

Purpose

The purpose of this procedure is to ensure the school community understands the important legal obligations of parents of children of compulsory education age and the requirement for them to be enrolled in a registered school and attend school on a full-time basis. The procedure also contains important information about processes in place to support, monitor and maintain student attendance.

Scope

This procedure applies to all students and parents/carers of Franklin School and should be read in conjunction with the [ACT Education Directorate Compulsory Education: Student Enrolment and Attendance Policy](#) and the [ACT Public School Attendance and Roll Marking Procedures](#) and the [Non-Compliance Procedures](#). This procedure does not replace or change the obligations of Franklin School parents/carers and Education Support Office under relevant legislation such as the [Education Act 2004](#).

Compulsory School Attendance

Going to school every day is the single most important part of your child's education. Students learn new things at school every day and there are no safe number of days for missing school.

In the ACT compulsory education requires that all children from age six are legally required to be enrolled at and attending school until they turn 17 or achieve their year 12 Senior Secondary Certificate.

Students are expected to attend school during normal school hours every day of each term unless:

- there is an exemption from school enrolment or attendance for the student;
- the student has a dual enrolment with another school and has only a partial enrolment in Franklin School and/or
- the student is registered for home schooling and has only a partial enrolment in Franklin School for particular classes/activities; or
- the parents can provide a reasonable excuse for their child not attending e.g. sick or holiday.

For more information refer to the [ACT Education website](#).

Supporting and promoting attendance

It is important that our school community has a shared understanding of the importance of attending school and protecting the safety and wellbeing of children and young people through the reporting and monitoring of absences.

Franklin School is committed to:

- promoting positive attendance and setting clear expectations;
- recording daily attendance in the School Administration System (SAS), the official student enrolment and attendance register
- ensuring children remain enrolled and attend school all day, every school day;
- closely monitoring, communicating and implementing strategies to improve regular school attendance;
- working proactively to identify individual students and groups of students who are vulnerable and whose attendance is low;
- working together with students and their parents to improve their attendance through a range of interventions and supports; and
- ensuring that the school community understand that attendance at school everyone's responsibility.

Late arrivals and early leavers

Students are expected to be at school from 8:55am each morning in time for the daily roll call.

If a student arrives at school from 9:10am onwards, they need to sign in at the front office to receive a late note. Parents are expected to provide a reason for their child's late arrival. If a valid reason is not provided, their late arrival (absence) will be recorded as 'absent-unexplained'.

Medical and dental appointments should be made outside of school hours where possible, however if a student needs to leave early, the parent/carer is required to provide an explanation as soon as practical, and the student must be signed out through the front office. Students who do not sign out, will have their absence recorded as 'unexplained'.

Any student who leaves the school grounds during the recess and lunch break without an explanation, will have their absence recorded as 'unexplained'.

What circumstances/explanations are considered a reasonable excuse?

There are a limited number of reasons which are considered reasonable excuses for an absence. The two most common reasons for student absences are 'sick' and 'leave'. 'Sick' is usually due to an illness and 'leave' may be required due to a serious illness of an immediate family member, family holiday or attendance at a funeral. The principal has the discretion to accept a reason given by a parent for a student's absence and can request a medical certificate or statutory declaration in addition to an explanation where required.

Principals will generally accept the following reasons, as reasonable excuses:

- illness or medical issues, including recovery from major injury or medical condition;
- medical and dental appointments, where out of hours appointments are not possible or appropriate;
- bereavement or attending a funeral of a relative or friend of the student;
- religious or cultural observation;
- family holidays where the parent notifies the school in advance and the principal supports the leave;
- attendance at court or other legal hearings or meetings associated with hearings;
- participation in sanctioned debates, sports, musical or theatrical productions not directly arranged by the school; and/or
- participation in interstate, national, or international academic or sporting event or equivalent.

What are unexplained absences?

An unexplained absence is an absence where the student's parent/carer has failed to provide a *reasonable excuse*. You will be notified by the school if an absence is unexplained and given the opportunity to provide a reasonable excuse within 10 school days of the first absence. If you fail to provide an explanation it will remain on the school's record as an unexplained absence and count towards your child's attendance record.

If you provide an excuse that is not considered to be a reasonable excuse, then the absence will be treated as unauthorised and this absence becomes an explained absence.

What are unauthorised absences?

In some circumstances, even though a reason has been provided, the absence may be recorded as *unauthorised* because the reason does not count as a valid reason as per the [ACT Education Directorate's Compulsory Education: Student Enrolment and Attendance policy](#) and the ACT Public School [Attendance and Roll Marking procedures](#).

In general, the following absences may be determined as unauthorised absences: repeated poor excuses such as running late, too tired, slept in and absences due to truancy.

Where explanations are provided that don't provide adequate information, the principal can use their discretion and may treat the explanation as 'explained/ unauthorised' e.g. 'My child was away from school on Friday 10 May' or 'My child has an appointment to attend'. These examples do not provide enough information to determine if the explanation is a 'reasonable excuse'.

Planned absences

Parents are encouraged to holiday or travel during the official school holidays. If travel outside of the school holiday period is necessary and it will be greater than five school days (e.g. overseas/interstate holiday), parents must apply in writing to the principal for approval beforehand. If you do not apply for leave, or the school does

not believe it to be in the best interests of your child, the absence from school may be recorded as an 'unauthorised absence'.

Contact us for attendance support

Should you have any concerns regarding your child's attendance, please call the school office and ask to speak to your child's teacher, the <Student Wellbeing Team> or the relevant Deputy Principal or Principal. <School Name> provides a range of support programs and strategies to address attendance concerns including support for students returning from an extended period of leave.

Responsibilities

Our school responsibilities include:

- promoting attendance and maintaining up to date school-based attendance procedures;
- maintaining an attendance register in SAS and marking attendance rolls each school day and keeping a record of the reason given for each absence;
- advising parents/carers of any unexplained absences on the same day, or as soon as practicable;
- encouraging open communication with students, parents and families about issues affecting a student's attendance and working in partnership with families to address any concerns about a student's education, engagement, health and wellbeing and discussing barriers to attendance early;
- taking action where there are more than three consecutive days, or more than seven unexplained non-consecutive days absent to seek a reasonable excuse from the parents/carers;
- determining if an explanation provided for an absence is reasonable for the purposes of the parent/carer meeting their responsibilities under the Act;
- identifying any attendance concerns and working with the student and parent/carer to understand and address any attendance barriers and provide support strategies and programs;
- referring to Student Engagement for access to support if a student's attendance remains a concern; and
- effectively monitoring overseas student attendance and implementing a documented intervention strategy where an overseas student's attendance is at risk of failing to meet the minimum student visa requirement (attendance of a minimum 80% of the scheduled course contact hours during each study period).

Parent/carer responsibilities include:

- ensuring your child/ren attend school on time every day when instruction is offered including excursions, sports carnivals camps and special events;
- ensuring you and your child follow the school attendance procedures for late arrival and early departure i.e. signing in and out of front office;
- notifying the school as soon as practicable if your child will be late or will be leaving early;
- providing permission for your child to leave the school grounds during the school day
- notifying the school in advance of any upcoming absences or letting the school know early in the morning if your child won't be attending so their absence can be recorded correctly.
- replying to the school's SMS, email the front office at E: info.franklinecs@ed.act.edu.au call on (02) 61421110 or alternatively, send a written note with your child on their return to school or visit the school;
- ensuring absence explanations include:
 - your child's name;
 - the date of the absence(s)
 - the reason (s)
- making sure explanations are provided in advance or on the day or as soon as practical or within 10 days of the first day of absence;

- ensuring your contact details are up to date so that the school can send you the absence notifications;
- communicating openly with the school and working in partnership to address any concerns about your child's education, engagement, health and wellbeing and discussing barriers to attendance early;
- scheduling family holidays, appointments and other activities outside of school hours where possible;
- putting in writing a request to the principal for planned extended absences of five or more days during term time (e.g. an overseas holiday);
- seeking a full-time or part-time Exemption Certificate if your child is unable to meet the attendance requirements of the Act due to individual circumstances;
- seeking an Approval Statement where your young person has completed year 10 and wishes to participate in workplace related training and/or employment alternatives; and
- complying with any attendance notifications (letters), Information and Compliances Notice instructions.

Related Resources

- [ACT Education Compulsory Education: Student Enrolment and Attendance Policy](#)
- [Attendance at ACT Public Schools Procedure](#)
- [Non-Compliance Procedure](#)
- [Enrolment in ACT Public Schools Preschool to Year 12 Procedure](#)

Appendix 2: Absence Reason Codes

The following options are available in SAS to record student absences.

Record	General description
Whole day	The student is away from school for the entire day.
Late	The student arrives after the official start time of school/class.
Timed	The exact time the student is absent from school/class is recorded.
Early	The student leaves the school/class prior to the school official finish time.

Unexplained Absences

Record	General description	Counted (treated as an absence on the student's record)	Notes
A - Absent – Unexplained	An absence where the student's parent/carer has not provided an explanation for an absence.	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>These absences can be partial/time based or whole day absences.</i>

Explained Authorised Absence Reasons

Record	General description	Counted	Additional notes
S - Sick	<p>An absence due to illness, includes mental health or recovery from major sickness, injury or medical condition.</p> <p>Includes an infestation or infectious disease or illness that is considered harmful to the health of other persons at the school (refer to Infectious Diseases Outbreak and inclusion policy).</p>	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Medical certificates/statutory declaration will be required for absences greater than 10 consecutive school days (two weeks) or for patterns of non-attendance (e.g. pattern of illness every Monday).</i> <i>A copy of medical certificate/statutory declaration will be saved on SAS and placed on the student record file.</i> <i>Where students are absent due to medical appointments with health care professionals or dental treatment their absence should be marked using absence reason 'Leave'.</i>
L - Leave (L)	An absence where the student's parent/carer has provided an explanation that is considered by the principal as a ' reasonable excuse '.	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Students participating in recognised sporting programs not related to the school or musical or theatrical productions where they are absent for large amounts of time require a mutual agreement with the school and the parent/carer to</i>

Explained Authorised Absence Reasons

Record	General description	Counted	Additional notes
	<p>Reasonable excuses include but are not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Participating in a recognised learning/sporting activity not related to the school such as debate, sport (state, national or international level), or musical or theatrical productions. ○ Participating in an external wellbeing/health program not related to the school e.g. Ted Noffs or Steps program. ○ Special events not related to school e.g. attendance at court or other legal hearings or meetings associated with hearings or transition day visits to another school (without teacher supervision). <p>Absences due to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ A misadventure, unforeseen or unavoidable event (e.g. bus ran late). ○ External medical/doctor's appointment with health care professionals including counselling or dental treatment. ○ Extended family travel/overseas exchange supported by the principal (5 days to <12 months). ○ The bereavement of a person with whom the student has a close, significant or family relationship, includes attending a funeral. ○ Religious/cultural reasons e.g. attendance at a recognised religious or ceremonial 		<p><i>ensure the student is able to access education during their absence/reduced timetable.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Part time attendance arrangements which are greater than 5 weeks require an Exemption Certificate.</i>

Explained Authorised Absence Reasons

Record	General description	Counted	Additional notes
	<p>activity e.g. participation in NAIDOC week.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ A natural disaster or extreme weather event which prevents the student from attending school. 		
E - Excursion	An absence due to a student attending an organised optional curriculum/enrichment activity off school grounds with school staff supervision.	No	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A separate roll can be created through 'Excursion' functionality in SAS. Absences can then be recorded using bulk absences. • If the excursion is for the whole class, the class should be cancelled in PxP with the reason entered as 'excursion'.
I - Approved Education Course – offsite	<p>An absence due to a student attending an approved education course where the student is not required to attend their enrolled school and is receiving education at another location. Examples include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Accessing Distance Education - a part time student who is also registered for home education and/or - external agency/community programs i.e., Booyah (PCYC). 	No	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'Approved Education Course (offsite)' differs from an 'Excursion', as an excursion requires school staff supervision. • If a student fails to attend the offsite education provider, their attendance record in SAS must be updated to reflect their absence. • An incursion should be created to account for a student's absence from class/activity on school grounds in a high school or college. The student should be marked absent in PxP No absence record should be present in School Attendance other than the incursion. • Absences related to programs/courses that are not education based such as wellbeing, alcohol and drug related courses should be marked as 'Leave'. • Students attending Muliyan, PIEC and SIEC should be marked using enrolment status as 'Leave of Absence' (deferred) at their mainstream school. This takes the student off all rolls at the 'home school', the IEC or Muliyan then marks the roll in SAS.
H - Mutually Agreed Leave	Absence where there is mutual agreement between the school and parent/carer that a student is not required to attend school for	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This code should not be used for students on exemptions or alternative education programs.

Explained Authorised Absence Reasons

Record	General description	Counted	Additional notes
	<p>part of the day, for reasons relating to their wellbeing, or to avoid a significant behavioural incident from occurring.</p> <p>This code <i>should not</i> be applied for longer-term part-time attendance arrangements.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> For more information on how this code should be applied refer to Section 3.7 of Suspension, Transfer or Exclusion of a student in ACT public schools procedure.
Z - Suspension	Absence where student is formally suspended and temporarily withdrawn from school activities and school grounds, placing them in care of their parents.	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>In-school consequence (formerly known as an in-school suspension/in school alternative program) should be managed through the major incident functionality.</i> Refer to Suspension, Transfer or Exclusion of a student in ACT public schools procedure.
N - Not Required	An absence where the student is not required to attend the school day (as determined by the school) e.g. A scheduled non-school day for kindergarten, student free day/moderation day, and preschool students who are only required for part of the week.	No	<p><i>This code should NOT be used for</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>students attending part time due to an Exemption Certificate or registered for Home Education.</i> <i>a timetabled class (HS/College) that does not run, in this case the class should be cancelled in SAS.</i> <i>students attending orientation sessions at another school.</i>
M - Exemption	An absence where the student has an approved partial or fulltime Exemption Certificate.	No	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Absences should not be recorded as 'Exemption' until the formal Exemption Certificate has been issued.</i> For more information on Exemptions refer to Exemption Certificate Procedures.
High schools and colleges			
Workplace Learning (W)	<p>An absence due to a student participating in a work experience related program. Examples include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Vocational Learning Options (VLOs); - Workplace learning/work experience (WEX); 	No	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Where a student is absent from school grounds due to attendance at a Workplace Learning Program (the program), the principal/delegated staff member is responsible for obtaining an accurate record of student</i>

Explained Authorised Absence Reasons

Record	General description	Counted	Additional notes
	- Structured Workplace Learning (SWL); or - Australian School-based Apprentice (ASbA).		<i>attendance from the workplace learning program contact officer.</i>
Structured Learning Activity (F)	An approved absence where students are provided structured learning activities to complete in lieu of attending the scheduled class.	No	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Classes that do not run due to staffing issues or scheduled flexible learning should be cancelled in PxP with the reason for cancellation: Structured Learning Activity.</i>

Explained Unauthorised Absence Reasons

Record	General description	Counted	Additional notes
Unauthorised explanation (U)	An absence where the student's parent/carer provides an explanation for an absence which is considered unacceptable/unreasonable by the principal.	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>This code can only be applied by the principal or by the enrolment officer with delegated approval of the Principal.</i> <p><i>Examples include:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>where a parent/carer notifies that their child has been away sick for four weeks however is unable to provide a medical certificate or statutory declaration.</i>
Truancy (T)	An absence where the student's parent/carer and the school consider the student to have been at an unsanctioned alternative location and failed to attend or left the school without school/parent/carer approval, (also known as 'off school grounds truancy').	Yes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Parent/carer should be notified as soon as a student is identified as truant.</i> <i>In high schools, where truancy occurs on school grounds, absences should be managed through the truancy wizard functionality in SAS.</i>

Incursions

Incursions account for student absences from classes and activities **and the student must be on school grounds.**

Record	General description	Counted	General Description
<p>Incursion (Different types can be created at the school level).</p>	<p>An absence from class where the student attends an activity/service or program on school grounds. e.g. career adviser, youth worker and school psychologist appointments.</p>	<p>No</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The absence entry must be created and closed at the time of the incursion.</i> • <i>Activities functionality in SAS can be used to create a cohort of students who attend a program or group activity on school grounds e.g. band, dance, sports program and academic events/exams.</i>
<p>Sickbay (incursion type)</p>	<p>An absence from class while the student attends sick bay.</p>	<p>No</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>This can be populated through 'Sickbay' functionality in SAS.</i>
<p>In-school Consequence (incursion type)</p>	<p>An absence when a student is excluded from regular school activities and is required to participate in an alternative program at school.</p>	<p>No</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Formerly known as 'in-school suspensions/in school alternative program'.</i>

Appendix 3: Attendance Advice Slip and Attendance Letters 1 & 2

Dear <Parent Name>

Re: Attendance Advice Slip - outstanding unexplained absence

I am aware that (insert child/young person’s name) has unexplained absences from school on the following dates this year:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

The school has tried to contact you on several occasions to discuss why (insert name) was not at school on these dates.

Please contact us as soon as possible or within 10 school days of the date of this Attendance Advice Slip to explain your child’s absence from school.

I understand that there are many circumstances that can impact on a student’s engagement, connection and attendance. If you have concerns regarding the engagement of your child or young person, I encourage you to contact the school as soon as possible so that we can assist you.

Yours sincerely
(insert name)
(date)

OR

Dear <Parent Name>

We note that (insert child/young person’s name) has unexplained absences on the following dates:

1)	5)
2)	6)
3)	7)
4)	

Please contact the school on (insert phone number) to provide reasons for your child’s absence from school.

Yours sincerely

(insert name)
(date)
Position Title
Phone number
Email Address

Attendance Advice Letter 1

Dear (insert name/s Parent/Carer)

Re: Attendance Advice Letter - outstanding unexplained absences

According to our records as of (insert date), (insert name of child) has had seven (or more) unexplained absences from school and or timetabled activities. Please find attached a copy of (insert child's name)'s unexplained absences.

An unexplained absence is an absence where no explanation has been provided to describe the reason for your child's absence from school.

Under the *Education Act 2004 Section 10A* and the *Attendance at ACT Public Schools Procedure (Section 11.1)* parents are responsible for advising the school of any absences and providing a reasonable excuse.

As the principal, I am required to contact parents when a student has seven or more unexplained absences as per section.

An explanation for each of the absences marked in the attachment with an 'A' is required and can be provided by

- calling the school on the telephone number above;
- emailing the school on the email address above; or
- sending in a note with (insert child's name) to their roll or class teacher.

This information is required within 10 school days of the date on this letter.

The ACT Education Directorate's ***Compulsory Education: Student Enrolment and Attendance policy*** and associated procedures are available on the ACT Education Directorate's website at www.education.act.gov.au/publications_and_policies/policies under the School Attendance section.

I understand that there are a range of circumstances that can impact on a student's engagement, connection and attendance at school. The school is committed to working with you and your child to support your child's attendance and engagement.

Please contact me, the deputy principal, your child's year coordinator or teacher to discuss your concerns.

Yours sincerely

(principal)

(date)

DRAFT Attendance Advice Letter 2

Dear (insert name/s Parent/Carer)

Re: Attendance Advice Letter - outstanding unexplained absences

I am writing to you about (insert student first name) attendance. I wrote to you previously on (insert date of first attendance letter) about (insert student's first name) unexplained absences.

As advised in the letter, under the *Education Act 2004 (Section 10A)* and the *Student Attendance and Roll Marking Procedure (Section 11.1)*, parents/carers have a legal responsibility to inform the school of a child's absence and provide a reasonable excuse for all absences from school.

As the principal, I am required to contact parents and carers if a student has seven or more unexplained absences. Our policies and procedures are available on the ACT Education Directorate's website: www.education.act.gov.au/publications_and_policies/policies under the School Attendance section.

Parents/carers are required to inform the school of the child's absence, stating the reason for their absence. According to our records {current_date}, your child has seven (or more) unexplained absences. Attached is a copy from our records of his/her absences. Those marked with an 'A' are considered to be 'unexplained'.

In my letter of (insert date) I requested that you contact the school via phone, email, in person or in writing in the form of a brief note to your child's roll or class teacher with an explanation of (insert student name) unexplained absences.

I have been advised that an explanation has not been provided to the school. If this is not the case and you have provided explanations for (insert student's first name), please call the deputy principal (insert name) on (insert telephone number) to discuss.

As stated in our first letter we acknowledge that there are many circumstances that may impact on a student's engagement, connection and attendance at school, and we are here to provide support if needed. Please contact the school on (insert number) to make an appointment with (insert name and role) within 10 school days to discuss (insert student's first name)'s educational needs and requirements.

We are committed to ensuring that all young people experience successful lifelong learning opportunities, and we want to work with you to support this in relation to (insert child's first name). I am required to contact the Education Support Office if you do not provide an explanation for (insert child's) unexplained absences and non-compliance official procedures will be commenced.

I look forward to continuing to work in partnership with you to support (insert name of child)'s attendance at school.

Yours sincerely

(principal)

(date)

Appendix 4: Non-attendance flowchart



Appendix 5: Parent Factsheet: School Attendance Requirements



Why is attending school important?

Going to school every day is the single most important part of your child's education, they learn new things every day. Children and young people who regularly attend school and complete Year 12 or an equivalent qualification have better health outcomes, better employment outcomes, and higher incomes across their lives.

What do I need to do if my child is going to be absent from school?

If your child is sick or absent, you are required to notify the school as soon as possible **on the day of absence** using one of the following methods:

- a) **a written explanation** via a note, email or text message containing the student's name, date of absence(s) and reasons for absence(s)
- b) **a verbal explanation** through either a phone call or visit to the school
- c) any other form of **communication agreed by the principal**.
- d) **a medical certificate** - principals may request medical certificates or other documentation when absences explained as being due to sickness indicate a pattern of non-attendance or are greater than 10 consecutive school days in duration.

What is my responsibility?

You are legally required to ensure your child attends school every day or you must provide an explanation for their absence. You should let the school know in advance of any upcoming absences or let them know in the morning if your child won't be at school. In order for schools to implement the same day notification requirement, it's essential that you provide the school with your most up-to-date contact details. Generally, one notification will be sent per family. Should there be circumstances that require both parents/carers to be notified, please contact the school to make the necessary arrangements.

Why do I need to notify the school if my child is absent?

Schools are legally required to maintain an accurate register of attendance of every student on every day when the school is open for attendance. Notifying the school of your child's absence either prior to, or on the day that they will be away, helps ensure the safety and wellbeing of children and will fulfil your legal responsibility.

Schools contact parents/carers as soon as practicable on the same day of an unexplained student absence. If your child is absent on a particular day and you have not contacted the school to explain why, the absence will be marked as unexplained.

What is the school's responsibility?

The school must notify you of an unexplained absence in relation to your child as soon as practicable on the same day. Schools will let you know either through SMS, phone call or email. If you can't be reached because the school does not have your correct contact details (i.e. changed phone number, SMS/email failure notification received etc.), the school will attempt to make contact with any emergency contact/s nominated on your child's file held by the school. Where possible, this contact will be made on the same day of the unexplained absence.

Where can I learn more about the process for managing student absences?

Ask your school for a copy of the ***School Attendance Procedures*** which outlines the school's procedures for monitoring, recording and following-up of student absences. Or alternatively refer to the ACT Education Directorate's ACT Public School Attendance and Roll Marking Procedures at www.education.act.gov.au/publications_and_policies/policies