



Census Procedures Manual

ACT non-government schools
February 2023

Census date: Friday 10 February 2023

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Section 1: Changes since the previous school census

For Non-Government schools, the template has been modified to allow the implementation of validation rules to ensure and support schools to upload all required data in the correct format. Schools need to ensure the date of format for students' date of birth is in the Australian format, for example 07/12/2020, the sequence is day, month and year.

For follow up communication regarding queries after school data submission on the Directorate's portal, Objective Connect will be used to share documents for editing and validation.

Data should be submitted to the Directorate in Microsoft Excel and the data file must be saved as Excel Workbook(*.xlsx).

Section 2: Context

This manual:

- outlines the census procedures for non-government schools;
- defines those students to be counted in the census;
- outlines enrolment and attendance responsibilities for principals as detailed in the *Education Act 2004*; and
- outlines census sign off process.

Under Section 125G of the [Education Act 2004](#), the Director-General or an authorised person of the Education Directorate (the Directorate) is authorised to request information about enrolments at non-government schools during a stated period or at a stated time.

A census of all ACT schools, both non-government and public, is conducted in February of each year. This census is undertaken to provide accurate data on ACT student enrolments at a specific point in time. The information collected at the time of the census is used to:

- determine enrolment trends, retention and participation;
- assist in the administration of NAPLAN; and
- assist with other government tasks.

Directorate staff will provide oversight and guidance during the census process, with individual school administrative and executive staff undertaking the census at the school level.

The data provided as part of the census process will also be used for the administration of the National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN). This single collection will remove the need for schools to double process student enrolment information during the 2023 school year. Data fields requested for this collection are listed at [Attachment 1](#).

Section 3: Education Act 2004

Part 4.5 of the [Education Act 2004](#) requires principals of non-government schools to fulfil the following responsibilities for the collection of student enrolment information for the census:

- keep a register of enrolments and attendances
- ensure the register contains the following information:
 - the full name of each student enrolled at the school or course, and
 - a record of the attendance or non-attendance of the student at the school or course on every day when the school or course is open for attendance.

Staff responsible for entering information into the register must carefully ensure that all the enrolment entries are correct.

Section 4: Integrity of census data

Ensuring the integrity of census data should commence when students are enrolled. Schools should ensure that all student information collected and maintained is up to date, accurate and complete.

To ensure our census data is accurate, it is important that schools have rigorous procedures in place to ensure accurate data is recorded on the day of the census. Principals should be aware that falsifying census returns is a serious offence, and that they are ultimately responsible for the maintenance and production of accurate student information.

Principals should ensure all school staff (including relief staff) understand:

- the provisions of the *Education Act 2004* in relation to the accuracy of records of enrolment and attendance
- the school processes for marking attendance and non-attendance.

Student information should be checked by staff prior to census day for accuracy to ensure that there have been no duplicate entries and that the information has been cross-checked with class/home group/subject rolls.

The principal is ultimately responsible for the maintenance of accurate student data, class rolls and attendance records. Schools should have on file all necessary documentation required to substantiate their student enrolment information. Principals should be satisfied that sufficient checks have been done before they sign off on their reported school census figures.

Section 5: Definition of a student

For census purposes, it is essential that all schools use the same definition of a student when counting student enrolments. This definition is consistent with the

one used by the Australian Bureau of Statistics in the [National Schools Statistics Collection](#).

The following definition of a student is to be used when recording student enrolments for the purpose of the February census.

A student is a person who is formally (officially) enrolled at a school and who is also active in a preschool, primary, secondary or special education program at that school.

Please note, a student who attends one school but is formally enrolled at another school is to be counted only at the school at which they are formally enrolled.

Include students that have an explainable absence, with the aim to capture all 'active' students. Examples of known explainable absences are:

- family commitments
- Indigenous community funerals or associated rites
- health reasons
- health and safety reasons, including the current COVID-19 situation
- student not currently attending due to a school issue which may take longer than four weeks to resolve, but the school and parents are in contact and working towards a return date
- student not currently attending due to family reasons, homelessness or disengagement, the school are aware of the situation and working with other agencies to deal with the issue and work towards a return date.

Exclude students who:

- *have only completed enrolment procedures at the school and have not yet attended*
- *have left the school (on or before the end of the census day), or*
- *have been absent without explanation since the beginning of the current school year . See below for exceptions.*

New students

Students who have completed enrolment procedures at the school but not yet attended, may be included in the census only if the principal has received written documentation signed by the parent/carer indicating that the student/s will be starting at the school prior to the end of week 3, term 1 (17 February 2023). The school must receive this information no later than the day of the census. Students expected to start at the school after 17 February 2023 must not be included in the census numbers.

Existing or continuing student

Existing or continuing students who have been absent without explanation since commencement of the current school year prior to and including the census date, may be included in the census only if the principal has received

written documentation signed by the parent/carer indicating that the student/s will be returning to school.

Students who do not fall within the definition must **not** be included in the census count. Inclusion of a student in the census is not an indication of the effort being made by the school to find/track the student but is a record of a student's active participation through enrolment and attendance.

Transferring students within the ACT – Students moving from one ACT school to another on or near Census day should be counted at the school where they were enrolled and attending at the close of business on census day.

Section 6: Census data specifications

The specifications of required student information are set out in [Attachment 1](#). The Directorate reminds schools that when students are first enrolled, the student's existing ACT student identifier should be used (rather than allocating a new identifier) if the student has previously been enrolled in the ACT school system.

Data should be submitted to the Directorate in Microsoft Excel and the data file must be saved as **Excel Workbook(*.xlsx)**, using the specified fields provided at [Attachment 1](#). Staff responsible for downloading the file must ensure that the field names and their order remain unchanged.

On the Directorate's website a Microsoft Excel template is available for schools to download and use as the basis for their census returns. This template and the procedures manual can be accessed at the following web address:
https://www.education.act.gov.au/school_education/non_government_schools/census.
For follow up communication regarding queries with school data submissions, Objective Connect will be used to share documents for editing and validation.

Schools are encouraged to utilise the *Data Standards Manual* available from the ACARA website for further questions relating to student data specifications. The manual details information to assist schools and school systems in collecting the student and associated information as agreed to by Education Ministers. This manual is available by accessing the following link
<http://www.acara.edu.au/reporting/data-standards-manual-student-background-characteristics>

Schools are also encouraged to contact the Performance and Systems Section of the Directorate (6205 2656) if you are unable to provide the above information or for clarification of any questions that may arise during the census collection.

Section 7: Data submission and sign off

Schools are required to submit student data to the Directorate on **Friday 10 February 2023**. If you cannot submit the data by COB on this date, please contact the Directorate.

Electronic submission of data

Student information is to be submitted electronically by visiting the Directorate website at <https://www.education.act.gov.au/schooling/non-government-schools/non-government-school-census> and undertaking the following steps:

1. Click on link above which will direct you to the webpage Non-Government School Census and click on the fourth link 'Non-government Census Submissions'.

The screenshot shows the ACT Government Education website. The header includes the ACT Government logo and the word 'Education'. A search bar is located in the top right. The navigation menu includes: Home, Schooling, Early Childhood, Public School Life, Support for Students and Families, Our Priorities, Working with Us, and About Us. Below the navigation menu is a breadcrumb trail: Home > Schooling > Non-Government Schools > Non-Government School Census. The main heading is 'Non-Government School Census'. On the left side, there is a 'Schooling' section with a sub-section 'Public Schools in the ACT'. To the right of this section is a list of links:

- [Census Procedures Manual - Canberra non-government schools 2021](#) (1.3 MB)
- [Census Procedures Manual - Canberra non-government schools 2021](#) (1.0 MB)
- [Census Return Template](#) (91.3 KB)
- [Non-government Census Submissions \(external link requires log-in\) - data collection](#)

The last link is circled in red.

Please note: You will be prompted to enter a username and password. These login credentials have been provided to your school principal. If you cannot locate your username and password, or have difficulties accessing this page please contact the Directorate on 6205 1845.

2. Select your school from the drop down list under the heading *Contact details* and fill in other census action officer contact information.



Non Government Census Submission

Contact Details

Select your school:

Please enter a contact name for the census data:

Please enter a contact phone number:

Please enter a contact email address:

2. Select

Submit Census Return

Please browse to your completed census return and then click the *Submit Census Return* button below. (Please wait until you receive confirmation that the file has been submitted properly).

No file chosen

3. Select

4. Select

3. Select *Choose File* and browse to locate your student data file on your school system that contains the student census information.
4. Select 'Submit Census Return' to electronically lodge your return.
 - Note successful submission and reference number of submission.

To enable identification of individual school returns by the Directorate, schools are asked to name their census data files consistent with the format of the following example.

E.g. *RiverViewHighSchool_2022 Census Collection*

Final sign-off of census data

When the Performance and Systems Section of the Directorate receives the electronic student census data from schools, it will be reviewed and summarised. In approximately 2 to 5 working days after the census date, a summary count by year level will be sent back to schools via email for final verification and signoff Attachment 2. After schools have agreed to the summarised data sent to them by the Directorate, this will become the school's official student census data. This information will then be used for inclusion in the ACT *School Census* publication and form the basis of any ACT Government funding entitlements.

Summary of requirements

1. Electronically submit your school's student data by **COB Friday 10 February 2023** (as per specifications set out in Attachment 1) via the Directorate website at <https://nongovernmentcensus.ed.act.edu.au/>
2. Verify the summarised student census data sent back to your school in the *Census sign off report* Attachment 2 by the Performance and Systems Section of the Directorate.

3. Once satisfied that all students are correctly accounted for, your school principal should sign the *Census sign off report* (an example of the *Census sign off report* that will be sent to your school is provided at Attachment 2). Please send a copy of your *Census sign off report* via email a scanned copy to SchoolCensus@act.gov.au

Section 8: Reports for verification

Schools are required to prepare reports that substantiate and verify their census numbers. Reports to be prepared and retained by the school should include:

- signed *Census sign off report*
- alphabetical list of students by year level
- class rolls that have been marked by the classroom teacher on a daily basis from the beginning of the term and including census day. The external auditors have recommended that:
 - all class rolls include the correct date, class name, teacher and year level
 - class rolls are not to be used to record information other than student identifiers and attendance
 - attendance records are maintained to ensure accessibility in the future.

Section 9: Role of the Directorate

The Performance and Systems section of the Directorate will distribute information on census processes to schools and liaise with and support schools where necessary. The section will be responsible for collating and verifying student census information from schools and liaising with schools to resolve discrepancies as required.

The Directorate will check the information against previous census data and projected enrolments for comparison. Where enrolment figures are considered unusual, schools may be contacted for clarification.

Once finalisation of the census information has been completed, the census information will be used to produce the ACT *School Census* publication.

Section 10: Further information




For further information regarding the ACT school census please contact the Performance and Systems Section on 6205 1845 or by email SchoolCensus@act.gov.au.


Section 11: Census checklist

To be used by schools as a guide only. This checklist does not need to be sent to the Directorate with student census information.

Census checklist for actions	Please tick
Staff have been informed about the specific definitions of eligible students and the need for census data to be accurate.	
Staff have ensured that no student has been enrolled under the minimum starting age without obtaining prior approval.	
Executive staff were involved in cross checking enrolments and verifying census data.	
Documentation is available to substantiate the accuracy of enrolment numbers supplied on census day.	
Documentation for an on-site audit is available if needed.	

Attachment 1: Data Specifications

Field Code	Field Descriptor	Maximum Length	Content/Allowed values	Notes
SchoolCode (ACARA numeric)	School code (ACARA)	5	Set of 5 unique numeric characters in the range 00001 to 99999	Allocated by ACARA and used for the My School website and NAPLAN related activities
ACT Student ID	Student ID	7	Numeric (no spaces)	
Family Name	Family Name	50	Alphabetic + spaces	
Given Name	Given Name	50	Alphabetic + spaces	First name
Middle Name(s)	Middle Name(s)	50	Alphabetic + spaces	Middle name(s) concatenated
Preferred Name	Preferred Name	50	Alphabetic + spaces	Preferred name used by student
Year Level	Academic Year Level	3	Alphanumeric + spaces	00B = Preschool, 00K = Kindergarten, 01, 02, 03, 04, 05, 06, 07, 08, 09, 10, 11 and 12
Class ID	Roll Group	10	Alphanumeric + spaces	used to generate class level tally sheets (rolls)
Sex / Gender	Sex / Gender	1	Numeric	1 = Male, 2 = Female, 3 = Other, 9 = unknown
Date of birth	Date of birth in Australian format	10	Date Format as dd/mm/yyyy	eg 10/02/2001 (10 February 2001)
Country of birth	Student birth country code	4	Text format	User will need to enter one of the unique SACC codes that are mapped to countries in the Standard Australian Classification of Countries (SACC) coding index. The complete list of codes is available on the ABS website at http://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/DetailsPage/1269.02016?OpenDocument . Select the  symbol to download the Excel spreadsheet.
Student Language Code	Student main language spoken at home. Does the student speak a language other than English at home?	4	Text format 4 digit ASCL code in range from 0000 to 9799	User will need to enter one of the unique ASCL codes that are mapped to languages in the Australian Standard Classification of Languages (ASCL) coding index. The complete list of codes is available on the ABS website at Select the http://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/DetailsPage/1267.02016?OpenDocument  symbol to download the Excel spreadsheet.
Indigenous status	Is the student of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander origin?	1	Numeric from the range 1, 2, 3, 4 or 9	1 - Aboriginal but not Torres Strait Islander Origin 2 - Torres Strait Islander but not Aboriginal Origin 3 - Both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Origin 4 - Neither Aboriginal nor Torres Strait Islander Origin 9 - Not stated/Unknown
GA Main Language Code	Parent 1 main language spoken at home Does the mother/parent1/guardian1 speak a language other than English at home?	4	Text format 4 digit ASCL code in range from 0000 to 9799	User will need to enter one of the unique ASCL codes that are mapped to languages in the Australian Standard Classification of Languages (ASCL) coding index. The complete list of Australian Standard Classification of Languages (ASCL), 2016 codes is available at http://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/DetailsPage/1267.02016?OpenDocument . Select the  symbol to download the Excel spreadsheet.

Field Code	Field Descriptor	Maximum Length	Content/Allowed values	Notes
GA School Education Code	Parent 1 school education – mother/parent1/guardian1 What is the highest year of primary or secondary school the mother/parent1/guardian1 has completed?	1	Numeric from the range 1, 2, 3, 4 or 0	1 - Year 9 or equivalent or below 2 - Year 10 or equivalent 3 - Year 11 or equivalent 4 - Year 12 or equivalent 0 - Not stated/Unknown
GA non School Education Code	Parent1 non-school education – mother/parent1/guardian1 What is the level of the highest qualification the mother/parent1/guardian1 has completed?	1	Numeric from the range 5, 6, 7, 8 or 0	5 - Certificate I to IV (including trade certificate) 6 - Advanced diploma/Diploma 7 - Bachelor's degree or above 8 - No non-school qualification 0 - Not stated/Unknown
GA Occupation Code	Parent1 occupation – mother/parent1/guardian1 What is the occupation of the mother/parent1/guardian1?	1	Numeric character from the range 1, 2, 3, 4, 8 or 9	1 - Senior management in large business organization, government administration and defence, and qualified professionals 2 - Other business managers, arts/media/sportspersons and associate professionals 3 - Tradesmen/women, clerks and skilled office, sales and service staff 4 - Machine operators, hospitality staff, assistants, labourers and related workers 8 - Not in paid work in last 12 months 9 - Not stated/Unknown
GB Main Language Code	Parent 2 main language spoken at home Does the father/parent2/guardian2 speak a language other than English at home?	4	Text format 4 digit ASCL code in range from 0000 to 9799	User will need to enter one of the unique ASCL codes that are mapped to languages in the Australian Standard Classification of Languages (ASCL) coding index. The complete list of codes is available on the ABS website at http://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/DetailsPage/1267.02016?OpenDocument . Select the  symbol to download the Excel spreadsheet.
GB School Education Code	Parent 2 school education – father/parent2/guardian2 What is the highest year of primary or secondary school the father/parent2/guardian2 has completed?	1	Numeric from the range 1, 2, 3, 4 or 0	1 - Year 9 or equivalent or below 2 - Year 10 or equivalent 3 - Year 11 or equivalent 4 - Year 12 or equivalent 0 - Not stated/Unknown

Field Code	Field Descriptor	Maximum Length	Content/Allowed values	Notes
GB non School Education Code	Parent 2 non-school education – father/parent2/guardian2 What is the level of the highest qualification the father/parent2/guardian2 has completed?	1	Numeric from the range 5, 6, 7, 8 or 0	5 - Certificate I to IV (including trade certificate) 6 - Advanced diploma/Diploma 7 – Bachelor’s degree or above 8 - No non-school qualification 0 - Not stated/Unknown
GB Occupation Code	Parent 2 occupation – father/parent2/guardian2 What is the occupation of the father/parent2/guardian2?	1	Numeric character from the range 1, 2, 3, 4, 8 or 9	1 - Senior management in large business organization, government administration and defence, and qualified professionals 2 - Other business managers, arts/media/sportspersons and associate professionals 3 - Tradesmen/women, clerks and skilled office, sales and service staff 4 - Machine operators, hospitality staff, assistants, labourers and related workers 8 - Not in paid work in last 12 months 9 - Not stated/Unknown
Student Apartment Number	The number of apartment/flat/unit	5	Alphanumeric and spaces	Address line information may include apartment/flat/unit number (if any); house/property number.
Student Street Number	The number of the residence	10		Student street number
Student Street Name	The full street name of the residence	50		Full street name with no abbreviations which are commonly used for street, circuit, road, avenue, crescent, park, drive, close, lodge, boulevard, etc.
Student Home Suburb	The suburb where the student resides	20	Alphabetic characters	Full name of home suburb (please ensure correct spelling and no abbreviations)
Student Postcode	The postcode of student suburb	4	Text format 4 digit code	The postcode of student home suburb
Student Home State	The state/territory where the student resides	3	Alphabetic characters	The acronym for home state/territory of the student E.g. ACT, NSW, QLD, VIC, NT, TAS, WA, SA
International Student (Y or blank)	Is the student classified as an International/Full fee paying	1	Text format Y or blank cell	International students include those students with visa categories of 456 and 560. These students are not eligible for ACT Government funding. These students are also often referred to as “full fee paying students”. Y = International Student Blank cell = not International student
Full/Part-time Days	Number of days enrolled per week	3	Numeric character	To one decimal place. Eg 1.5 for one and a half days per week. 5 = Student attends full time.

Attachment 2: Census sign off form

Grade	P	K	01	02	03	04	05	06	Ungraded primary	07	08	09	10	11	12	Ungraded secondary	Total
Total students																	0
International students																	0
Total students <i>less</i> international students	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

Example only

.....
Name of Principal (please print)

..... / / 2020
Signature of Principal