



Tin Can Bay P–10 State School

Attendance policy

Effective date: 25 May 2015

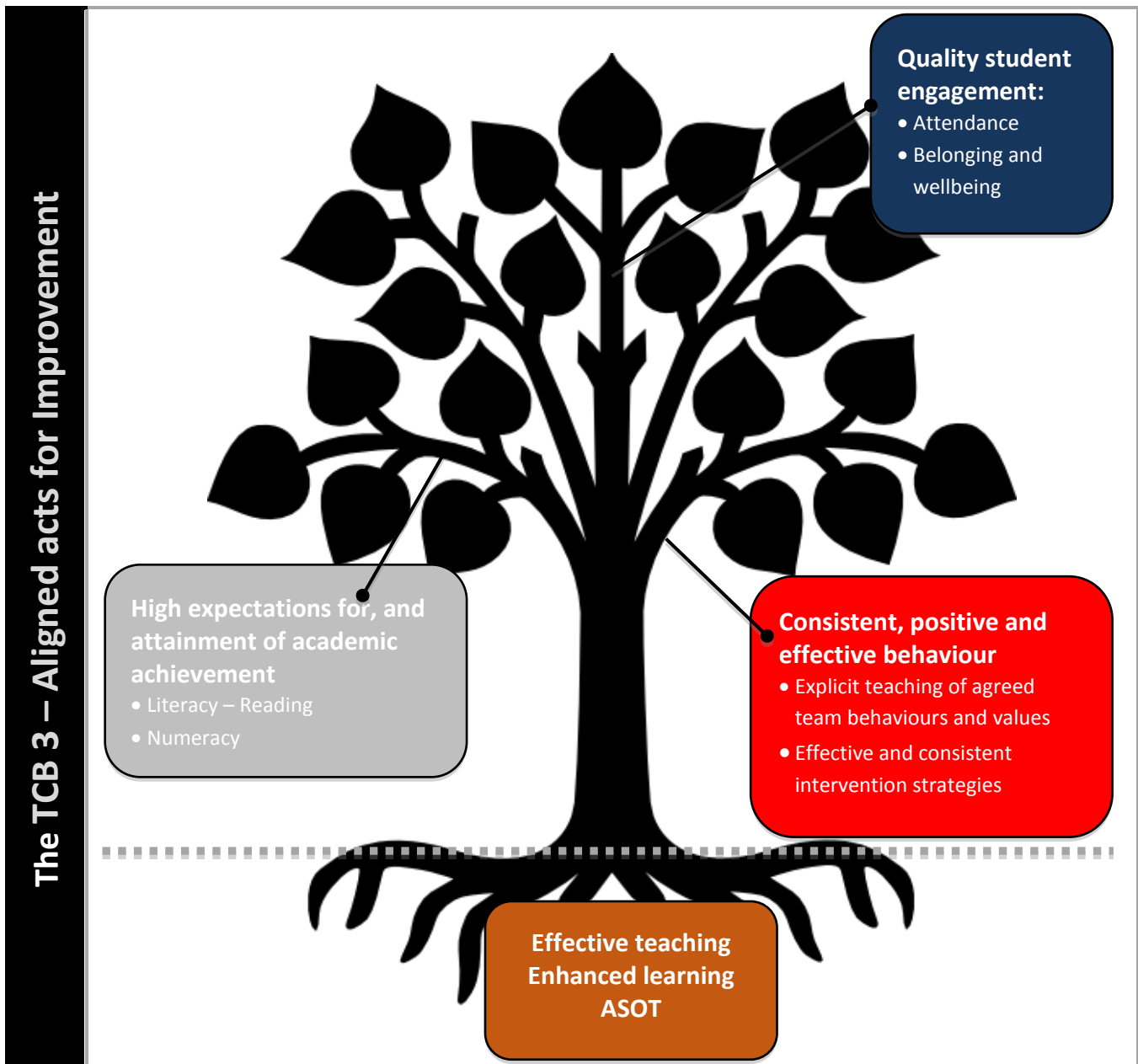


Attendance policy

Rationale

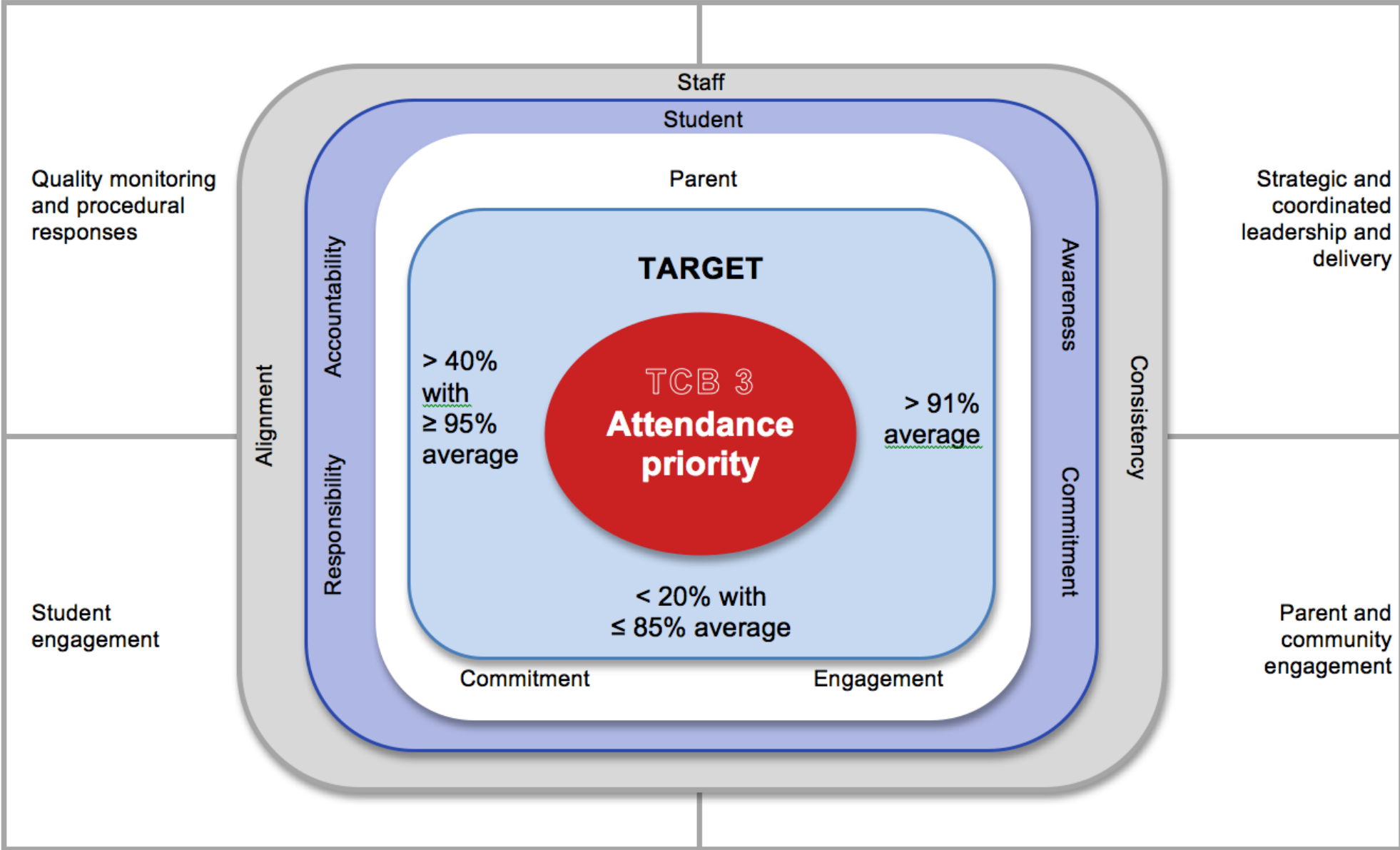
Tin Can Bay P–10 State School's **Attendance policy** aims to ensure all students are able to achieve the school's *Three agreements* – in particular the agreement, **Be a Learner**.

The policy is key to achieving the school's Explicit Improvement Agenda – The TCB 3.



The expectations at Tin Can Bay P–10 State School are that:

- all students will attend every school day, unless the student has a reasonable excuse as defined under the Education (General Provisions) Act 2006 ss.176 and ss. 239.
- all absences are to be explained on the day following a students returns to school or beforehand in the case of a planned absence.



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.

Tin Can Bay P–10 State School:

- is committed to promoting the key messages of *Every Day Counts* and believes improved attendance requires a holistic approach. This involves:
 - Quality monitoring and procedural responses
 - Strategic and coordinated leadership and delivery
 - Parent and community engagement
 - Student engagement.

At Tin Can Bay P–10 State School we believe that:

- all children should be enrolled at school and attend school all day, every school day.
- attendance is improved when there is a school culture of support, good relationships between all members of the school and community, and quality teaching and learning leading to positive engagement.
- attendance at school is the responsibility of everyone in the community.
- students should play a role in monitoring their attendance and be encouraged and rewarded for high or improved attendance.
- increased attendance leads to increased likelihood of academic success and social and emotional competence.
- regular lateness to school will impact on a student's academic success.
- truancing can place a student in unsafe situations and impact on their future employability and life choices.

Tin Can Bay P–10 State School responsibilities

- Clear system of accountability and procedures known and implemented by all staff and students. See the Tin Can Bay P–10 SS *Attendance monitoring and response procedures*
- Ensure accurate records of attendance and roll marking.
- Team leaders regularly monitor and discuss absences and review school data.
- Provide pathways and learning opportunities that enhance student engagement.
- Work in partnership with families and students with attendance concerns.
- Communicate regularly and clearly with parents and carers.
- Ensure legislative accountabilities are met.
- Ensure learning is of a high quality and that students are engaged in goal setting, monitoring and receiving feedback on their attendance.
- Staff role model being on time, prepared and organised to work.
- Use enrolment tools and data platforms to support and maximise improved attendance.
- Case manage students and provide individual support plans, transition plans and special provisions in response to student needs. Utilise the pastoral care role of staff and specialist staff to support students' social and emotional wellbeing.

- Initialise the SP4 process if lack of attendance or truanting places a student at risk of harm or suspected risk of harm.

Student responsibilities

It is the responsibility of students to:

- act in a positive manner that is reflective of the Three TCB agreements.
 - Be safe
 - Be respectful
 - Be a learner

In doing so they are contributing positively to their own learning and the learning environment of others.

- attend school with the aim of meeting the TCB baseline attendance target.
- engage in learning activities to their fullest capacity.
- set goals for their attendance and monitor their progress towards attainment them.
- be on time for the start of each school day and for every lesson.
- attend all classes as required.

Parent responsibilities

It is the responsibility of each parent/care giver to:

- ensure their student attends school on all school days, unless the student has a reasonable excuse as defined under the Education (General Provisions) Act 2006 ss.176 and ss. 239.
- communicate with the school in a proactive manner regarding their student's attendance and absences.
- communicate with the school to explain all absences on the day following their students returns to school, or beforehand if an absence is known in advance.
- support the TCB messages to students about the importance of being at school and fully engaged in learning. Supporting these messages may include:
 - making sure their student has all the required equipment to participate in their course of instruction
 - regularly discussing attendance goals and progress with their student.
- make sure their student has good, regular sleep patterns, breakfast and lunch.
- monitor their students travel to school, wherever possible, thus ensuring punctuality.
- regularly ask their student how their day at school has been. Report to the teacher or team leader any concerns as soon as possible. In this way the parent/s and school can work together to help the student succeed and be happy at school.
- put a high priority on 100% attendance.

Community responsibilities

It is the responsibility of the community to:

- 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 a reasonable hour during the 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 Tin Can Bay P–10 State School we promote 100% attendance by:

- maintaining a high profile of the importance of attendance
- positively acknowledging positive attendance through a range of avenues
- promoting attendance through the school newsletter, on parade, class data wall, class competition, at P&C meetings, and at relevant community and parent information sessions
- monitoring attendance data and trends, and discussing strategies for ongoing improvement with the school leadership team
- using effective monitoring, response and intervention processes
- implementing a coordinated attendance incentive and recognition program.

Responses to absences

At Tin Can Bay P–10 State School we are committed to achieving the following targets in order to improve attendance. Refer to **Appendix 1**.

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*](#)



Attendance monitoring and response procedures

Strategy	Who	Aligned school actions and strategies						
Proactive approach	Team approach	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Student awareness and self-monitoring <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Each secondary student will set a term attendance goal, counter signed by the parent. They will regularly access the student page on <i>OneSchool</i> to monitor their attendance graph as part of the daily care session outcomes. Each primary student will set an attendance goal agreed to by the parent and maintain a learning and attendance card. Parent notification and awareness <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Text message sent daily when unexplained absence entered in <i>OneSchool</i> Attendance update letter sent fortnightly with attendance percentage and summarising unexplained absences Teacher monitoring and awareness (see Appendix 6) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accurate roll marking Teacher daily monitoring of individuals on ID Attend — monitoring trends, patterns and unexplained absences Teacher monitoring class/care class data on <i>OneSchool</i> Class Dashboard Fortnightly unexplained absence reports issued to teachers for consideration and follow up Administration/office staff <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accurate recording of absence information and explanations — correct use of Departmental codes Accurate enrolment and exit records Generation of attendance and absence summary reports Team leaders receive fortnightly attendance summary reports for monitoring and action. (See Appendix 7) Attendance committee considers whole-school trends through 5-week data cycles. 						
● Role model		<p>Positive recognition and rewards structure — Whole-school and in-class</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Whole-school</th> <th>Classroom</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bronze and silver attendance awards based on students achieving their attendance goal within a 5-week cycle End of term recognition letters for >95% attendance and 100% attendance Inter-class competition Celebration assembly, notices and newsletters Parent awards </td> <td> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Positive comments to students and notes home to parents Extra time at the computer or PE; free homework pass First-in-line privileges for lunch or dismissal Pencils, pens, stickers, posters, book covers, bookmarks, etc. Team certificates for the best record or most improved record Name on the 'Attendance Wall' in the classroom Chance to act as the teacher's personal assistant </td> </tr> </tbody> </table>			Whole-school	Classroom	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bronze and silver attendance awards based on students achieving their attendance goal within a 5-week cycle End of term recognition letters for >95% attendance and 100% attendance Inter-class competition Celebration assembly, notices and newsletters Parent awards 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Positive comments to students and notes home to parents Extra time at the computer or PE; free homework pass First-in-line privileges for lunch or dismissal Pencils, pens, stickers, posters, book covers, bookmarks, etc. Team certificates for the best record or most improved record Name on the 'Attendance Wall' in the classroom Chance to act as the teacher's personal assistant
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● TCB Learner		<p>Student and parents maintain school target attendance rate and explain all absences with acceptable reasons.</p>						
● Monitoring and class intervention	Care teacher or Class teacher	<p>Unexplained</p> <p>Daily monitoring of roll to ensure students bring a note upon their return to school, following an absence.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Fortnightly unexplained absences must be at nil. Contact parent if this is becoming a repeated problem. Make a record in <i>OneSchool</i> contact. 	<p>Extended</p> <p>If a student has not attended school after 3 consecutive days and no information has been forthcoming, contact parent by phone (out of care and concern).</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Make written note and submit to office for records. Put in place initial actions to support student (if required) and communicate with teachers (if required). Make a record in <i>OneSchool</i> contact. 	<p>Pattern or accumulation</p> <p>If a regular pattern of absence is developing leading to greater than 5% (3 days) absence in a term, and explanations are questionable, make further enquiries with student and parent.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Put in place initial actions to support student (if required) to attain regular attendance. Make record in <i>OneSchool</i> contact. 				
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitoring of class attendance data via Class Dashboard Encouragement of interclass competition and class team approach 						
● Intervention and collaborative support — School-based processes	Team leaders or Delegates	<p>If student fails to respond to a teacher's actions and accumulates 5 days unexplained for a term:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Letter will be generated for 5 or more unexplained absences and signed by the School Administrator — P-3, 4-6, 7-10 or SEP Follow-up meeting with parent (if required) 	<p>If absent for 5 consecutive days and no information has been forthcoming:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Team leader is to contact parent and invite them to a meeting to discuss the situation if: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> absence is not reasonable student support is required letter prepared and signed by School administrator — P-6, 7-10 or SEP Record on <i>OneSchool</i> Proactively monitor 	<p>If a continuation of a pattern of regular absence continues:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Team leader to contact parent and invite to meeting to discuss situation if: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> absence is not reasonable student support is required letter is prepared and signed by the School administrator — P-3, 4-6, 7-10 or SEP Record actions on <i>OneSchool</i> Proactively monitor 				
● Stage 4 – Activation of Departmental processes	Admin.	<p>15 days after original contact by administration</p> <p>If student absence continues and student is not attending regularly or parent does not respond, then formal process under <i>Managing Student absences and Enforcing Enrolment and Attendance in State Schools Policy</i> to be followed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Team leader will consider previous correspondence and communication Team leader will generate Form 4 – <i>Notice of Obligation – Compulsory Schooling</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Form 4 sent by registered post Entered in <i>OneSchool</i> via Manage incidents Meeting of parent/s with the Principal or a Deputy Principal 						
● Stage 5	Principal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If not positively resolved Form 5 – <i>Warning notice</i> Process recorded in <i>OneSchool</i> via Manage incidents 						
● Stage 6 – Department intervention	Principal and Director General	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If not positively resolved Form 6 – <i>Recommendation to prosecute</i> 						

Key considerations for effective implementation

- Access for all students to an **intentionally inviting, safe and supportive** school and classroom environment is key to reducing absenteeism rates.
- Implement incentives school wide. To foster a culture of attendance **every classroom needs to participate**.
- Attendance incentives are most effective when part of a comprehensive approach that includes outreach to families with significant challenges to attendance. Incentives should be part of **creating a school-wide culture of attendance** and accompanied by a deep commitment to ensuring students are engaged in the classroom once they show up.
- Consider when to best conduct sports days, exam blocks, excursions, etc (in the last week of term) to limit absenteeism and reduce disruption to key learning times during the semester.
- Incentives don't need to be costly. **Simple rewards – recognition** from peers and the school through certificates or assemblies, extra recess time and homework passes all go a long way toward motivating students. Ask students what they consider a meaningful incentive.
- Interclass competition is a powerful motivator. The sense of competition between classes (with rewards like a party for the class with the best monthly attendance) can be a powerful motivator. Such strategies **encourage students to feel accountable** to each other for attending class.
- Avoid recognising only perfect attendance. Perfect attendance is not always the goal since it is not wise to encourage students to come to school when they're sick. **Students should be rewarded for improved attendance, not just perfect records**. Offering weekly perfect attendance awards can allow students to still have a chance to succeed the next week if they are absent.
- **Reward timeliness** – not just showing up to school. Tardiness also has an adverse impact on learning. For this reason many schools only count on-time attendance toward rewards.
- Send home information highlighting both the value of attendance and incentives and the consequences of poor attendance. **Ensure families know about the incentive program and the importance of attendance for academic success**, as well as school policies in which poor attendance can result in failing a course or being retained. Consequences should never be used without incentives.
- **Offer incentives for families**, not just students. Often, families appreciate access to resources such as food baskets, transportation passes, etc.

Table 1 – Absence codes for full or part day absence

Type of absence	Code	Explanatory notes	Tin Can Bay P–10 State School context
Entire day	A	Student was absent for the entire day	
Early (No penalty)	E	<p>Student left early, but within the final 2 hours of scheduled schooling. This will not count as an afternoon/half day absence.</p> <p>If the student left earlier than 2 hours prior to the end of the scheduled school day, this will count as an afternoon/half day absence (see 'P' code).</p>	Student leaves between 12.30pm and 2.30 pm
Late (No penalty)	L	<p>Student arrived late, but within 2 hours of scheduled schooling. This will not count as a morning/half day absence.</p> <p>If the student arrived after the first 2 hours of the scheduled school day, this will count as a morning/half day absence (see 'M' code).</p>	Student arrives between 8.30 am and 10.30am
Morning	M	Student was absent for the morning. This will count as a half-day absence.	
Afternoon	P	Student was absent during the afternoon. This will count as a half-day absence.	

Coding of school absences where a student is not physically present but will not be recorded as absent

School activity (Absence reason code A)

A student will not be considered absent when they are participating in an authorised activity for school purposes. Examples include students performing in school choirs, bands or dance groups, students participating in a youth parliament or council, or students participating in community service. Students attending a hospital school should also be marked with Code A. Upon discharge from hospital, the hospital school should advise the usual school of any variations in the student's attendance. Code A should be replaced with Code I (Illness) for days when the student has not participated in the education program at the hospital school due to illness.

Excursion (Absence reason code C)

A student will not be considered absent when they are participating in an excursion that occurs outside the school grounds and is conducted, organised and/or approved by the school. Excursions include part-day, full-day or multi-day class visits to venues outside the school, and school camps.

Natural disaster (Absence reason code N)

A student will not be considered absent if they are unable to attend school due to an extreme weather event or other natural disaster. This code may be used whether or not the student is continuing with school work while absent from school, and may be used for full or part-day absences.

Off campus activity (Absence reason code F)

A student will not be considered absent if they are participating in an authorised activity that is away from the school campus. These activities may include flexible arrangements, attendance at a TAFE or other training provider course, or participation in a school-based apprenticeship or traineeship. These activities will be regular and ongoing in nature.

Sport – Representative (Absence reason code S)

A student will not be considered absent when they are representing the school, district, region, state or country at a sporting event approved by the school. For non-representative sport, see below.

Work experience (Absence reason code W)

A student will not be considered absent when they are participating in a work experience program approved and organised by the school. Work experience programs are available for students 14 years or older. Schools must ensure appropriate work experience agreements have been completed before students participate in work experience.

Exemption (Absence reason code Z)

The student has been formally exempted for this absence and is recorded in the school's exemption register.

Attendance not required (Absence reason code B)

The student was not required to attend school on this day, as it is not included in his/her educational program. This may include part-time students or students whose educational program does not require their attendance on particular days.

The following circumstances will be considered absences for which a reasonable excuse has been given:

Illness (Absence reason code I)

It is reasonable that a child may be absent from school when they are genuinely too ill to attend. On any single day of absence due to illness, or as soon as possible within 2 days of the student's return to school, a parent should provide the school with an explanation for the absence, in line with the school's agreed processes for notifying of student absence. This may take the form of a written explanation note containing the student's name, date(s) of absence(s) and reason for absence(s), a verbal explanation through either a phone call or visit to the school, or a medical certificate.

If the absence is more than 10 consecutive school days, an exemption is required. Refer to *Exemptions from Compulsory Schooling and Compulsory Participation*.

Infectious or contagious disease (Absence reason code I)

It is a reasonable excuse for a child to be absent from school if the child is, or is a member of a class of persons, that is subject to a direction or order given about an infectious or contagious disease or condition.

Medical or dental treatments or procedures (Absence reason code O)

In some circumstances it may be reasonable for a student to be absent to attend a medical or dental appointment during school hours, however, parents should be encouraged to make these appointments out of school hours if possible. These absences should be documented through the provision of a written or verbal explanation from a parent.

Holiday (Absence reason code H)

Holidays during terms should be actively discouraged. Parents should be encouraged to plan holidays during gazetted school holiday periods and student free days.

If the absence is more than 10 consecutive school days, an exemption is required. Refer to *Exemptions from Compulsory Schooling and Compulsory Participation*.

Religious observance (Absence reason code O)

In some circumstances it may be reasonable for a student to be absent to participate in a special religious observance. These absences should be documented through the provision of a written or verbal explanation from the parent.

Sport – non-representative (Absence reason code O)

Principals should use their professional judgement to determine if it is reasonable for a student to be absent from school to participate in a sporting event where they are not representing their school, district, region, state or nation, taking into consideration the type of event and the organising sporting body.

Suspension

Suspension is a reasonable excuse for absence and the following applies:

- a student suspended for 10 days or less (**Absence reason code P**)
- a student suspended for 11 to 20 days **or for charge-related reasons (Absence reason code Q)**
- a student suspended with a recommendation for exclusion (**Absence reason code R**).

For all suspensions, the school's principal must take reasonable steps to ensure the student can continue their education.

Law of the Commonwealth (Absence reason code O)

It is a reasonable excuse for a child to be absent from school if a Law of the Commonwealth allows a child to carry on an activity other than attending school.

Funeral (Absence reason code O)

Attendance at a funeral may be considered as a reasonable excuse for absence. Parents should be encouraged to ensure their child misses as little school as possible. There may also be circumstances where a child is kept out of school due to grief for a close family member. In such circumstances, the school should work with families to encourage them to have the child attend school to maintain a sense of normalcy. These situations should be handled with respect and sensitivity and should be underpinned by the interests of the child.

Sorry business (Absence reason code D)

Student is Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander and was required to be absent to participate in cultural activities related to a recent family bereavement. Parents should be encouraged to ensure their child misses as little school as possible. There may also be circumstances where a child is kept out of school due to grief for a close family member. In such circumstances, the school should work with families to encourage them to have the child attend school to maintain a sense of normalcy. These situations should be handled with respect and sensitivity and should be underpinned by the interests of the child.

Legal (Absence reason code O)

It is a reasonable excuse for a child to be absent from school where the child is required to attend court or fulfil other legal requirements.

Guideline to determine reasonable excuses for absence

Guideline for authorised officers on how to determine whether parents have a reasonable excuse for the purposes of ss. 176 and 239 of the *Education (General Provisions) Act 2006 (Qld)*

Under s176(1) of the [Education \(General Provisions Act\) 2006 \(EGPA\)](#) 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**.

Under s239 (1) of the EGPA, each 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**.

What is a reasonable excuse?

For the purposes of ss.176 and 239, and without limiting the ordinary meaning of the term, parents **have a reasonable excuse** if, for example:

- the child (or children in question) resides with parent 1, and parent 2 (who does not reside with the children) believes, on reasonable grounds, that parent 1 is complying with the obligation to have their child or children enrolled and attending school. Parent 2 has a reasonable excuse
- the parents are not reasonably able to control the child's behaviour to the extent necessary to comply with their obligation to have their child enrolled, attending or participating
- the parents are unable to comply with their obligation because of ill health or a disability
- the child in question is considered to be independent and is no longer practically subject to the parental authority of the parents
- the child's non-attendance or non-participation was due to an accident or unforeseen event that the parent could not prevent. Evidence must be provided (e.g. certificate signed by medical/health professional in case of medical event).

What is not a reasonable excuse?

For the purposes of ss.176 and 239, and without limiting the ordinary meaning of the term, parents **do not have a reasonable excuse** if, for example:

- they claim they meet the situation of a reasonable excuse as mentioned above without providing reasonable and sufficient evidence to support their claim
- they refuse to let their child attend school due to an alleged incident or incidents that occurred at school
- they refuse to cooperate with staff at the school or region
- they claim they do not understand their legal obligations
- they refuse to respond to the notices and/or claim that they did not receive the notices
- they claim they are not able to control their child without any valid reasonable or sufficient evidence (e.g. information provided by relatives, police or child protection authorities and/or the student, observations from school/region personnel, information from other agencies) supporting their claim
- they claim the extended absences are for family reasons
- they have provided false, misleading or incorrect information intentionally.

Process to follow if it is determined a parent has a reasonable excuse

In circumstances where an authorised officer, after contact with the relevant parents and/or child, consultation with their supervisor, proper investigation and consideration of all relevant evidence, is satisfied that failure to enrol, attend or participate **can be explained by a reasonable excuse**, the authorised officer:

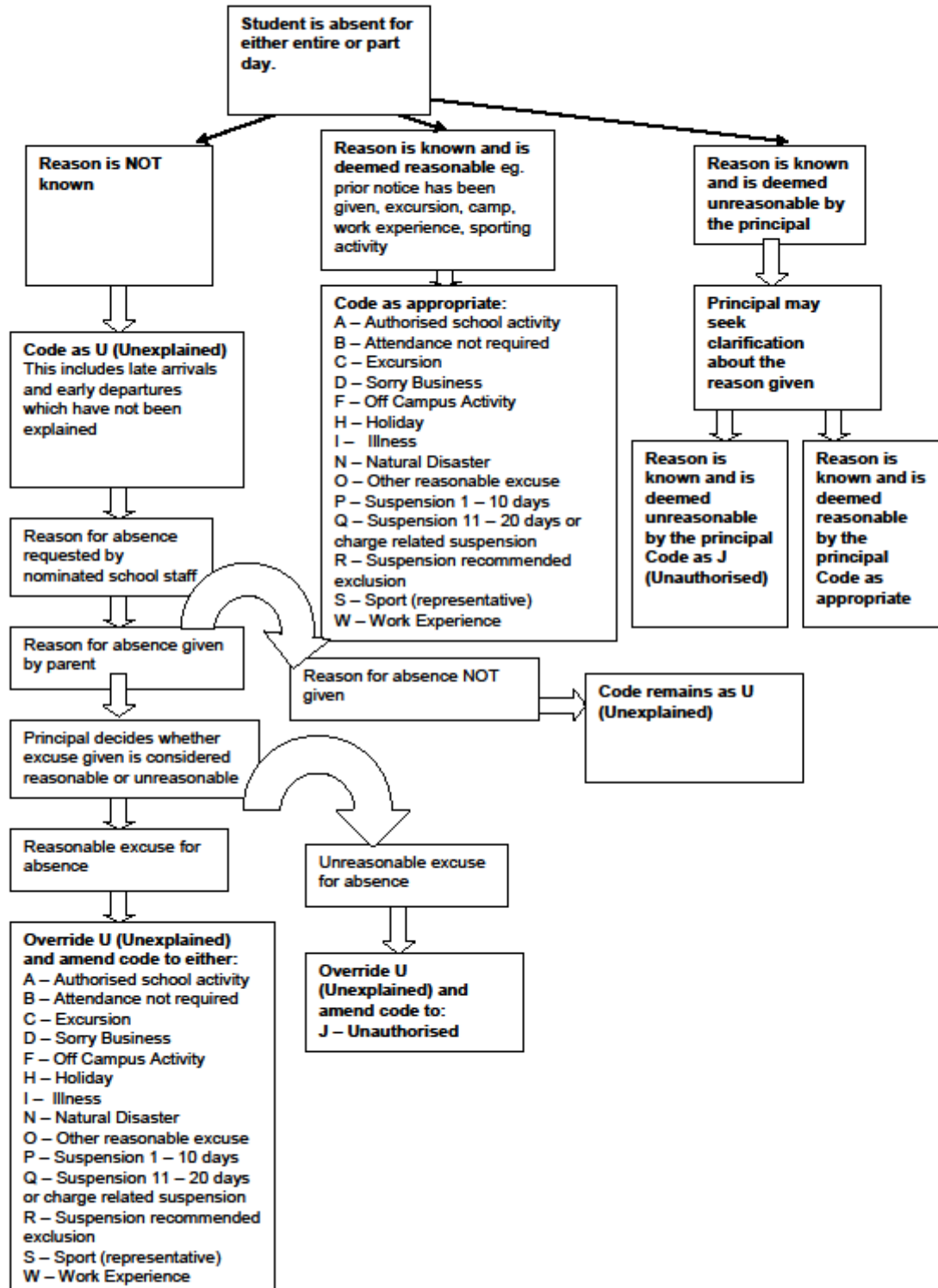
- is not required to brief the Director-General must record in OneSchool all contacts made with the parents and/or child/young person including outcomes of investigations
- must continue to assist the child/young person to attend and access educational support or participate in an eligible option

- must continue to record absences in accordance with the departmental policy *Roll Marking in State Schools*.

Appendix 5

Flowchart for recording student absences

Flowchart for recording student absences



Appendix 6

Attendance monitoring and response – Teacher checklist

Frequency	Strategy	Notes
Daily	Maintain accurate rolls.	
	Use ID Attend 'history' to identify trends and patterns.	
	Seek explanation for all absences.	Use buff slip for student to take home and attain a written explanation for their absence.
	Have students use <i>Self-monitoring card</i> .	
Weekly	Check classroom dashboard to monitor and share class attendance percentage.	Use dashboard as a celebration and motivational tool for interclass competition.
	Provide positive teacher rewards and communicate student progress.	
	Contact parents if a student is absent for 3 consecutive days.	
	Contact parents if regular attendance appears to be at risk.	
Fortnightly	Provide unexplained absence and summary absence reports for consideration.	Administration team leaders to send a letter when students have 3 or more accumulated unexplained absences.
	Update Interclass competition on assembly.	
Five weeks (Half term)	Submit the names of students who have attained their attendance goal to Team leader.	Issue Bronze and Silver Award certificates.

Team leaders – Role in attendance

Team leaders at the school are required to:

1. have a good, working knowledge of Tin Can Bay P–10 State School's **Attendance Policy** and Departmental procedures and guidelines
(For example, the correct use of Absence reason codes (see Appendix 3) and reasonable excuses for absence (see Appendix 4).)
2. quality control exit processes for student enrolment at a new school.
3. maintain an accurate record of communications relating to student attendance
4. support parents and students in an effort to improve school attendance
5. quality control the processes used by teachers within their team to achieve attendance goals and implement the TCB attendance strategy
6. regularly monitor student cohort attendance data.

Direct role in specific TCB P–10 SS processes

1. Exit procedures

Team leaders are to:

- commence or complete a checklist upon notification of a student's exit from the school
- communicate the student's exit to staff via notices
- conclude checklist once the student has enrolled at their new school and is removed from the TCB P–10 SS OnSchool.

2. Communicate Absence reason codes to office staff

Team leaders are to ensure that Office staff are informed of the Absence reason code for a student, when the student is involved in an arranged activity or absence. For example, 'Exemption' if the student is participating in a flexible program.

3. Monitor and follow-up explained absences each fortnight

Each fortnight Team leaders will receive a report of unexplained absences occurring in a given Term. Letters will be generated by Office staff for those students who have accumulated three or more unexplained absences.

4. Report on and follow-up prolonged absences each week

Team leaders are to:

- prepare for weekly Executive meeting by printing OneSchool attendance report and identifying any prolonged absences or low attendance percentages
- follow-up identified absences by:
 - monitoring
 - making a phone call to parent/care giver. (Record in OneSchool)
 - generating letter with full absence report attached. (Forward letter to Office – Janelle and record in OneSchool)
- Follow-up letter if no response is forthcoming by generating Form 4 process in OneSchool

