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.

Karara State School expects all students to attend school every day of the school year unless prevented by reasonable circumstances for doing so.

Karara State School attendance policy aims to maximise participation in learning programs by all students to ensure optimal educational outcomes.

At Karara State School we are committed to achieving the following targets in improving attendance:

- A 95% attendance rate for students in 2014
- 100% of students arriving at school before 8:50 a.m.

The importance of attending school

At Karara 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. Karara 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 can be broken down into 3 main stakeholders, the School, the Student and the Parents. The shared responsibility creates the best chance for optimal student attendance.

**Parent responsibilities:**

- Send children to school every day unless there is a valid reason.
- Provide an satisfactory explanation for all absences, lateness or early departure.
- Notify the school of any known absences before 9:00 a.m. or within 2 days of a student’s return to school. This can be done via email, note or by phone.
- Contact the Principal if the student’s absence is foreseen to be an extended period so the school can prepare support for the student to ensure student can continue their learning.
- Provide the school with a written note (signed and dated) or contact the Principal if a child is required to leave the school early.
- Meet with school staff in cases of regular non-attendance, or regular unexplained absences and follow up with strategies for improvement.

**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.
- Remain at school at all times unless permission has been given from parents/carers or the school.
- Provide copies of notes to teachers or from teachers to parents to reduce number of unexplained absences.
- Ensure absence records are accurate and absences have been explained from proper authority.

**School responsibilities:**

- Regularly inform students, staff and parents/carers about the Jundah State School Attendance Policy and Procedures (including the Policy and Procedures for late arrival, early departure and truanting) and make this publicly available through the school’s website, newsletters and enrolment package.
- Monitor student attendance daily through marking the roll at the beginning of each day.
- 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.

Every day counts – Is your child at school today?  
www.education.qld.gov.au/everydaycounts
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 Karara State School we are committed to achieving the state wide attendance target by:

- Promoting the importance of attending school everyday through parades, school newsletter items and in classroom discussions.

- Creating safe and supportive classroom environments that encourage children to attend school every day.

- Providing rich and stimulating learning experiences in all classrooms that encourage students to learn. Encouraging participation in extra curricular offerings and individual child interest areas at the school.

- Recognising and rewarding students who are on target and maintain attendance of >95%

- Staff showing interest and concern for student welfare and following up with absences that have been unexplained.

- Any student with an attendance rate of <90% may not be able to participate in extracurricular activities including school camps, excursions and will not be eligible for consideration in school leadership roles.

### 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 be recorded as an unauthorised absence*.

Karara is committed to achieving the following targets in improving attendance:

- No Unexplained Absences.

- 100% follow up to ensure all children who are away have phoned, emailed or called the school. *(Attendance note reminder, phone call home).*
When a student is absent without explanation for 3 days or a pattern of absences has been identified, Karara State School will take the following actions:

- Principal or school representative to call parent enquiring about the absent child and the reason for their absence.

For repeated unexplained absences principal to hold a parent teacher meeting outlining the concerns and strategies to improve child’s attendance. Principal to follow Managing Student Absences and Enforcing Enrolment and Attendance at State Schools DETE policy.

**Reporting and monitoring attendance**

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

- Phoning or emailing the school (the.principal@kararass.eq.edu.au)
- Note sent to school with the student (signed/dated)
- In person

**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: What chance does your child have of being successful?

Appendix B: Parent and Carers Fact Sheet
What chance has your child got of being successful?

1 or 2 days a week doesn’t seem much but …

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>He/She is only missing just…</th>
<th>This equals…</th>
<th>Which each year is…</th>
<th>and over 13 years of schooling that’s…</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 day per fortnight</td>
<td>20 days per year</td>
<td>4 weeks per year</td>
<td>Nearly 1.5 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 day per week</td>
<td>40 days per year</td>
<td>8 weeks per year</td>
<td>Over 2.5 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 days per week</td>
<td>80 days per year</td>
<td>16 weeks per year</td>
<td>Over 3 years</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

OR

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>He/She is only missing just…</th>
<th>That equals…</th>
<th>Which is…..</th>
<th>and over 13 years of schooling that’s…</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10 minutes per day</td>
<td>50 minutes per week</td>
<td>Nearly 1.5 weeks per year</td>
<td>Nearly Half a year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 minutes per day</td>
<td>1 hour 40 mins per week</td>
<td>Over 2.5 Weeks per year</td>
<td>Nearly 1 year</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Half an hour per day</td>
<td>Half a day per week</td>
<td>4 Weeks per Year</td>
<td>Nearly 1 and a Half years</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

EVERY DAY COUNTS

Every day counts – Is your child at school today?
www.education.qld.gov.au/everydaycounts
Regular school attendance

Information for parents and carers

Did you know? Research shows that in Queensland, higher student attendance at school is associated, on average, with higher student achievement.

Why is regular attendance at school important?
Regular school attendance will mean that your child has a better chance in life. Your child will achieve better when they go to school all day, every school day.
- they learn better
- they make friends
- they are happier
- they have a brighter future.

Why must I send my child to school?
Under Queensland law, you must make sure your child of school age is enrolled and attends school all day, every school day unless they have an acceptable reason. Illness, doing work experience or competing in a school sporting event are acceptable reasons for being absent from school.

Principals decide if the reason given for your child's absence is acceptable.

Avoid keeping your child away from school for:
- birthdays, shopping, visiting family and friends, if they sleep in, looking after other children, minor check ups or care such as hair cuts.

Routine medical or other health appointments should be made either before or after school or during the school holidays.

What should I do if our family is going on a holiday in school time?
You are encouraged not to schedule holidays during school time. If your family holiday is during school time, let the school know in advance and talk about what arrangements can be made for your child. Depending on the circumstances the school may be able to provide tasks for your child to complete while they are absent or assist you to organise an exemption from schooling.

Do I need to let the school know if my child has been away from school?
Yes, you must let the school know the reason why your child has been absent from school within two school days of their return. If possible, advise the school beforehand.

Are you having problems getting your child to school for some of these reasons?
- won't get out of bed in the morning
- won't go to bed at night
- can't find their uniform, books, school bag ...
- slow to eat breakfast
- haven't done their homework
- watching TV
- have a test or presentation to do, have an assignment to hand in
- it's their birthday.

If so, a set routine can help
- have a set time to go to bed
- have a set time to get out of bed
- have uniform and school bag ready the night before
- have a set time for starting and finishing breakfast
- set a time for daily homework activities
- speak about school positively
- be firm, send your child to school every school day including their birthday and the last day of term!

What should I do if my child won't go to school?
You should contact the school as soon as possible for advice and support.

Every day counts – Is your child at school today?
www.education.qld.gov.au/everydaycounts