

# ATTENDANCE POLICY



## Every Student, Every Lesson, Every Day!

Nerang SHS expects all students to attend school every lesson, every day. Strong partnerships between the school and parents will assist in reducing absenteeism.

Procedures for Absences	Notes
<p>a) Students are required to attend school on every <a href="#">official school day</a> gazetted by Education Queensland unless the student is <b>ill</b> or <b>special circumstances</b> prevent the student from attending.</p>	<p><i>For types of circumstances see Appendix 1B.</i></p>
<p>b) On each occasion that a student is absent without explanation, an SMS text message is sent to a designated Parent/Guardian on the day of absence.</p>	<p><i>Designating which parent/guardian receives the txt can be changed by contacting the school.</i></p>
<p>c) A reason for the absence is required. Either:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Reply to the text message, giving a specific explanation for the absence; OR</li> <li>2. A written note of explanation to be handed into Student Services on the day the student returns to school; OR</li> <li>3. A medical certificate needs to be handed to Student Services.</li> </ol>	<p><i>Notes must include: Student's full name, Roll Class, Parent/Guardian name and signature.</i></p> <p><i>A medical certificate is usually required during an exam block.</i></p>
<p>d) Parents intending to take students for <b>holidays</b> during the school term must apply to the school in writing stating the dates the students will be absent from school and the reason why the vacation must be taken in school time.</p> <p>If the holiday duration is for more than 10 consecutive school days, a formal <a href="#">exemption</a> note, signed by the Principal is required</p>	<p><i>A request for work or special arrangements for assessment missed should be arranged through a negotiation form available from the office.</i></p> <p><i>Exemptions: See Appendix 2B</i></p>
<p>e) Absences which remain <b>unexplained</b> for a period of 1 week will be followed up with a phone call seeking a reason for the absence.</p> <p>A formal letter will be sent in cases of students having unexplained absences of 3 or more consecutive days, requiring an immediate parent explanation.</p>	<p><i>See Appendix 1A – Unexplained Absences</i></p>
<p>f) Absences will not be <b>authorised</b> if they do not fall in the broad categories of medical, specialist sport, bereavement, or legal requirements.</p>	<p><i>See Appendix 1B - Authorised absences</i></p>
<p>g) Students of the school must be in attendance up to and including the last day of school of each semester. Year 11 and 12 students must be in attendance up to and including the dates set each year by the Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority (QCAA).</p>	<p><i>The last week of school of each semester is a normal week in terms of behaviour, uniform and student activities</i></p>

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## Procedures for Late Arrival and Early Departure

- h) **Lateness:** Students who are late for school are to report to Student Services with either an explanation note or phone call from parent/guardian for a LATE PASS. Students who are persistently late will be required to make up this time.
- i) **Part-day absences:** Students who need to leave school early are to report to the Student Services before school, permission is given if a phone call or note from parent/guardian provides a reasonable explanation. A LEAVE PASS will then be issued to student
- j) **Leaving the School Grounds:** Students are not permitted to leave the school grounds unless a LEAVE PASS has been obtained from the Student Services.

Permission will be granted to leave the school grounds for the following reasons **only:**

- A student becomes ill and a parent has been contacted by the school to make arrangement for the student to go home.
- If a parent/guardian has a reasonable explanation to take the student from the grounds.

## Notes

*otherwise an absence will be recorded*

*Half-day absences count towards total absences.*

*This refers to morning and lunch breaks, as well as during lesson time.*

Each student is responsible for their **punctuality** and **attendance**. Parental support is appreciated, but ultimately it is the individual student who will be held accountable by the school for being on time and being present every lesson, every day.

## Appendix 1: Terms we use

### 1A: Unexplained absences

An absence is considered unexplained when no reason for the absence has been offered to the school by the Parent/Guardian (or the student, if they are living independently).

Processes are implemented when unexplained absences persist. For senior students, this may include cancellation of enrolment.

### 1B: Authorised absences

A decision is made about whether the reason offered to explain an absence is satisfactory. An absence will be considered authorised<sup>#</sup> if it is less than 10 days and:

- due to illness
- for medical or dental treatments or procedures
- a part of specialised training or sporting events, other than those associated with the school
- to attend a funeral
- attached to a significant cultural reason
- to participate in a special religious observance
- for personal or family counselling

- for Sorry Business (Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander students participating in cultural activities related to a recent family bereavement)
- for the student to attend court or fulfil other legal requirements

*<sup>#</sup>An absence for which a satisfactory reason has not been provided is considered an unauthorised absence.*

Nerang State High School will **NOT authorise** the following absences:

- Finishing assignments or completing extra study at home - this disadvantages other students
- Birthdays, shopping, concerts and other social events
- Vacations
- Visiting friends and relatives

### 1C: Eligibility for Certification

To receive a Queensland Certificate of Education (QCE) Nerang SHS requires attendance that meets the minimum time requirements to complete the course. A total of 10 unauthorised absences in each of Years 11 and 12 is considered the absolute maximum allowable. Anything beyond that would require special consideration and negotiation with the Principal and/or Guidance Officer.

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## Appendix 2: The Law

### 2A: The Education Act

A parent of a child of compulsory school age is obliged to ensure their child attends school on every school day for the educational program in which he/she is enrolled.

Pursuant to s176(1) of the Education General Provisions Act (EGPA) 2006, each parent of a child who is of Compulsory School Age\* must ensure that the child is enrolled and attends school on every school day for the educational program in which the child is enrolled unless the parent has a reasonable excuse. Pursuant to s239(1) of the Education General Provisions Act (EGPA) 2006 a parent of a young person in the Compulsory Participation Phase\* must ensure the young person is participating full-time in an eligible option, unless the parent has a reasonable excuse.

(\* See 2E)

### 2B: Exemption

Every parent of a child of compulsory school age or a young person in the compulsory participation phase has a legal obligation to ensure their child is enrolled and attending school or participating in an eligible option.

Parents can apply for an exemption from this obligation when their child cannot attend or it would be unreasonable in all the circumstances for their child to attend school or participate in an eligible option for a period of more than 10 consecutive school days. Situations where an application for an exemption may be made include Illness, Family reasons or Cultural/religious reasons.

If your child is exempted from compulsory schooling, you are excused from your obligation in relation to compulsory schooling or compulsory participation. The school is not responsible for providing an educational program to your child, however they may provide advice on other educational options available.

Decisions about exemptions are made by the principal of the school the student attends. The application for exemption is available at [Exemptions from Compulsory Schooling and Compulsory Participation](#).

### 2C: Cancellation of Enrolment

Sections 316-317 of the Education General Provisions Act provides that the principal of a state school at which a student who is older than 16 years of age is enrolled may cancel the enrolment if the principal is reasonably satisfied that the student's behaviour amounts to a refusal to participate in the educational program provided at the school.

Repeated absences or lateness without reasonable excuse amounts to a refusal to participate in the educational program, and as such would lead to cancellation of enrolment. Students will receive a warning of cancellation of enrolment, and be required to attend an interview to explain their circumstances. Should this inappropriate level of engagement in their learning persist, these students will have their enrolment at Nerang SHS cancelled.

### 2D: ABSTUDY

To be eligible, a student must be enrolled and attend school for at least 85 per cent of each term. This means students may lose their entitlement if they have greater than 6 days of absence in a Term.

### 2E: Compulsory school age and Participation

**Compulsory school age** (*Education (General Provisions) Act 2006* section 9): A child is of compulsory school age if the child is at least 6 years and 6 months, and **less than 16 years**. However, a child is no longer of compulsory school age if the child has **completed year 10**.

**Compulsory participation phase** (*Education (General Provisions) Act 2006* section 231): A young person's compulsory participation phase starts when s/he stops being of compulsory school age (i.e. **turns 16 or completes Year 10** whichever comes first) and ends when the person:

- gains a Certificate of Achievement, Senior Statement, Certificate III or Certificate IV or
- has participated in eligible options for 2 years after the person stopped being of compulsory school age or
- turns 17.

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## Appendix 3: Our Philosophy

### **Rationale:**

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

Nerang SHS attendance policy aims to:

- develop a positive school culture,
- identify absences quickly,
- follow-up promptly, and
- send clear messages to students and parents that attendance is vital.

### **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. Nerang SHS:

- 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 life choices.

### **School responsibilities:**

- Communicate high expectations of attendance to students, parents, staff and other members of the community at every opportunity.
- Reward exceptional and improved student attendance.
- Monitor school, cohort and individual student attendance patterns.
- Follow up on student absences and late arrivals.
- Provide intervention and support strategies for students and families.

### **Student responsibilities:**

- Attend school every day (including all sports days and carnival days).
- Arrive to school on time every day.

### **Parent/guardian responsibilities:**

- Support and encourage their child to attend school every day.
- Ensure their child arrives to school on-time every day.
- Provide an explanation for any student absences or late arrivals.
- Report any concerns regarding their child's attendance to school staff.

### **Strategies:**

At Nerang SHS we promote 100% attendance by:

- Rewarding of outstanding attendance (95% and above) and improved attendance
- Allocation of house points for outstanding and improved attendance
- School Wide Positive Behaviour Support initiatives
- Ensuring consistent follow up of absences with parents/guardians
- Providing intervention and support to individual students and families to reduce absenteeism

### **Responses to absences:**

At Nerang SHS we are committed to achieving the following targets in improving attendance:

- 100% of absences are explained.
- Improve the school's overall attendance to 95%.

At Nerang SHS the consequences or impacts of unexplained or unauthorised absences might include the following:

- Referral to Student Support Services Committee
- Referral to Guidance Officer and/or outside agencies
- Meeting with parents/guardians
- Developing an Individual Attendance Plan for students
- Formal processes as per Education Queensland policy up to and including referral by the Director General for prosecution under the Education (General Provisions)

### **Some related resources:**

#### ***Every Day Counts :***

<http://education.qld.gov.au/everydaycounts/index.html>

#### ***Departmental Policies and Procedures:***

[\*Managing Student Absences and Enforcing Enrolment and Attendance at State Schools\*](#)

[\*Roll Marking in State Schools\*](#)