

Attendance recording and reporting – procedures

Policy statement

Under the *Education Act 2015* (the Act), principals of Northern Territory (NT) Government schools must ensure that an attendance register, in respect of all currently enrolled students, including students in early childhood education programs, is maintained each day that the school is open for instruction. This document outlines the procedures for recording and reporting student attendance.

Schools and the Department of Education (department) use attendance data to:

- ensure the safety and wellbeing of students, including in emergency situations
- provide an evidence base for planning, developing, and monitoring attendance strategies aimed at improved attendance
- monitor individual students and initiate the department's enforcement processes
- provide evidence for enforcement under the Act.

Roles and responsibilities

Teachers and school staff

Teachers and school staff must:

- record attendance information in the department's mandated student administration system or approved compliant third-party program on a daily basis. Attendance from the approved compliant third-party program must be transferred on a daily basis to the department's mandated student administration system
- ensure all correspondence with parents and all other relevant documentation is filed in the Student Record Folder.

Principals, including teaching principals

Principals, including teaching principals must:

- ensure that school staff understand department policies and procedures, school processes, and their individual roles and responsibilities in relation to attendance recording and reporting
- ensure that school staff are trained in the use of the department's mandated student administration system and, where relevant, the approved compliant third-party program
- ensure accurate attendance records are entered daily, or as soon as practicably able where access to internet inhibits, and are maintained in accordance with legislation and department policies and procedures
- ensure all correspondence with parents and all other relevant documentation is filed in the Student Record Folder.

Senior Directors Education

Senior Directors Education must:

- manage schools' compliance with legislative requirements and department procedures for attendance recording and reporting.

Student Engagement Programs and Services

Student Engagement Programs and Services must:

- provide advice to principals and school staff regarding the appropriate use of attendance codes in the department's mandated student administration system.

Student Systems Team, Department of Corporate and Digital Development

Student Systems Team, Department of Corporate and Digital Development must:

- provide training and support in the use of the department's mandated student administration system.

Strategic Reporting and Analysis

Strategic Reporting and Analysis must:

- collate the department's official enrolment and attendance data in week 4 and week 8 of each term
- provide direction and support to schools to validate enrolment and attendance data
- facilitate schools to ensure data quality.

Procedures

Marking student attendance

Student attendance must be recorded and entered on a daily basis into the department's mandated student administration system or approved compliant third-party program. Children attending Families as First Teachers must have their attendance recorded in accordance with the Families as First Teachers attendance recording procedures.

A teacher must record attendance at the following times during the school day:

- Preschool – account for children as they arrive and depart the preschool such as using a sign in or sign out process and complete the record of attendance within 30 minutes of the start of each session.
- Primary school – twice a day, within 30 minutes of the start of each session.
- Middle and senior school – at schools where students' attendance is recorded for each lesson, within 15 minutes of the start of each lesson, and at schools where attendance is recorded twice a day, am and pm, within 30 minutes of the start of each session.

All students present in class will be marked as Present (/ code). Absences should be marked as Un-notified Absence (U code) until a reason is provided. If a student arrives late to class, the un-notified absence must be changed to Late (L code).

If marking on a paper roll, in exceptional circumstances, schools, including schools with a teaching principal, must have local processes in place to ensure this information is entered to the department's mandated student administration system or approved compliant third-party program prior to the commencement of the next school day. In a homeland school, the week's attendance must be entered into the department's mandated student administration system or approved compliant third-party program by no later than close of business on the Friday of that week.

If there are exceptional circumstances where marking attendance has occurred or will occur outside of this timeframe, the principal should notify Student Engagement Programs and Services.

Recording non-attendance

Principals must have local processes in place to resolve all absences marked as Un-notified Absence (U code), including contacting parents of children or children living independently, on the first day of an un-notified absence. Attempts to contact a parent or a child living independently as set out in the Attendance procedures must be recorded in the attendance notes field in the department's mandated student administration system or approved compliant third-party program as they occur.

An attendance code regarding a student's absence can be updated only when school staff receive notification from a parent, a student living independently, or an authorised person. Advice from a third party will not be considered as a notification unless this is approved by the principal. An attendance note must be added in the department's mandated student administration system or approved compliant third-party program, stating the reason why the attendance code has been updated and by whom. Notifications via email and handwritten notes must be filed in the Student Record Folders.

Where a student is absent for two weeks and no evidence is provided, the decision as to whether the attendance code will be updated in accordance with the reason provided is at the discretion of the principal. Any decisions about student absence must be recorded in the attendance notes field in the department's mandated student administration system or approved compliant third-party program.

Unmarked attendance

School staff must generate the unmarked registers report on a weekly basis to identify students categorised as 'not yet marked'. This is to ensure that attendance is recorded for all students.

Passive form

The passive form and its procedures apply to:

- children and young people of compulsory school age and
- children enrolled in preschool.

Where a student has recorded 20 consecutive school days of Un-notified Absence (U code) and or Unacceptable Reason (X code) and the school has not received notification that the student is enrolled in another school, the student's name must be moved to the passive form. Students can only be transferred from an active form to the passive form in the department's mandated student administration system if the student has met this threshold of 20 consecutive school days. Under no other circumstance should a student be moved to the passive form.

The principal will ensure that students are moved to the passive form effective from Day 21, backdating where necessary, that is, where a student met and exceeded the threshold of 20 consecutive school days but was not moved to the passive form. Principals will also ensure that the passive form is marked daily.

A student on the passive form can only be moved to the active form and marked with a Present code when they attend school, or the principal is satisfied that there is appropriate learning occurring, including learning from home, attending classes while in detention or attending a Hospital School.

Students on the passive form are not counted as enrolments and their attendance is disregarded when calculating school attendance.

Dual enrolments

For dual enrolments, principals must ensure:

- the school recorded as the student's main school is the school that provides main responsibility for curriculum delivery to the student and reporting on their academic progress
- the other school or schools the student attends are listed as subsidiary schools
- the main school marks the student as Attendance Not Required (B code) when the student is attending a subsidiary school or a flexible education program. The subsidiary school records student attendance using an appropriate code according to the student's attendance status
- student enrolment and attendance data are provided back to the main school on a weekly basis
- education, training and wellbeing related information is collated and shared between schools.

Providing attendance reports to parents and external agencies

Parents

A parent can request their child's attendance data from a school at which their child is currently enrolled or has been previously enrolled. Attendance data can only be released to a parent identified in the department's mandated student administration system or who can provide evidence of parental responsibility. A parent is not required to inform the school of their reasons for requesting attendance data. If a parent identifies errors in attendance data and has reasonable evidence to support that claim, the matter will be resolved at the discretion of the principal.

External agencies

An agency external to the department may request individual student attendance data. When considering requests, school and department staff must comply with the *Information Act 2002* and the Data access policy.

NT Government officers from the Department of Territory Families, Housing and Communities, or the Northern Territory Police, Fire and Emergency Services can request information under the *Care and Protection of Children Act 2007*.

For further information, please contact the following area:

Business Unit	Email
Strategic Reporting and Performance	stats.det@education.nt.gov.au
Student Systems team	sams.det@education.nt.gov.au
Student Engagement Programs and Services	se.doe@education.nt.gov.au
Early Childhood Program Attendance System (ECPAS)	earlychild.det@education.nt.gov.au

Related legislation, policy and procedures

- Care and Protection of Children Act 2007 – <https://legislation.nt.gov.au/Legislation/CARE-AND-PROTECTION-OF-CHILDREN-ACT-2007>
- Data access policy – <https://education.nt.gov.au/policies/conduct>
- Education Act 2015 – <https://legislation.nt.gov.au/Legislation/EDUCATION-ACT-2015>
- Education and Care Services (National Uniform Legislation) Act 2011, which adopts the Education and Care Services National Law Act 2011 in the NT – <https://legislation.nt.gov.au/en/Legislation/EDUCATION-AND-CARE-SERVICES-NATIONAL-UNIFORM-LEGISLATION-ACT-2011>
- Education and Care Services National Regulations – <http://www.legislation.nsw.gov.au/#/view/regulation/2011/653>
- Families as First Teachers attendance recording procedures – <https://education.nt.gov.au/policies/early-childhood-education-and-care>
- Information Act 2002 – <https://legislation.nt.gov.au/en/Legislation/INFORMATION-ACT-2002>

Acronyms	Full form
NT	Northern Territory

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2	May 2023	Student Engagement Programs and Services	Template and information updated