Rationale

All schools in Queensland are committed to providing safe and supportive learning environments for all students which address their educational needs. Research shows that regular attendance is integral to successful academic, employment and social outcomes. Accordingly, it is important that students, staff and parents/carers have a shared understanding of the importance of regular student attendance. Nagoorin State School expects that every student will attend school every day of the school year unless prevented by reasonable circumstances from doing so. Nagoorin State School attendance policy aims to maximise participation in learning programs by all students to ensure all children can access equitable educational outcomes.

At Nagoorin State School we are committed to achieving the following targets in improving attendance:  **A 94-100% average attendance rate for students in 2014.**

The importance of attending school

At Nagoorin State School we believe that students need to attend school regularly in order to participate fully and gain maximum benefit from schooling. Regular attendance enables children to access a full education and assists them to reach their full potential. School staff set an example for students by encouraging and emphasising attendance and punctuality. A child between the ages of six and sixteen years is of compulsory school age, irrespective of distance from the school or whether the student has a disability. All students are required to be enrolled at a registered government or non-government school and must attend on every day instruction is provided, unless the minister has granted an exemption from school attendance.

The responsibility for enforcing school attendance is with the Department of Education and Children’s Services. The Department therefore has a legal responsibility to record and monitor attendance and take appropriate action to rectify problems of non-attendance. It is important that students, staff and parents/carers have a shared understanding of the importance of attending school. Nagoorin State School is committed to promoting the key messages of the Queensland State-wide initiative *Every Day Counts* which promotes four key messages:

- All children be enrolled at school and attend on every school day
- Schools monitor, communicate and implement strategies to improve regular school attendance
- Truanting can place a student in unsafe situations and impact on their future employability and life choices
- Attendance at school is the responsibility of everyone in the community
Responsibilities

Parents/Carers Responsibilities:

- Ensure that their child attends school on every school day.
- Provide a satisfactory explanation for all absences, lateness or early departures.
- Contact the school prior to any planned absence. Where this is not possible, parents must provide the reason for any absence prior to 9.30 a.m. on the day of absence, or within 2 days of the student's return to school. This may take the form of a medical certificate or a satisfactory explanation for the absence either by phone or by written note.
- Contact the Principal if student absence is to be for an extended period of time (e.g. family reasons or illness) and request school work - at least 2 days' notice should be given to prepare work.
- Contact the Principal if a student is refusing to attend school. Initiate or attend meetings to seek support and discuss their child’s attendance or participation in their educational program.
- Provide a written note (signed and dated) to the teacher, if their child is required to leave school early.
- Provide a written note (signed and dated) from parents/carers explaining their lateness.
- Advise the school of any change of address or phone numbers to ensure school records are accurate. Up to date data is essential in an emergency.

Student Responsibilities:

- Under the Education (General Provisions) Act 2006, students must attend school each day. They must be on time and have all necessary equipment.
- Never leave school during school hours without permission from parents/carers or the school.
- Report to the office if arriving to school after 8.55am and provide a note from parents/carers explaining their lateness.
- Ensure all missed school work is completed.
- Ensure absence records are accurate and all absences have been explained by parents/carers.

School Responsibilities:

- Regularly inform students, staff and parents/carers about the Nagoorin State School Attendance Policy and Procedures (including the Policy and Procedures for late arrival, early departure and truanning) and make this publicly available through the school’s website, newsletters and enrolment package.
- Monitor student attendance daily through marking the roll at 9.30am and again at 2.30pm.
- Notify parents/carers of any unexplained absence, requesting a satisfactory explanation for their child's absence.
- Discuss individual attendance with students and offer support and help to parents and students when school attendance has become a problem.
- Principal and staff will refer to a Student Attendance Officer on an ED171 (Report of Unsatisfactory Attendance) form if attendance issues are not resolved.
- Provide students with school work when they are absent for legitimate extended periods of time.
- Notify the relevant authorities if non-attendance persists.
Strategies

At Nagoorin State School, we are committed to achieving our attendance target and continually improving and promoting attendance and achievement by:

- Ensuring consistent follow up of absences with parents/caregivers.
- Working with students and families to reduce absenteeism.
- Recognising and rewarding students who are on target and maintain attendance of >95%.
- Monitoring attendance through weekly report and data display (updated weekly).
- Ensuring work that is missed due to absence is completed during play breaks and in some cases for homework.
- Any student with an attendance rate of <90% may not be able to participate in extracurricular activities including school camps, arts councils and will not be eligible for consideration in school leadership.

Responses to absences

Absences for which a satisfactory reason has been provided are considered explained absences, and the student’s enrolment is viewed as continuous. Undertaking a leisure activity such as shopping, visiting friends and relatives, fishing or camping, is not considered a satisfactory explanation for an absence.

An absence for which a satisfactory reason has not been provided is considered an unexplained absence and will be recorded as an unauthorised absence.

If there is no explanation from the Parent/Caregiver regarding a student’s absence or lateness for that day the teacher will:

- Complete an “Unexplained Absence” form, “Notification of Late Attendance” or “Early Leaving” form
- Give the form to the student who will take it home to be signed and be returned the following day
- Phone messages will be recorded by Administration on OneSchool as a Record of Contact.
- On the third day of an unexplained absence, lateness or if a regular pattern of non-attendance is observed the Principal will contact home by phone.
- When students are absent without explanation for 2 or more days in any given fortnight, an Absence Letter will be mailed home, reminding parents/carers of their obligations to ensure their child attends school on every school day and the requirement for providing satisfactory explanations for all absences. Parents are asked to provide the reason for the unexplained absences, sign and return the Absence Report.
- Where there is a continuation of unexplained absences, or absences without satisfactory reasons, parents will be required to attend a meeting with the Principal to address issues contributing to these absences and to discuss implementation of appropriate strategies and support mechanisms.
- Where unsatisfactory attendance still continues, the Principal may commence Formal processes associated with Enforcement of Compulsory Schooling and Compulsory Participation as per Education Queensland policy up to and including referral by the Director General for prosecution under the Education (General Provisions) Act.

Reporting and monitoring attendance
At Nagoorin reports of absence or truanting are taken seriously. Parents, members of community and school staff may report an absence in the following ways:

- Telephone / email to the school office (the.principal@nagoorinss.eq.edu.au)
- Signed/dated note sent with the student
- In person to the office or class teacher

**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

**Appendixes**

Appendix A: Absent Notes
Appendix B: What chance does your child have of being successful?
Appendix C: Parent and Carers Fact Sheet