend at least 90% of all school days and engage in learning activities to fullest capacity.
- Be on time for the beginning of the day and for every lesson.
- Attend all classes as required and not truant.
- Behave in a manner that assists the teaching and learning.

Parent responsibilities:

- Ensure student attends school on every school day for which there is not a legitimate reason for absence.
- Communicate with the school if student will be away for an extended period of time eg family holiday and ensure student is not disadvantaged in their learning by this absence.
- Communicate with the school to explain any student absence within 3 days of the absence occurring.
- Support the campus messages to students about the importance of being at school and fully engaged in learning by such actions as making sure the student has all required equipment to be able to participate in course of instruction.
- Make sure the student has good regular sleep patterns, good breakfast, has a good lunch and monitor the student travel to school wherever possible.
- Regularly ask the student how their day at school has been and report to the teacher or Head of Campus any concerns as soon as possible so family and school can work together to help the student succeed and be happy at school.
- Put a high priority on 100% attendance.
Community responsibilities:

- Support families and students in 100% attendance.
- Implement strategies such as refusal to serve school students who are not accompanied by an adult during school time.
- Encourage school-aged children to be at home at reasonable hour during school term.
- Let the family or school know of any student seen absent or truanting whether in school uniform or not.
- Develop a culture that “Attendance at school is everybody’s business”.

Strategies

At Tagai State College we promote 100% attendance by:

- Each term a full page article and photos in Torres News, campus by campus, acknowledging those students with 100% attendance.
- Each campus had a choice of privileges for students acknowledging their achievement and building internal motivation.
- Major draw each term provided by Tagai Executive.
- Article about attendance, including relevant data, in each week’s Torres News.
- Each campus promotion of attendance including through the campus newsletter, on parade, class data wall, class competition, at P&C meetings, at relevant community and parent information sessions.
- All Tagai campus’ data is collated weekly on attendance rates, reasons for absences. This weekly Tagai-wide data is monitored, analysed and presented by Associate Principal, Student Support Services, to weekly Executive meeting and weekly YUMI Education for Life meetings. Strategies are developed, improvements publically acknowledged.
- Supervisor discussion of strategy with Head of Campus.
- Posters and signage in the campus and the community.

Responses to absences

At Tagai State College, we are committed to achieving the following targets in improving attendance:

- All students to attend 90% of all school days and participate in course of instruction.
- Average weekly campus attendance to be 90% or greater.
- All absences to be explained within 3 days of absence.

When a student is absent without explanation for 3 days or a pattern of absences has been identified, Tagai State College will take the following actions:
contact will be made with the family, where possible face to face. Record of contact on student’s OneSchool profile.

seek support by contacting relevant family member as determined by cultural and traditional kinship systems.

determine if referral to CEARS or TEARS is warranted so that, through a case management approach, any required referral, intervention and support plans developed.

referral, where relevant to government and non-government agencies, Elders or similar community group.

At Tagai State College the consequences or impacts of unexplained or unauthorised absences might include the following:

- for unexplained absences, families will be asked to give explanation for absences each week through Family Liaison Officer or similar staff with support role.
- warning letters sent as per the Managing Student Absences and Enforcing Enrolment and Attendance at State Schools policy.
- steps enacted to implement referral to Police and further prosecution as provided in the Managing Student Absences and Enforcing Enrolment and Attendance at State Schools policy.
- Tagai Community Engagement Officer follow up with families and support where needed including advocacy and liaison around enrolment, accommodation, travel and on-going monitoring as required.

Reporting and monitoring attendance

At Tagai State College reports of absence or truanting are taken seriously. Students, parents, members of community and school staff may report an absence in the following ways:

- contacting the Head of Campus directly or contacting a member of the campus staff.
- contacting the Tagai Community Engagement Officer.
- contacting the campus Supervisor.

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