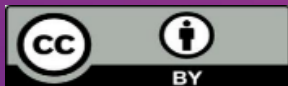




**ACT**  
Government

Education

# ACT PUBLIC SCHOOL STUDENT ATTENDANCE AND ROLL MARKING PROCEDURES



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## ACT Public School Student Attendance and Roll Marking Procedures

These procedures should be read in conjunction with [Compulsory Education: Student Enrolment and Attendance Policy](#).

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## 1. Overview

- 1.1 The procedure provides guidance to ACT public school (schools) students, parents, school staff and the Education Support Office (ESO) to ensure the legal responsibilities and duties under the [Education Act 2004](#) (the Act) are met.
- 1.2 The procedure applies to ACT public school students, parents, staff and ESO staff. They do not apply to children enrolled in ACT non-government schools or those registered for full time home education.
- 1.3 The procedure should be read in conjunction with the [Compulsory Education: Student Enrolment and Attendance Policy](#) and other related procedures.

## 2. Rationale

- 2.1 The ACT Education Directorate (the Directorate) recognises the strong link between attendance and student outcomes. While school attendance is a legal obligation of parents, supporting students to attend school each day is the shared responsibility of all parents, students, school staff and the wider community.
- 2.2 Section 10 of the Act requires all children living in the ACT to be enrolled and attend school and/or an approved education course and/or be registered for Home Education from the age of six until the child completes year 12 or turns 17, whichever happens first.
- 2.3 Sections 32 and 33 of the Act describe the requirements of ACT public schools to maintain an accurate register of enrolment and attendance.

## 3. School-based Attendance Procedure

- 3.1 Under the provisions of the Act, ACT public school principals are required to develop a school-based attendance procedure which underpins shared understandings and expectations about the school's procedures for monitoring, recording and follow-up of student attendance ([Appendix 1: School-based Attendance Procedures Template](#)).
- 3.2 School principals will ensure the school-based attendance procedure is updated regularly and communicated to students, parents and staff and addresses the following:
  - 3.2.1 information to support parents to understand their statutory obligations in relation to their child's fulltime attendance;
  - 3.2.2 expectations and responsibilities in relation to punctuality and attendance every day;
  - 3.2.3 procedures for late arrivals and early departures to and from school;
  - 3.2.4 the importance of contacting the school prior to any planned absences and the expectations of parents to provide timely explanations (preferably in writing) for each absence;
  - 3.2.5 an outline of what is considered a reasonable excuse for non-attendance and examples of unauthorised absences;
  - 3.2.6 the requirement of parents to provide medical certificates or other documentation in required circumstances;
  - 3.2.7 official non-compliance attendance procedures where parents fail to provide reasonable excuses for their child's absence within the required timeframes; and
  - 3.2.8 the provision of available support programs, strategies, and the contact details of school staff who can work in partnership with students, parents, government and community organisations to identify and address barriers to attendance.

## 4. Attendance Register and Roll Marking

- 4.1 Section 32 & 33 of the Act requires principals to maintain an accurate enrolment and attendance register which details the full name of every student and a record of their attendance/non-attendance.

- 4.2 Attendance data is recorded digitally in the School Administration System (SAS), the official register of enrolment and attendance. Where SAS is not accessible, paper records of attendance can be kept and SAS records can be updated when available.
- 4.3 Attendance data is recorded promptly at the beginning of each day or timetabled class/activity as per below:
- 4.3.1 **preschool attendance rolls**, where possible within the first 15 minutes of each scheduled session regardless of the duration of the session;
  - 4.3.2 **primary school attendance rolls** will be marked promptly at the start of each day (where possible within the first 15 minutes of each school day) and should be reviewed (a visual check against students in the class) regularly for classes conducted in locations other than the home classroom, after breaks or when students are with a specialist teacher;
  - 4.3.3 **high school and college attendance rolls** will be marked at the commencement of each period (where possible within the first 15 minutes of each period) or timetabled class or activity.
- 4.4 All absences recorded in SAS are allocated an appropriate absence reason code that determines the absence as 'explained or unexplained' and 'authorised or unauthorised' (Appendix 2: Absence Reason Codes and definitions).
- 4.5 School attendance records detail the time of arrival and departure each day and will clearly indicate whether a student is/is not physically present on the school grounds. A student's lack of participation in a class cannot be reflected on their attendance record. Any concerns in relation to engagement should be addressed through school engagement support processes.
- 4.6 Where a student is attending more than one ACT public school, each school will be responsible for marking attendance for the days/session times that the student is in attendance.
- 4.7 Students participating in school activities off school grounds (e.g., excursions, camps, attendance at an approved education program or attendance at another school on a part time basis) are marked as absent with an explained authorised absence code (Appendix 2: Absence Reason Codes).
- 4.8 A teacher in charge of an activity off school grounds such as an excursion and sports carnival will record attendance and ensure parents are notified of any absences, in the same manner as for a regular absence from school grounds.
- 4.9 Where a student is absent from school grounds due to attendance at a **Workplace Learning Program** (the program), the principal/delegated staff member is responsible for obtaining an accurate record of student attendance from the workplace learning program contact officer. Any absences from the program should be updated in SAS as soon as reasonably possible using the correct absence code i.e., S-Sick.
- 4.10 Where students are enrolled part-time in school and registered part-time for **Home Education**, the student is marked absent from school using '**I – Approved Education Course**' when the student is not at school due to the agreed part-time Home Education arrangements lodged with ESO's Non-Government Education section.
- 4.11 Where a student is absent due to attendance at another **approved education program** such as Distance Education or Murrumbidgee Education and Training Centre (METC), they should be marked absent using '**I – Approved Education Course**'.
- 4.12 Where students are enrolled in a school and are absent due to attending Muliyan, the **enrolment status** should be updated to '**Leave of Absence**' through the enrolment record in SAS.
- 4.13 Where students are enrolled in a school and are absent due to accessing the Secondary Introductory English Centre (SIEC) and Primary Introductory English Centre (PIEC) at another school location, the **enrolment status** should be updated to '**Leave of Absence**' through the enrolment record in SAS.

4.14 All student absences due to the school being inaccessible as a result of a fire or flood, part or full day industrial action or approved staff development days such as moderation days, will be marked as **'explained'** using absence code **'N - Not required'**.

## 5. Daily absence notifications

- 5.1. Principals are required to notify parents of any unexplained absences as soon as practicable on the same day, preferably using the automated messaging in SAS (This includes pre/post-compulsory education aged students).
- 5.2. The following timeframes are required when notifying parents of unexplained absences (noting exceptional circumstances):
  - 5.2.1 preschool, primary and high school notifications will be made **within half an hour** after the official roll has been taken on each official school day; and
  - 5.2.2 college notifications will be sent by **the end of the official school day** (for most, this would be 4pm).

## 6. Managing unexplained absences and explanations

- 6.1 If a parent fails to explain an absence within **10 school days** of the first day of an absence, the principal/delegated authority will provide a reminder to the parent of their responsibility to provide an explanation for any absences. This can be in the form of an Attendance Advice Slip available in SAS ([Appendix 3: Attendance Advice Slip](#)) or other school-based procedures.
- 6.2 The principal is responsible for determining if the explanation provided for an absence is reasonable, for the purposes of the parent meeting their responsibilities under the Act. Principals can use their discretion in making this decision (Refer to Section 15.2 for definition of a reasonable excuse).
- 6.3 The principal may request a Medical Certificate or other documentation e.g., Statutory Declaration where absences are explained as being due to illness for **more than 10 consecutive school days** or where the absences are recurrent e.g., every Monday.
- 6.4 Where an explanation is deemed **'unauthorised'** and is not considered to be a reasonable excuse, the parent will be notified by the principal and the absence will be recorded as **'unauthorised'** or **'truancy'**.
- 6.5 If a student has **greater than three consecutive full day unexplained absences**, the principal/delegated authority will contact the parent to confirm the student's health, wellbeing and safety and the reason for their absence and offer support as required.
- 6.6 If a student **has seven or more unexplained non-consecutive days in a school year**, and contact cannot be made with the parent or they do not provide a reasonable explanation, the principal/delegated authority will commence non-attendance official procedures (refer to Section 11C of these procedures).
- 6.7 Attendance investigations will continue to be followed up by the school until the student returns to school.
- 6.8 Any associated contact and correspondence with parents in relation to attendance will be recorded in SAS including the dates, times and associated details.

## 7. BSSS attendance requirements

- 7.1. Under the [BSSS policy requirements](#), students are required to attend and participate in all scheduled classes/contact time/structured learning activities for the units in which they are enrolled, unless they have a reasonable excuse. Noting section 4.5 where a student's lack of participation in a class cannot be reflected on their attendance record.
- 7.2. Any year 11 or 12 student whose attendance falls below 90% of the time-tabled classes/contact time or 90% participation in structured learning activities in a unit, without a reasonable excuse, will be deemed to have voided the unit.
- 7.3. College principals have the right to exercise discretion in determining if an absence is authorised under special circumstances, where satisfactory documentation is provided e.g., Medical Certificate or Statutory Declaration.

- 7.4. In addition to these Attendance Procedure requirements, college principals/the delegated authority are responsible for monitoring participation in structured learning activities and flag any concerns early with the students and parent as per [Chapter 4.3.8 BSSS Policy and Procedures Manual](#).

## **8. Preschool attendance**

- 8.1 ACT Public Preschools are required to comply with the ACT Public School Student Attendance and Roll Marking Procedure.
- 8.2 Under the Education and Care Services National Law (ACT) Act 2011 and the Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011, Principals must comply with attendance and roll marking procedures.
- 8.2.1 In line with Regulation 158(2) of the Education and Care Services National Regulations 2011, a preschool program provided by a school is not required to comply with subregulation (1) if it keeps attendance records in accordance with the education law, or Government education department policy, of the participating jurisdiction.
- 8.3 Early childhood programs such as preschool are not compulsory education, however once a student is enrolled in an ACT public school, the Student Attendance and Roll Marking procedure applies.
- 8.4 Enrolled preschool students will be expected to fulfil the fulltime attendance requirement (approximately 15hrs per week) unless they have a reasonable excuse for non-attendance.
- 8.5 In line with this, principals will encourage and support preschool attendance requirements of all enrolled non-compulsory aged students to support the establishment of positive attendance patterns early.

## **9. Overseas (International Full Fee Paying) student attendance and progress requirements**

- 9.1. The following procedures should be read in conjunction with the [Overseas Student Attendance and Progress Policy and Procedures](#).
- 9.2. Principals who enrol overseas students are required to monitor student attendance and implement a documented intervention strategy where attendance concerns are raised.
- 9.3. For colleges, support strategies must be implemented where an overseas student's attendance is at risk of failing to meet the 80% minimum attendance for student visa requirement (in addition to the 90% minimum attendance requirement for BSSS).
- 9.4. For the purposes of fulfilling visa requirements, overseas student attendance calculations differ from that of domestic students. Any absences relating to illness or leave for overseas students, irrespective of the explanation or medical certification, are included in the attendance calculation.
- 9.5. Consideration may be given, under the *National Code*, to exclude evidenced illness on compassionate grounds, if absences are jeopardising the 80% minimum attendance standard.
- 9.6. Principals will ensure their International Private Student (IPS) Co-ordinators advise the Directorate's International Education Unit (IEU) as soon as reasonable of any students who:
- 9.6.1. are absent for more than three consecutive school days (including absences from timetabled classes); and/or
  - 9.6.2. who may be at risk of not meeting the BSSS attendance requirements; and/or
  - 9.6.3. not meeting the National Code attendance requirements.
- 9.7. The IEU will issue an overseas student a written warning letter when their attendance falls below 90% and again at 85% and exercise discretion in relation to reporting them to the Department of Home Affairs.
- 9.8. Discretion will be applied if an overseas student is attending at least 70% of scheduled course contact hours and there is genuine evidence of exceptional circumstances.
- 9.9. The IEU will work collaboratively with the student, parents and IPS Co-ordinators to identify and resolve issues underlying disengagement and implement individualised support strategies.

## 10. Non-Attendance Official Procedure

- 10.1. Before Non-Attendance Official Procedure are enacted, schools and ESO will exhaust a range of support strategies to support the student and the parents to fulfil their legislative responsibilities.
- 10.2. Where a student has **greater than seven whole day unexplained absences** in a school year/or consistent late arrivals, and contact cannot be made with the parent or they do not provide a reasonable explanation, non-attendance official procedures will commence.
- 10.3. The deputy principal/principal will issue the parents with **Attendance Advice Letter 1** (Appendix 3: Attendance Advice Letters), via email or post.
- 10.4. If no response is received from the parents **within 10 school days** from the date of the letter and/or the attendance requirements are not met, the principal will issue the parents with **Attendance Advice Letter 2** (Appendix 3: Attendance Advice Letters) via email or post.
- 10.5. All Non-Attendance Official Procedure correspondence must be placed on the student's official record file. While Attendance Advice **Letter 1** can be sent via email as an attachment or via regular post, Attendance Advice **Letter 2** must be sent via registered post and this must be done through the post office for date stamping.
- 10.6. If no further response is received **within 10 school days** of the date of **Attendance Advice Letter 2** and the student's attendance does not improve (e.g., increasing/continuing unexplained absences), the principal will notify Student Engagement to seek support.
- 10.7. Student Engagement will work with the principal and school leaders to develop appropriate re-engagement strategies to identify and address any barriers to attendance.
- 10.8. Where attendance concerns are not resolved and the parent/carer continues to be non-compliant, Student Engagement in consultation with the school principal will commence Non-Compliance Official Procedures (Refer to Non-Compliance Official Procedures).

## 11. Roles and Responsibilities

The following roles and responsibilities are in addition to those identified in the ***Compulsory Education: Student Enrolment and Attendance Policy***.

### 11.1. Parents are responsible for:

- 11.1.1. ensuring their child attends school for the required hours every day the school is open for instruction (including activities such as excursions, sports carnivals, camps and special events on or off the school grounds) unless:
  - 11.1.1.1. an Exemption Certificate has been granted where the parents are unable to meet the requirements of the Act; or
  - 11.1.1.2. an Approval Statement has been granted for a student who has completed year 10 and wishes to participate in work-related training/employment rather than attend school or fulfil the full-time attendance requirement with an alternative approved education provider; or
  - 11.1.1.3. the student is registered for Home Education and has only a partial enrolment in a school for particular activities.
- 11.1.2. ensuring the child arrives at school punctually and follows the school's attendance procedures for late arrival and early departures;
- 11.1.3. notifying the school (on the day of absence or as soon as practicable) of any absences and providing an explanation (e.g., illness or other circumstances). This may take the form of:
  - 11.1.3.1. a written explanation provided to the school via a written note, email or text message containing the (a) student's name, (b) date of absence(s) and (c) reason/s for absence(s);
  - 11.1.3.2. verbal explanation to the school through either a phone call or visit to the school; and/or

- 11.1.3.3. any other form of communication agreed by the principal.
  - 11.1.4. making medical and dental appointments outside of school hours where possible;
  - 11.1.5. requesting leave for planned extended absences of five or more days during term time (e.g., an overseas holiday) in writing to the principal;
  - 11.1.6. working in partnership with the school to support their child's attendance, including raising concerns about their child's education, engagement, health and wellbeing and discussing barriers to attendance;
  - 11.1.7. seeking a full-time or part-time Exemption Certificate if they are unable to meet the enrolment or attendance requirements of the Act due to individual circumstances;
  - 11.1.8. seeking an Approval Statement where a young person has completed year 10 and wishes to participate in workplace related training and/or employment alternatives; and/or
  - 11.1.9. complying with and responding to any attendance letter notifications, Information and/or Compliance Notice instructions.
- 11.2. School principals are responsible for:**
- 11.2.1. developing whole school attendance strategies and promoting attendance by:
    - 11.2.1.1. providing a safe, supportive and inclusive culture where student diversity is catered for, educational adjustments are implemented, and students experience success and build positive relationships that promote attendance;
    - 11.2.1.2. implementing and communicating a school-based attendance procedure in collaboration with the students, parents and wider school community (refer to section 3: School-based Attendance Procedures);
  - 11.2.2. working in partnership with parents and students who:
    - 11.2.2.1. are unable to meet attendance requirements of the Act due to individual circumstances to apply for full-time or part-time Exemption Certificates;
    - 11.2.2.2. have completed year 10 and are wishing to participate in work-related training and/or employment alternatives to apply for an Approval Statement;
    - 11.2.2.3. wish to be registered for Home Education in accordance with the Act on a full-time or part-time basis.
  - 11.2.3. maintaining an accurate record of every student's attendance in SAS and ensuring rolls are submitted in real time as per section 4.3;
  - 11.2.4. reviewing rolls regularly to ensure accurate attendance records that align with the requirements of the Compulsory Education: Student Enrolment and Attendance Policy and these procedures;
  - 11.2.5. seeking explanations for unexplained absences from parents and carers and determining if the explanation provided for an absence is reasonable, for the purposes of the parent meeting their responsibilities under the Act;
  - 11.2.6. identifying and managing patterns of non-attendance, habitual absences and/or welfare concerns and working with students and their parents to address concerns or matters related to attendance; and
  - 11.2.7. supporting relevant school staff (teaching, non-teaching, temporary and permanent) to understand their attendance procedure responsibilities and the requirements of the school-based attendance procedures, including support to access professional learning, where required.
- 11.3 Student Engagement is responsible for:**
- 11.3.1 the provision and oversight of the implementation of these procedures to ensure parents and school staff are supported to meet their legal obligations under the Act and the Compulsory Education: Student Enrolment and Attendance Policy;



- 11.3.2 working with principals to build the whole school capacity to manage student wellbeing, behaviour support and student attendance, including targeted strategies for students who are at risk of non-attendance or are currently not attending school;
- 11.3.3 working with students and their parents to identify and address barriers to attendance;
- 11.3.4 facilitating access to professional learning for school staff to build capability to respond effectively to attendance matters and implement accurate roll marking procedures;
- 11.3.5 issuing full-time or part-time Exemption Certificates for children of compulsory education age who are deemed eligible.
- 11.3.6 issuing Approval Statements for children who are deemed eligible (have completed year 10) and wish to participate in work-related training and/or employment alternatives;
- 11.3.7 implementing Non-Compliance Procedures and where necessary issuing, extending and revoking Information Notices and/or Compliance Notices; and
- 11.3.8 analysing attendance data to inform the strategic direction of the Education Directorate's Attendance Strategy, to then support schools in advancing effective plans to improve attendance rates in ACT public schools.

#### 11.4 **The Director School Improvement (DSI) is responsible for:**

- 11.4.1 supporting principals to develop and implement school-based attendance procedures which are in accordance with the requirements of the Act, the Compulsory Education: Student Enrolment and Attendance policy and associated procedures; and
- 11.4.2 working collaboratively across their network, with Student Engagement and the school leadership teams to develop and implement strategic plans and school improvement initiatives which incorporate student attendance management and improvement strategies.

#### 11.5 **The International Education Unit (IEU) is responsible for:**

- 11.5.1 issuing overseas students with written warnings when their attendance falls below 90% and again at 85% and exercising discretion if an overseas student's attendance falls below 90% and where there are compelling or compassionate circumstances;
- 11.5.2 working collaboratively with overseas students, parents and IPS Co-ordinators to identify and resolve issues underlying non-attendance; and
- 11.5.3 working collaboratively with schools to implement individualised support strategies for overseas students.

### 12. **Records Management**

- 12.1. Records of all attendance rolls should be made in accordance with division 2 of the [Territory Records Act 2002](#) and will be maintained in accordance with the [Directorate's Records Management Policy](#).
- 12.2. Section 32 and 33 require a principal to keep a register of enrolments and attendances which must include the full name of each student enrolled at the school or course and a record of the attendance or nonattendance. Keeping all correspondence may be recommended and required for operational reasons, for example as evidence

### 13. **Contact**

- 13.1. The Executive Branch Manager, Student Engagement Branch is responsible for this procedure.
- 13.2. For support contact the Feedback and Complaints team on (02) 6205 5429.

### 14. **Complaints**

- 14.1. Any concerns about the application of these procedures, should be raised with:
  - 14.1.1. the school principal in the first instance;

- 14.1.2. online at [https://www.accesscanberra.act.gov.au/app/forms/etd\\_liaison\\_feedback](https://www.accesscanberra.act.gov.au/app/forms/etd_liaison_feedback);
- 14.1.3. the Feedback and Complaints team on (02) 6205 5429; or
- 14.1.4. see the [Complaints Policy](#) on the Directorate's website.

## 15. References

### 15.1. Definitions

In addition to the definitions detailed in the overarching **Compulsory Education: Student Enrolment and Attendance Policy**, the following definitions relate to this procedure.

**Approved education course - offsite** is a sanctioned school program where the student is not required to attend their scheduled class and/or school. The organisation/school principal providing an approved educational course will comply with the provisions of the *Education Act 2004*, Sections 32 and 33 regarding the recording of attendance of students at an approved educational course.

**Attendance roll** refers to any hard copy documents or electronic records, which record both the attendance and non-attendance of a child at school, scheduled sessions at the school and/or attendance at an approved educational course.

**Authorised absence** is an absence where a student is away from school grounds due to participation in an offsite curriculum program or activity organised by the school (e.g., excursion/camp or workplace learning) or where a parent provides an explanation for an absence which is considered a reasonable excuse by the principal for the purposes of the parent meeting their responsibilities under the *Education Act 2004* (the Act).

**Compulsory education age** is considered if the child is at least six years old and is under the age that the first of the following happens:

- (a) the child is 17 years old;
- (b) the child completes year 12.

**Early departure** occurs when a student leaves before the official finish time of a school day, scheduled class or activity.

**Enrolment** is the term used for the administrative procedure by which a person becomes a student of an education provider.

**Exceptional Circumstances** refers to where a child or young person is unable to meet the enrolment or attendance requirement of the Act due to conditions such as the child's health, wellbeing or other circumstances that prevent the child from being able to engage in compulsory education.

**Exemption Certificate** is a formal certificate issued by the Director-General of the Directorate exempting a child or young person (under the age of 17) from the education participation requirements of being enrolled with an education provider (i.e., complete exemption) or from meeting the full-time attendance requirements (partial exemption). Exemption Certificates are only issued where a child is not able to meet the requirements of the Act due to exceptional circumstances.

**Delegated authority** is the process of assigning work to another person along with the appropriate level of authority to complete the work.

**Late arrival** occurs when a student arrives after the start of the official school day, scheduled class or activity.

**Parent** is a person having parental responsibility for the child under the *Children and Young People's Act 2008* including a carer appointed under that Act.

**Reasonable excuse** is an acceptable justification provided by a parent for the absence of a student from school/scheduled class or activity. Examples of what a reasonable excuse is for the purposes of explaining an authorised absence may include, amongst other considerations:

- illness or medical issues, including recovery from major injury or medical condition;
- medical and dental appointments, where out of hours appointments are not possible;
- bereavement or attending a funeral of a relative or friend of the student;
- religious or cultural observation;
- family holidays where the parent notifies the school in advance;
- attendance at court or other legal hearings or meetings associated with hearings;
- participation in sanctioned debates, sports, musical or theatrical productions not directly arranged by the school; or
- participation in interstate, national, or international academic or sporting event or equivalent.

**School Administration System (SAS)** is an online management tool used by ACT public schools and the ACT Education Directorate to record details of student enrolment, attendance and related matters.

**School** for the purposes of these procedures relates to an ACT public school.

**Student** is a child or young person enrolled in an ACT public school in accordance with Section 33 of the Act.

**Truancy** is defined as an absence where the student's parent and/or school consider the student to have been at an unsanctioned alternative location and failed to attend and/or participate in school/ scheduled class or activity.

**Unexplained absence** is an absence where the student's parent has failed to provide a 'reasonable excuse'.

**Unauthorised absence** is an absence where a parent has provided an explanation which is considered unacceptable by the principal and/or does not align with the reasonable excuse definition. In general, the following absences may be determined as unauthorised explanation but are not limited to:

- absences due to repeatedly running late, too tired or poor excuses such as slept in;
- extended family holidays where it is determined the leave is not in the best interests of the child and the leave is not supported by the school;
- absences due to truancy;
- extended periods of absences (>10 school days) where no evidence such as a medical certificate or statutory declaration can be provided; and/or
- absences that are not in accordance with the Attendance and Non-compliance procedures and the school-based attendance procedures.

**Workplace learning** refers to a student's participation in work experience, structured workplace learning, a work placement as part of an Australian School Based Apprenticeship or other work-related course.

## Appendix 1: School-based Attendance Procedures Template



### [School Name] School-based Attendance Procedure

Insert school logo

*[This template has been developed to assist your school to develop local school attendance procedures. Schools may use this template or design their own, noting that many of the requirements in the template are requirements of the Attendance and Noncompliance Procedures and should not be changed without seeking advice and to ensure compliance. Please insert information relevant to your school where prompted This information should be published on the school website, handbook and communicated regularly to the school community through the newsletter].*

#### Purpose

The purpose of this procedure is to ensure the school community understands the important legal obligations of parents of children of compulsory education age and the requirement for them to be enrolled in a registered school and attend school on a full-time basis. The procedure also contains important information about processes in place to support, monitor and maintain student attendance.

#### Scope

This procedure applies to all students and parents/carers of < school name> and should be read in conjunction with the [ACT Education Directorate Compulsory Education: Student Enrolment and Attendance Policy](#) and the [ACT Public School Attendance and Roll Marking Procedures](#) and the [Non-Compliance Procedures](#). This procedure does not replace or change the obligations of < school name>, parents/carers and Education Support Office under relevant legislation such as the [Education Act 2004](#).

#### Compulsory School Attendance

Going to school every day is the single most important part of your child's education. Students learn new things at school every day and there are no safe number of days for missing school.

In the ACT compulsory education requires that all children from age six are legally required to be enrolled at and attending school until they turn 17 or achieve their year 12 Senior Secondary Certificate.

Students are expected to attend school during normal school hours every day of each term unless:

- there is an exemption from school enrolment or attendance for the student;
- the student has a dual enrolment with another school and has only a partial enrolment in < school name> and/or
- the student is registered for home schooling and has only a partial enrolment in < school name> for particular classes/activities; or
- the parents can provide a reasonable excuse for their child not attending e.g. sick or holiday.

#### <Include the following for colleges>

After students complete Year 10, and until they turn 17 years of age, students have the following options:

- 1) continue full-time study at school;
- 2) full-time further education and training (e.g. CIT, traineeship, apprenticeship);
- 3) full-time, paid employment of a minimum 25 hours per week; or
- 4) a combination of 2) and 3) providing employment and education which equates to 25 hours or more per week.

To engage in options 2-4 an Approval Statement must be granted by the Education Support Office. For more information refer to the [ACT Education website](#).

#### Supporting and promoting attendance

It is important that our school community has a shared understanding of the importance of attending school and protecting the safety and wellbeing of children and young people through the reporting and monitoring of absences.

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<school name> is committed to:

- promoting positive attendance and setting clear expectations;
- recording daily attendance in the School Administration System (SAS), the official student enrolment and attendance register
- ensuring children remain enrolled and attend school all day, every school day;
- closely monitoring, communicating and implementing strategies to improve regular school attendance;
- working proactively to identify individual students and groups of students who are vulnerable and whose attendance is low;
- working together with students and their parents to improve their attendance through a range of interventions and supports; and
- ensuring that the school community understand that attendance at school everyone's responsibility.

### Late arrivals and early leavers <Insert relevant to primary schools and high schools>

Students are expected to be at school from XXam each morning in time for the daily roll call.

If a student arrives at school from xxam onwards, they need to sign in at the front office to receive a late note. Parents are expected to provide a reason for their child's late arrival. If a valid reason is not provided, their late arrival (absence) will be recorded as 'absent-unexplained'.

Medical and dental appointments should be made outside of school hours where possible, however if a student needs to leave early, the parent/carer is required to provide an explanation as soon as practical, and the student must be signed out through the front office. Students who do not sign out, will have their absence recorded as 'unexplained'.

Any student who leaves the school grounds during the recess and lunch break without an explanation, will have their absence recorded as 'unexplained'.

### What circumstances/explanations are considered a reasonable excuse?

There are a limited number of reasons which are considered reasonable excuses for an absence. The two most common reasons for student absences are 'sick' and 'leave'. 'Sick' is usually due to an illness and 'leave' may be required due to a serious illness of an immediate family member, family holiday or attendance at a funeral. The principal has the discretion to accept a reason given by a parent for a student's absence and can request a medical certificate or statutory declaration in addition to an explanation where required.

Principals will generally accept the following reasons, as reasonable excuses:

- illness or medical issues, including recovery from major injury or medical condition;
- medical and dental appointments, where out of hours appointments are not possible or appropriate;
- bereavement or attending a funeral of a relative or friend of the student;
- religious or cultural observation;
- family holidays where the parent notifies the school in advance and the principal supports the leave;
- attendance at court or other legal hearings or meetings associated with hearings;
- participation in sanctioned debates, sports, musical or theatrical productions not directly arranged by the school; and/or
- participation in interstate, national, or international academic or sporting event or equivalent.

### What are unexplained absences?

An unexplained absence is an absence where the student's parent/carer has failed to provide a *reasonable excuse*. You will be notified by the school if an absence is unexplained and given the opportunity to provide a reasonable excuse within 10 school days of the first absence. If you fail to provide an explanation it will remain on the school's record as an unexplained absence and count towards your child's attendance record.

If you provide an excuse that is not considered to be a reasonable excuse, then the absence will be treated as unauthorised and this absence becomes an explained absence.

### **What are unauthorised absences?**

In some circumstances, even though a reason has been provided, the absence may be recorded as *unauthorised* because the reason does not count as a valid reason as per the [ACT Education Directorate's Compulsory Education: Student Enrolment and Attendance policy](#) and the ACT Public School [Attendance and Roll Marking procedures](#).

In general, the following absences may be determined as unauthorised absences: repeated poor excuses such as running late, too tired, slept in and absences due to truancy.

Where explanations are provided that don't provide adequate information, the principal can use their discretion and may treat the explanation as 'explained/ unauthorised' e.g. 'My child was away from school on Friday 10 May' or 'My child has an appointment to attend'. These examples do not provide enough information to determine if the explanation is a 'reasonable excuse'.

### **Planned absences**

Parents are encouraged to holiday or travel during the official school holidays. If travel outside of the school holiday period is necessary and it will be greater than five school days (e.g. overseas/interstate holiday), parents must apply in writing to the principal for approval beforehand. If you do not apply for leave, or the school does not believe it to be in the best interests of your child, the absence from school may be recorded as an 'unauthorised absence'.

### **Contact us for attendance support**

Should you have any concerns regarding your child's attendance, please call the school office and ask to speak to your child's teacher, the <Student Wellbeing Team> or the relevant Deputy Principal or Principal. <School Name> provides a range of support programs and strategies to address attendance concerns including support for students returning from an extended period of leave.

### **Responsibilities**

#### **Our school responsibilities include:**

- promoting attendance and maintaining up to date school-based attendance procedures;
- maintaining an attendance register in SAS and marking attendance rolls each school day <or each timetabled class or activity> and keeping a record of the reason given for each absence;
- advising parents/carers of any unexplained absences on the same day, or as soon as practicable;
- encouraging open communication with students, parents and families about issues affecting a student's attendance and working in partnership with families to address any concerns about a student's education, engagement, health and wellbeing and discussing barriers to attendance early;
- taking action where there are more than three consecutive days, or more than seven unexplained non-consecutive days absent to seek a reasonable excuse from the parents/carers;
- determining if an explanation provided for an absence is reasonable for the purposes of the parent/carer meeting their responsibilities under the Act;
- identifying any attendance concerns and working with the student and parent/carer to understand and address any attendance barriers and provide support strategies and programs;
- referring to Student Engagement for access to support if a student's attendance remains a concern; and
- effectively monitoring overseas student attendance and implementing a documented intervention strategy where an overseas student's attendance is at risk of failing to meet the minimum student visa requirement (attendance of a minimum 80% of the scheduled course contact hours during each study period).

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### Additional responsibilities for Colleges

- providing support to students to ensure their attendance does not fall below 90% of the scheduled classes/contact time as per the [BSSS Attendance policy requirements](#).

### Parent/carer responsibilities include:

- ensuring your child/ren attend school on time every day when instruction is offered including excursions, sports carnivals camps and special events;
- ensuring you and your child follow the school attendance procedures for late arrival and early departure i.e. signing in and out of front office;
- notifying the school as soon as practicable if your child will be late or will be leaving early;
- providing permission for your child to leave the school grounds during the school day (delete noting this excludes college students);
- notifying the school in advance of any upcoming absences or letting the school know early in the morning if your child won't be attending so their absence can be recorded correctly.
- replying to the school's SMS, email the front office at E: [XXX@ed.act.edu.au](mailto:XXX@ed.act.edu.au); call on (02) XXXX-XXX or alternatively, send a written note with your child on their return to school or visit the school;
- ensuring absence explanations include:
  - your child's name;
  - the date of the absence(s)
  - the reason (s)
- making sure explanations are provided in advance or on the day or as soon as practical or within 10 days of the first day of absence;
- ensuring your contact details are up to date so that the school can send you the absence notifications;
- communicating openly with the school and working in partnership to address any concerns about your child's education, engagement, health and wellbeing and discussing barriers to attendance early;
- scheduling family holidays, appointments and other activities outside of school hours where possible;
- putting in writing a request to the principal for planned extended absences of five or more days during term time (e.g. an overseas holiday);
- seeking a full-time or part-time Exemption Certificate if your child is unable to meet the attendance requirements of the Act due to individual circumstances;
- seeking an Approval Statement where your young person has completed year 10 and wishes to participate in workplace related training and/or employment alternatives; and
- complying with any attendance notifications (letters), Information and Compliances Notice instructions.

### Related Resources

- [ACT Education Compulsory Education: Student Enrolment and Attendance Policy](#)
- [Attendance at ACT Public Schools Procedure](#)
- [Non-Compliance Procedure](#)
- [Enrolment in ACT Public Schools Preschool to Year 12 Procedure](#)



## Appendix 2: Absence Reason Codes

The following options are available in SAS to record student absences.

Record	General description
Whole day	The student is away from school for the entire day.
Late	The student arrives after the official start time of school/class.
Timed	The exact time the student is absent from school/class is recorded.
Early	The student leaves the school/class prior to the school official finish time.

### Unexplained Absences

Record	General description	Counted (treated as an absence on the student's record)	Notes
<b>A - Absent – Unexplained</b>	An absence where the student's parent/carer has not provided an explanation for an absence.	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>These absences can be partial/time based or whole day absences.</i></li> </ul>

### Explained Authorised Absence Reasons

Record	General description	Counted	Additional notes
<b>S - Sick</b>	<p>An absence due to illness, includes mental health or recovery from major sickness, injury or medical condition.</p> <p>Includes an infestation or infectious disease or illness that is considered harmful to the health of other persons at the school (refer to <a href="#">Infectious Diseases Outbreak and inclusion policy</a>).</p>	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Medical certificates/statutory declaration will be required for absences greater than 10 consecutive school days (two weeks) or for patterns of non-attendance (e.g. pattern of illness every Monday).</i></li> <li><i>A copy of medical certificate/statutory declaration will be saved on SAS and placed on the student record file.</i></li> <li><i>Where students are absent due to medical appointments with health care professionals or dental treatment their absence should be marked using absence reason 'Leave'.</i></li> </ul>



## Explained Authorised Absence Reasons

Record	General description	Counted	Additional notes
<b>L - Leave (L)</b>	<p>An absence where the student's parent/carer has provided an <b>explanation</b> that is considered by the principal as a '<b>reasonable excuse</b>'.</p> <p>Reasonable excuses include but are not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <b>Participating in a recognised learning/sporting activity not related to the school</b> such as debate, sport (state, national or international level), or musical or theatrical productions.</li> <li>○ <b>Participating in an external wellbeing/health program not related to the school</b> e.g. Ted Noffs or Steps program.</li> <li>○ <b>Special events not related to school</b> e.g. attendance at court or other legal hearings or meetings associated with hearings or transition day visits to another school (without teacher supervision).</li> </ul> <p>Absences due to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ A misadventure, unforeseen or unavoidable event (e.g. bus ran late).</li> <li>○ External medical/doctor's appointment with health care professionals including counselling or dental treatment.</li> <li>○ Extended family travel/overseas exchange supported by the principal (5 days to &lt;12 months).</li> </ul>	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Students participating in recognised sporting programs not related to the school or musical or theatrical productions where they are absent for large amounts of time require a mutual agreement with the school and the parent/carer to ensure the student is able to access education during their absence/reduced timetable.</i></li> <li>• <i>Part time attendance arrangements which are greater than 5 weeks require an <a href="#">Exemption Certificate</a>.</i></li> </ul>

## Explained Authorised Absence Reasons

Record	General description	Counted	Additional notes
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ The bereavement of a person with whom the student has a close, significant or family relationship, includes attending a funeral.</li> <li>○ Religious/cultural reasons e.g. attendance at a recognised religious or ceremonial activity e.g. participation in NAIDOC week.</li> <li>○ A natural disaster or extreme weather event which prevents the student from attending school.</li> </ul>		
<b>E - Excursion</b>	An absence due to a student attending an organised optional curriculum/enrichment activity off school grounds with school staff supervision.	No	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>A separate roll can be created through 'Excursion' functionality in SAS. Absences can then be recorded using bulk absences.</i></li> <li>• <i>If the excursion is for the whole class, the class should be cancelled in PxP with the reason entered as 'excursion'.</i></li> </ul>
<b>I - Approved Education Course – offsite</b>	<p>An absence due to a student attending an approved education course where the student is not required to attend their enrolled school and is receiving education at another location. Examples include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Accessing Distance Education</li> <li>- a part time student who is also registered for home education and/or</li> <li>- external agency/community programs i.e., Booyah (PCYC).</li> </ul>	No	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>'Approved Education Course (offsite)' differs from an 'Excursion', as an excursion requires school staff supervision.</i></li> <li>• <i>If a student fails to attend the offsite education provider, their attendance record in SAS must be updated to reflect their absence.</i></li> <li>• <i>An incursion should be created to account for a student's absence from class/activity on school grounds in a high school or college. The student should be marked absent in PxP No absence record should be present in School Attendance other than the incursion.</i></li> <li>• <i>Absences related to programs/courses that are not education based such as wellbeing, alcohol and drug</i></li> </ul>

## Explained Authorised Absence Reasons

Record	General description	Counted	Additional notes
			<p><i>related courses should be marked as 'Leave'.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students attending Muliyan, PIEC and SIEC should be marked using enrolment status as 'Leave of Absence' (deferred) at their mainstream school. This takes the student off all rolls at the 'home school', the IEC or Muliyan then marks the roll in SAS.</li> </ul>
<b>H - Mutually Agreed Leave</b>	<p>Absence where there is mutual agreement between the school and parent/carer that a student is not required to attend school for part of the day, for reasons relating to their wellbeing, or to avoid a significant behavioural incident from occurring.</p> <p>This code <b><i>should not</i></b> be applied for longer-term part-time attendance arrangements.</p>	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This code <b><i>should not</i></b> be used for students on exemptions or alternative education programs.</li> <li>For more information on how this code should be applied refer to <a href="#">Section 3.7 of Suspension, Transfer or Exclusion of a student in ACT public schools procedure</a>.</li> </ul>
<b>Z - Suspension</b>	<p>Absence where student is formally suspended and temporarily withdrawn from school activities and school grounds, placing them in care of their parents.</p>	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In-school consequence (formerly known as an in-school suspension/in school alternative program) should be managed through the major incident functionality.</li> <li>Refer to <a href="#">Suspension, Transfer or Exclusion of a student in ACT public schools procedure</a>.</li> </ul>
<b>N - Not Required</b>	<p>An absence where the student is not required to attend the school day (as determined by the school) e.g. A scheduled non-school day for kindergarten, student free day/moderation day, and preschool students who are only required for part of the week.</p>	No	<p>This code <b><i>should NOT be used</i></b> for</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>students attending part time due to an Exemption Certificate or registered for Home Education.</li> <li>a timetabled class (HS/College) that does not run, in this case the class should be cancelled in SAS.</li> <li>students attending orientation sessions at another school.</li> </ul>

## Explained Authorised Absence Reasons

Record	General description	Counted	Additional notes
<b>M - Exemption</b>	An absence where the student has an approved partial or fulltime Exemption Certificate.	No	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Absences should not be recorded as 'Exemption' until the formal Exemption Certificate has been issued.</li> <li>For more information on Exemptions refer to <a href="#">Exemption Certificate Procedures</a>.</li> </ul>
<b>High schools and colleges</b>			
<b>Workplace Learning (W)</b>	<p>An absence due to a student participating in a work experience related program. Examples include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Vocational Learning Options (VLOs);</li> <li>Workplace learning/work experience (WEX);</li> <li>Structured Workplace Learning (SWL); or</li> <li>Australian School-based Apprentice (ASbA).</li> </ul>	No	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Where a student is absent from school grounds due to attendance at a Workplace Learning Program (the program), the principal/delegated staff member is responsible for obtaining an accurate record of student attendance from the workplace learning program contact officer.</li> </ul>
<b>Structured Learning Activity (F)</b>	An approved absence where students are provided structured learning activities to complete in lieu of attending the scheduled class.	No	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Classes that do not run due to staffing issues or scheduled flexible learning should be cancelled in PxP with the reason for cancellation: Structured Learning Activity.</li> </ul>

## Explained Unauthorised Absence Reasons

Record	General description	Counted	Additional notes
<b>Unauthorised explanation (U)</b>	An absence where the student's parent/carer provides an explanation for an absence which is considered unacceptable/unreasonable by the principal.	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>This code can only be applied by the principal or by the enrolment officer with delegated approval of the Principal.</i></li> </ul> <p><i>Examples include:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>where a parent/carer notifies that their child has been away sick for four weeks however is unable to provide a medical certificate or statutory declaration.</i></li> </ul>
<b>Truancy (T)</b>	An absence where the student's parent/carer and the school consider the student to have been at an unsanctioned alternative location and failed to attend or left the school without school/parent/carer approval, (also known as 'off school grounds truancy').	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Parent/carer should be notified as soon as a student is identified as truant.</i></li> <li><i>In high schools, where truancy occurs on school grounds, absences should be managed through the truancy wizard functionality in SAS.</i></li> </ul>

## Incursions

Incursions account for student absences from classes and activities **and the student must be on school grounds.**

Record	General description	Counted	General Description
<b>Incursion</b> (Different types can be created at the school level).	An absence from class where the student attends an activity/service or program <b>on school grounds</b> . e.g. career adviser, youth worker and school psychologist appointments.	No	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>The absence entry must be created and closed at the time of the incursion.</i></li> <li><i>Activities functionality in SAS can be used to create a cohort of students who attend a program or group activity on school grounds e.g. band, dance, sports program and academic events/exams.</i></li> </ul>
<b>Sickbay</b> (incursion type)	An absence from class while the student attends sick bay.	No	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>This can be populated through 'Sickbay' functionality in SAS.</i></li> </ul>

<b>In-school Consequence</b> (incursion type)	An absence when a student is excluded from regular school activities and is required to participate in an alternative program at school.	No	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Formerly known as 'in-school suspensions/in school alternative program'.</li> </ul>
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## Appendix 3: Attendance Advice Slip and Attendance Letters 1 & 2

Dear <Parent Name>

### Re: Attendance Advice Slip - outstanding unexplained absence

I am aware that (insert child/young person's name) has unexplained absences from school on the following dates this year:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

The school has tried to contact you on several occasions to discuss why (insert name) was not at school on these dates.

Please contact us as soon as possible or within 10 school days of the date of this Attendance Advice Slip to explain your child's absence from school.

I understand that there are many circumstances that can impact on a student's engagement, connection and attendance. If you have concerns regarding the engagement of your child or young person, I encourage you to contact the school as soon as possible so that we can assist you.

Yours sincerely  
(insert name)  
(date)

OR

---

Dear <Parent Name>

We note that (insert child/young person's name) has unexplained absences on the following dates:

1)	5)
2)	6)
3)	7)
4)	

Please contact the school on (insert phone number) to provide reasons for your child's absence from school.

Yours sincerely

(insert name)  
(date)  
Position Title  
Phone number  
Email Address

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## Attendance Advice Letter 1

Dear (insert name/s Parent/Carer)

### Re: Attendance Advice Letter - outstanding unexplained absences

According to our records as of (insert date), (insert name of child) has had seven (or more) unexplained absences from school and or timetabled activities. Please find attached a copy of (insert child's name)'s unexplained absences.

An unexplained absence is an absence where no explanation has been provided to describe the reason for your child's absence from school.

Under the *Education Act 2004 Section 10A* and the *Attendance at ACT Public Schools Procedure (Section 11.1)* parents are responsible for advising the school of any absences and providing a reasonable excuse.

As the principal, I am required to contact parents when a student has seven or more unexplained absences as per section.

An explanation for each of the absences marked in the attachment with an 'A' is required and can be provided by

- calling the school on the telephone number above;
- emailing the school on the email address above; or
- sending in a note with (insert child's name) to their roll or class teacher.

This information is required within 10 school days of the date on this letter.

The ACT Education Directorate's ***Compulsory Education: Student Enrolment and Attendance policy*** and associated procedures are available on the ACT Education Directorate's website at [www.education.act.gov.au/publications\\_and\\_policies/policies](http://www.education.act.gov.au/publications_and_policies/policies) under the School Attendance section.

I understand that there are a range of circumstances that can impact on a student's engagement, connection and attendance at school. The school is committed to working with you and your child to support your child's attendance and engagement.

Please contact me, the deputy principal, your child's year coordinator or teacher to discuss your concerns.

Yours sincerely

(principal)

(date)



## DRAFT Attendance Advice Letter 2

Dear (insert name/s Parent/Carer)

### Re: Attendance Advice Letter - outstanding unexplained absences

I am writing to you about (insert student first name) attendance. I wrote to you previously on (insert date of first attendance letter) about (insert student's first name) unexplained absences.

As advised in the letter, under the *Education Act 2004 (Section 10A)* and the *Student Attendance and Roll Marking Procedure (Section 11.1)*, parents/carers have a legal responsibility to inform the school of a child's absence and provide a reasonable excuse for all absences from school.

As the principal, I am required to contact parents and carers if a student has seven or more unexplained absences. Our policies and procedures are available on the ACT Education Directorate's website:

[www.education.act.gov.au/publications\\_and\\_policies/policies](http://www.education.act.gov.au/publications_and_policies/policies) under the School Attendance section.

Parents/carers are required to inform the school of the child's absence, stating the reason for their absence. According to our records {current\_date}, your child has seven (or more) unexplained absences. Attached is a copy from our records of his/her absences. Those marked with an 'A' are considered to be 'unexplained'.

In my letter of (insert date) I requested that you contact the school via phone, email, in person or in writing in the form of a brief note to your child's roll or class teacher with an explanation of (insert student name) unexplained absences.

I have been advised that an explanation has not been provided to the school. If this is not the case and you have provided explanations for (insert student's first name), please call the deputy principal (insert name) on (insert telephone number) to discuss.

As stated in our first letter we acknowledge that there are many circumstances that may impact on a student's engagement, connection and attendance at school, and we are here to provide support if needed. Please contact the school on (insert number) to make an appointment with (insert name and role) within 10 school days to discuss (insert student's first name)'s educational needs and requirements.

We are committed to ensuring that all young people experience successful lifelong learning opportunities, and we want to work with you to support this in relation to (insert child's first name). I am required to contact the Education Support Office if you do not provide an explanation for (insert child's) unexplained absences and non-compliance official procedures will be commenced.

I look forward to continuing to work in partnership with you to support (insert name of child)'s attendance at school.

Yours sincerely

(principal)

(date)

## Appendix 4: Non-attendance flowchart



## Appendix 5: Parent Factsheet: School Attendance Requirements



### Why is attending school important?

Going to school every day is the single most important part of your child's education, they learn new things every day. Children and young people who regularly attend school and complete Year 12 or an equivalent qualification have better health outcomes, better employment outcomes, and higher incomes across their lives.

### What do I need to do if my child is going to be absent from school?

If your child is sick or absent, you are required to notify the school as soon as possible **on the day of absence** using one of the following methods:

- a) a **written explanation** via a note, email or text message containing the student's name, date of absence(s) and reasons for absence(s)
- b) a **verbal explanation** through either a phone call or visit to the school
- c) any other form of **communication agreed by the principal**.
- d) a **medical certificate** - principals may request medical certificates or other documentation when absences explained as being due to sickness indicate a pattern of non-attendance or are greater than 10 consecutive school days in duration.

### What is my responsibility?

You are legally required to ensure your child attends school every day or you must provide an explanation for their absence. You should let the school know in advance of any upcoming absences or let them know in the morning if your child won't be at school. In order for schools to implement the same day notification requirement, it's essential that you provide the school with your most up-to-date contact details. Generally, one notification will be sent per family. Should there be circumstances that require both parents/carers to be notified, please contact the school to make the necessary arrangements.

### Why do I need to notify the school if my child is absent?

Schools are legally required to maintain an accurate register of attendance of every student on every day when the school is open for attendance. Notifying the school of your child's absence either prior to, or on the day that they will be away, helps ensure the safety and wellbeing of children and will fulfil your legal responsibility.

Schools contact parents/carers as soon as practicable on the same day of an unexplained student absence. If your child is absent on a particular day and you have not contacted the school to explain why, the absence will be marked as unexplained.

### What is the school's responsibility?

The school must notify you of an unexplained absence in relation to your child as soon as practicable on the same day. Schools will let you know either through SMS, phone call or email. If you can't be reached because the school does not have your correct contact details (i.e. changed phone number, SMS/email failure notification received etc.), the school will attempt to make contact with any emergency contact/s nominated on your child's file held by the school. Where possible, this contact will be made on the same day of the unexplained absence.

### Where can I learn more about the process for managing student absences?

Ask your school for a copy of the **School Attendance Procedures** which outlines the school's procedures for monitoring, recording and following-up of student absences. Or alternatively refer to the ACT Education Directorate's ACT Public School Attendance and Roll Marking Procedures at [www.education.act.gov.au/publications\\_and\\_policies/policies](http://www.education.act.gov.au/publications_and_policies/policies).

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