

# Attendance – procedures

## Policy statement

All children and young people of compulsory school age must attend the school each school day, or each part of a school day, on which the school is open for instruction. Daily attendance is fundamental in achieving educational outcomes and increasing children and young people's wellbeing and life options.

These procedures articulate roles and responsibilities to be fulfilled by relevant stakeholders to meet compulsory attendance requirements under the *Education Act 2015* and attendance expectations under the national Preschool Reform Agreement.

Students who have completed year 10 and are not yet 17 years of age may enter a compulsory participation phase and participate in an eligible option. For information about participating in eligible options, go to the Department of Education's (department) Enrolment webpage.

The department encourages regular attendance at early childhood education programs delivered by schools including preschool, transition and Families as First Teachers (FaFT).

## Roles and responsibilities

### Principals or nominated staff members

Principals or nominated staff members must:

- ensure school staff understand the department's policies and procedures, school processes, and their individual roles and responsibilities in relation to attendance recording and reporting
- ensure school staff are trained in the use of the department's mandated student administration system and, where relevant, the 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
- monitor student attendance and assist in case management
- apply school-level engagement strategies and processes to address low attendance and non-attendance and optimise student attendance
- where sustained efforts have been exhausted to satisfactorily achieve compulsory participation requirements, refer the case to Student Engagement Programs and Services for case management support.

### Teachers and school staff

Teachers and school staff must:

- build positive relationships with children and young people and their families to promote regular school attendance
- record attendance information in the department's mandated student administration system or approved compliant third-party program on a daily basis. Attendance from the compliant third-

party program must be transferred on a daily basis to the department's mandated student administration system

- monitor individual student attendance and alert relevant school staff to low attendance and non-attendance
- undertake professional development provided by the department and schools on how to engage, motivate and encourage the self-efficacy of learners.

## Senior Directors Education

Senior Directors Education will:

- plan for strategic improvement of school attendance within their region
- monitor regional and school efforts that address low attendance and non-attendance, including the effectiveness of school-level strategies and processes in reducing absenteeism
- ensure principals have exhausted all school-level strategies to lift attendance barriers before referring the case to an authorised person
- work with schools where attendance or engagement issues have been identified with the support of Student Engagement Programs and Services
- facilitate Student Engagement Programs and Services in their interaction with schools.

## Student Engagement Programs and Services

Student Engagement Programs and Services will:

- work in partnership with schools, children and young people, and their families on improving attendance, including developing strategies to promote re-engagement
- work with corporate and school staff to develop service delivery plans for schools and monitor the implementation of these plans
- work with Senior Directors Education to support and contribute to the department's direction and strategies relating to improving attendance
- develop cross-agency partnerships on Territory-wide initiatives aimed at improving student attendance
- ensure only regional staff who are currently employed in an enrolment and attendance capacity have authorisation regarding enrolment, attendance and enforcement
- ensure authorised persons undertake relevant training and fulfil their roles and responsibilities as per the department's policies and procedures
- ensure authorised persons accurately record their actions in the department's mandated case management system
- collate and report on attendance data of Northern Territory Government schools.

## Authorised persons

Authorised persons will:

- manage their workload across their full allocation of schools and work with individual principals or nominated staff members to determine the number of students under case management at a time

- work with identified students, generally those who demonstrate low attendance and non-attendance, their families, schools and community members to improve attendance, including using enforcement powers
- accurately record their actions in the department's mandated case management system
- work with schools to support student transition between years of schooling
- contribute to service delivery plans for schools.

## Procedures

### Un-notified absences

To address un-notified absences, principals or nominated staff members must:

1. make attempts to contact parents or carers where possible within two hours of school commencement through, for example, communication technology or attendance officers. School staff are required to continue to make attempts to contact the parent or carer of a student absent for three or more consecutive days. Where all attempts to contact the parent or carer have been exhausted, a balanced judgement needs to be made to determine if a mandatory report is required
2. be satisfied with the reason provided by parents or carers regarding absences.

### Ongoing absenteeism

To address ongoing absenteeism, principals or nominated staff members must:

1. provide information to students and their parents regarding compulsory attendance requirements and the consequences of non-attendance
2. manage the passive form and work with colleagues, students and families regarding student transition between years of schooling
3. prioritise participation at compulsory conferences to assist in the development of an engagement plan
4. implement the engagement plan and monitor its implementation
5. notify an authorised person if non-attendance continues or if there is a change in family circumstances that affects attendance
6. manage student re-entry, including ensuring appropriate support is in place to facilitate the re-entry process, such as engagement strategies or flexible education arrangements
7. consider referring the case to Student Engagement Programs and Services when sustained efforts have been exhausted to satisfactorily achieve compulsory attendance.

For information regarding enforcement powers, go to the department's Enrolment webpage.

### Referral of cases to Student Engagement Programs and Services

To refer cases to Student Engagement Programs and Services, principals or nominated staff members must:

1. ensure the following criteria are met prior to making a referral to Student Engagement Programs and Services:

- the student has five or more full school days recorded as an Un-notified Absence or Unacceptable Reason within a five-week school period
- the student has demonstrated a pattern of Un-notified Absence or Unacceptable Reason
- reasonable and sustained efforts have been made by the school to improve attendance

2. make a formal referral to Student Engagement Programs and Services.

## Children in early childhood education programs

In relation to children enrolled in schools' early childhood education programs, school staff will:

1. discuss with parents regarding ongoing absenteeism
2. seek advice and assistance from authorised persons regarding engagement strategies.

## Related legislation, policy and resources

- *Education Act 2015* – <https://legislation.nt.gov.au/Legislation/EDUCATION-ACT-2015>
- Enrolment – <https://education.nt.gov.au/policies/student-enrolment/enrolment>
- Enrolment and attendance enforcement procedures – <https://education.nt.gov.au/policies/student-enrolment/enrolment>
- Families as First Teachers policy, procedures and guidelines – <https://education.nt.gov.au/policies/early-childhood-education-and-care>
- Preschool Reform Agreement – <https://federalfinancialrelations.gov.au/agreements/preschool-reform-agreement>

Document title	Attendance – procedures
Contact details	Inclusion and Engagement Services, Student Engagement Programs and Services, <a href="mailto:enrolattend.policy@education.nt.gov.au">enrolattend.policy@education.nt.gov.au</a>
Approved by	Executive Director Inclusion and Engagement Services
Date approved	28 April 2023
TRM number	50:D23:2683

Version	Date	Author	Changes made
1	January 2022	Student Engagement Programs and Services	First version
2	May 2023	Student Engagement Programs and Services	Template and information updated