

Attendance - procedure

Department of Education and Training

Contents

1. Summary.....	3
2. Procedure.....	3
2.1. Un-notified absences.....	3
2.2. Ongoing absenteeism.....	3
2.3. Referral of cases to Student Attendance and Engagement.....	4
2.4. Children in early childhood education programs.....	4
3. Mandatory reporting	4
4. Roles and responsibilities	4
4.1. Principals, assistant principals and nominated staff members.....	4
4.2. Teachers.....	5
4.3. School-based attendance and engagement staff – non-authorised persons.....	6
4.4. School-based attendance and engagement officer – authorised persons	6
4.5. Other school-based administration staff.....	6
4.6. Senior Directors Education	7
4.7. Student Attendance and Engagement Programs and Services, including authorised persons	7
5. Definitions.....	8
6. Related legislation, policy and resources	8
6.1. Legislation.....	8
6.2. Policy	8
6.3. Resources.....	8

Read this document with the Enrolment and attendance birth to year 12 policy, Attendance recording and reporting procedure, Intensive support roll guideline, and the Enrolment and attendance enforcement procedure.

1. Summary

All children and young people of compulsory school age must attend 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* (the Act) 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 and Training'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).

2. Procedure

2.1. 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 2 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 3 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.

2.2. 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 intensive support roll 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 Attendance and Engagement Programs and Services for case management when sustained efforts have been exhausted to satisfactorily achieve compulsory attendance
8. notify the Student Attendance and Engagement team in their region once they have placed a student on the Intensive support roll for referral to Enhanced income management.

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

2.3. Referral of cases to Student Attendance and Engagement

To refer cases to SAE, principals or nominated staff members must:

1. ensure the following criteria are met prior to making a referral to SAE:
 - the student has 5 or more full school days recorded as an Un-notified Absence or Unacceptable Reason within a 5-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 Attendance and Engagement Programs and Services.

2.4. 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.

3. Mandatory reporting

Chronic non-attendance may be the basis for reasonable grounds to believe that a child is likely to suffer from harm, exploitation or neglect. Every person in the NT is legally required to make a mandatory report under section 26 of the *Care and Protection of Children Act 2007*, if there are reasonable grounds.

For more information about mandatory reporting refer to the Mandatory reporting of harm and exploitation of children – guidelines and procedures.

4. Roles and responsibilities

4.1. Principals, assistant principals and nominated staff members

Principals, assistant principal and nominated staff members must:

- ensure that all school staff understand their roles and responsibilities as outlined in the department's policies and procedures in relation to student attendance and engagement

- work with the school community to continuously improve attendance and engagement by making schools safe, accessible, welcoming, and culturally responsive. This includes setting and implementing attendance and engagement goals in their Annual school improvement plan (ASIP)
- develop and implement school-level strategies to address low attendance or non-attendance and support regular student attendance
- monitor and accurately maintain attendance records daily, or as soon as practicable, including marking the Intensive support roll (ISR), in accordance with legislation and department policies and procedures, including Attendance recording and reporting procedures
- promote the implementation of a team-based, individualised case management approach for students at risk of disengaging from education, guided by the Team around the learner case management framework
- identify the need for establishing or continuously improve the school's flexible education programs, guided by the Quality standards framework for flexible education programs
- support school-employed authorised persons to, where necessary, issue notices and directions in relation to enrolment, attendance and participation
- where sustainable efforts have been exhausted to satisfactorily achieve compulsory enrolment, attendance, and participation requirements, refer the case to Student Attendance and Engagement Programs and Services (SAEPS) for intensive case management support. Intensive case management typically involves students who have been chronically absent or require multi-agency support services
- plan for, recruit and develop a dedicated attendance and engagement team, including roles such as attendance officers, youth mentors, Aboriginal education officers, and home liaison officers
- notify the Student Attendance and Engagement team in their region once they have placed a student on the Intensive support roll.

4.2. Teachers

Teachers must:

- create a positive and welcoming learning environment by explicitly teaching and modelling expected behaviours, and by building strong relationships with students and families through consistent, effective communication that encourages regular attendance and active engagement in learning
- monitor and record student attendance information in the department's mandated student administration system or approved compliant third-party program daily. Attendance from the compliant third-party program must be transferred daily to the department's mandated student administration system
- work collaboratively with school-based attendance and engagement staff to address attendance concerns in a timely manner
- deliver targeted and focused programs and support students who are at risk of disengaging or already disengaged from education, guided by the Quality standards framework for flexible education programs
- where required, contribute to a multidisciplinary team that responds to the complex needs of the whole student, whether it be academic, social emotional or behavioural.

4.3. School-based attendance and engagement staff – non-authorised persons

School-based attendance and engagement staff - non-authorised persons, must:

- support other school staff to improve student attendance and engagement by creating a safe, welcoming learning environment; building positive relationships with students and their families; and supporting the implementation of attendance and engagement strategies and processes at the whole school and individual student levels
- where possible, maintain presence at school-led holiday programs and engagement activities such as family BBQs and movie nights to drive attendance
- support students in their transitions between stages of schooling, for example the transition from year 6 to year 7.

4.4. School-based attendance and engagement officer – authorised persons

School-based attendance and engagement officers - authorised persons, must:

- build strong, positive relationships with students and families to promote regular attendance
- support students in their transitions between stages of schooling, for example the transition from year 6 to year 7
- guided by the Team around the learner case management framework, lead quality case management for children and young people who are at risk of disengaging or already disengaged in education
- actively manage the caseload in consultation with school principals or nominated staff members to determine the number of students under case management at a time and raise concerns or seek guidance, where required
- where necessary, consider and seek approval from principals or nominated staff members on issuing notices and directions in relation to enrolment, attendance and participation
- maintain accurate record keeping of all case management activities with students, families and stakeholders, as well as compliance actions
- maintain a visible and supportive presence at school-led holiday programs and engagement activities such as family BBQs and movie nights to strengthen community engagement and drive attendance.

4.5. Other school-based administration staff

Other school-based administration staff must:

- undertake data entry and retrieval of school data to ensure accurate maintenance of all manual and computerised student records including ensuring the integrity and currency of the database
- collaborate with other school staff to improve student attendance and engagement by creating a safe, welcoming learning environment; building positive relationships with students and their families; and supporting the implementation of attendance and engagement strategies and

processes at the whole school and individual student levels.

4.6. Senior Directors Education

Senior Directors Education will:

- based on regional enrolment and attendance data and evidence, establish a strategic vision and plan for the region on improving student attendance and engagement in consultation with schools and wider communities, and oversee the implementation of this plan
- support schools to develop and implement their ASIP attendance and engagement goals and actions
- support principals in managing challenging operational and educational school-based issues related to whole school or individual student attendance and engagement
- monitor regional and school efforts that address low attendance and non-attendance, including the effectiveness of school-level strategies and processes in reducing absenteeism
- support principals to pursue all school-level engagement efforts to meet compulsory enrolment, attendance, and participation requirements before they refer the case to SAEPS for intensive case management
- coordinate or contribute to regional multi-agency initiatives aimed at improving student attendance and engagement
- with the support from SAEPS, work with schools demonstrating attendance or engagement issues and facilitate the interactions between SAEPS and schools.

4.7. Student Attendance and Engagement Programs and Services, including authorised persons

SAEPS, including authorised persons must:

- work in partnership with schools, children and young people, and their families on improving attendance, including developing strategies to promote re-engagement and educating parents on their legal obligation to send their children to school
- work with Senior Directors Education to support and contribute to the department's direction and strategies relating to improving attendance
- provide advice and guidance to schools on the implementation of department policies and strategies that support suitable programs and initiatives aimed at improving student attendance and engagement school-wide, including the Enrolment and attendance policy suite, the Quality standards framework for flexible education programs, and the Team around the learner case management framework
- promote evidence-informed and best practice approaches and processes to improve student attendance and engagement across NT Government schools through training, professional development, and establishing a community of practice for knowledge sharing and mutual learning
- increase attendance in NT Government schools through targeted compliance activities
- ensure only regional staff who are currently employed in an enrolment and attendance capacity have authorisation regarding enrolment, attendance and enforcement

- ensure authorised persons accurately record their actions in the department's mandated case management system
- collate and report on attendance data of NT Government schools
- lead intensive case management in consultation with schools and other identified stakeholders using a team around the learner approach. Intensive case management typically involves students who have been chronically absent and require multi-agency support services
- partner with government agencies and community-based organisations to integrate service delivery to ensure education engagement and re-engagement of students who are at risk of disengaging or already disengaged from education
- work collaboratively with identified agencies and stakeholders to deliver compliance campaigns and services including the No School No Service campaign
- monitor the ISR for newly added students and refer these students to Services Australia for Enhanced income management.

5. Definitions

Refer to the Enrolment and attendance policy suite definitions

6. Related legislation, policy and resources

6.1. Legislation

Education Act 2015 – <https://legislation.nt.gov.au/Legislation/EDUCATION-ACT-2015>

Care and Protection of Children Act 2007 – <https://legislation.nt.gov.au/Legislation/CARE-AND-PROTECTION-OF-CHILDREN-ACT-2007>

6.2. Policy

Attendance recording and reporting procedure - <https://education.nt.gov.au/policies/student-enrolment#attendance>

Enhanced income management referrals – <https://elearn.ntschoools.net/policies/8346>

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>

Intensive support roll guideline - <https://education.nt.gov.au/policies/student-enrolment#intensive>

Mandatory reporting of harm and exploitation of children - guidelines - <https://education.nt.gov.au/policies/health-safety/safeguarding-of-students>

6.3. Resources

Preschool Reform Agreement - <https://federalfinancialrelations.gov.au/agreements/preschool->

[reform-agreement](#)

Letter to Parents – notifying absence – template - <https://elearn.ntschoools.net/media/file/5960>

Quality standards framework for flexible education programs -
<https://elearn.ntschoools.net/supporting-staff/student-inclusion-and-engagement/student-attendance-and-engagement-programs-and-3>

Resources for re-engaging students – eLearn page - <https://elearn.ntschoools.net/supporting-staff/student-inclusion-and-engagement/student-attendance-and-engagement-programs-and-0>

Team around the learner case management resources - <https://elearn.ntschoools.net/supporting-staff/student-inclusion-and-engagement/student-attendance-and-engagement-programs-and-1#resources27208>

Acronyms	Full form
ASIP	Annual School Improvement Plan
FaFT	Families as First Teachers
ISR	Intensive Support Roll
NT	Northern Territory
SAEPS	Student Attendance and Engagement Programs and Services

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