

General information on long-term exemptions from attendance

Children and young people who regularly attend school have better health and wellbeing and increased life choices. It is a legal responsibility for parents of children of compulsory school age and children of compulsory school age who are living independently to ensure daily attendance.

Short term absences from school, such as illness or a short family holiday, are managed through your school's absence notification process.

Where there are special circumstances which mean that students cannot attend school for a longer period, and flexible education is unsuitable, parents of children or children living independently may apply for a formal exemption from school attendance or from participation in an eligible option. One example of special circumstances is infectious disease.

What you should do

As a parent or as a child living independently, you need to:

1. explore all alternative options with the school principal before you make a formal request for exemption from attendance
2. write to the school principal, six weeks before your proposed start date for exemption, to formally request an exemption. Attach supporting documentation to the request to explain:
 - the reason why you are requesting an exemption
 - the special circumstance being experienced by your child or by you as a child living independently
 - the expected period of exemption
3. advise the principal if the special circumstance changes. Any change to the circumstance will result in the application to be processed as a new request
4. notify the principal when the child or young person intends to return to school so that the school can organise a re-entry.

Your application for exemption will be reviewed by the Chief Executive. The Chief Executive may, if satisfied that the special circumstance explained in the application warrants exemption and flexible education is not suitable, exempt the child or young person for a specified period from attending school or from all distance education course requirements.

If you are unsatisfied with the decision relating to your request for exemption, you can make a complaint. For information on how to make a complaint, refer to the Northern Territory Government's [Make a complaint about a school](#) webpage.

Imposed non-attendance

A principal, the Chief Executive, or the Minister may sanction a child or young person of compulsory school age to not attend school when they are suffering from an infectious disease or are suspended, excluded, expelled, or directed not to attend school for a specified time.

Useful information

- *Education Act 2015* – <https://legislation.nt.gov.au/Legislation/EDUCATION-ACT-2015>
- Exemptions from attendance procedures – <https://education.nt.gov.au/policies/student-enrolment>
- Make a complaint about a school – <https://nt.gov.au/learning/primary-and-secondary-students/make-a-complaint-about-a-school>