

# POLICY

## Student Absenteeism

Responsibility of: School Enrolment and Attendance Team  
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### 1. POLICY

Chronic absenteeism in all NT Government schools must be addressed in accordance with this policy and the *Student Absenteeism Guidelines*. Further information is provided in the Student Absenteeism FAQs.

### 2. DEFINITIONS

**“child of compulsory school age”** means a child of six years or over and below the minimum school leaving age.

**“minimum school leaving age”** means the age when the child completes year 10 of secondary education or the age of 17 years, whichever is the earlier. Where a child completes Year 10 but is not yet 17, they must then participate in education, training or employment until they turn 17.

**“authorised person”** means a person authorised by the Chief Executive pursuant to section 25 of the *Education Act*.

**“parent”** includes the person who has the actual custody of a child and the person with whom a child resides. This may include biological parents, grandparents, carers, uncles/aunties or other persons with whom the child may be residing at any given time.

A **“child living independently”** is a child is of or above the aged of 14 years and not living with a parent. The child is also taken to be living independently, although living with a parent, if the parent is unable to control the child’s behaviour to the extent necessary to ensure compliance with Part 4 of the *Education Act*.

**“absenteeism”** means unexplained non-attendance at school on a day that instruction is provided at the school.

**“chronic absenteeism”** means a significant pattern of unexplained absences, whether on consecutive days or otherwise, which adversely affects a student’s progress.

**“Student Administration Management System (SAMS)”** is the electronic Student Administration Management System which is used by all NT Government schools to record and report student attendance.

### **3 BUSINESS NEED**

Attendance at school for a child of compulsory school age is a legislative requirement under the Northern Territory *Education Act* and consistent procedures to be followed by all schools in addressing absenteeism are required to enhance the effectiveness of the department’s endeavor to promote increased enrolment and improved attendance rates in schools.

### **4 RESPONSIBILITIES**

#### **Parents**

It is a parent’s **legal** responsibility to ensure that their child of compulsory school age attends school and to notify the school and provide a reason acceptable to the department and the principal for their child’s absence(s) from school.

#### **The Department**

The department will work with schools, families and communities to optimise student attendance at school, and takes the lead in the implementation of Part 4 of the *Education Act*.

#### **Director School Performance**

The Director School Performance must work with principals and provide leadership to ensure that this policy is implemented in all of their schools.

#### **Principals**

Principals have a key role in implementing the department’s policies and procedures related to enrolment and student attendance by:

- developing and implementing a School Attendance Plan for their school.
- monitoring student absenteeism and following up on unexplained absences.
- implementing school initiated strategies addressing individual student absenteeism.
- ensure the quality and accuracy of attendance records in SAMS and school rolls (refer *Recording Student Attendance Policy*).
- ensuring the proper filing of all documentation relevant to student absenteeism in Student Record Folders etc (refer the *General Disposal for School Records and Storage Procedural Guidelines*) together with notation in the Student Administration Management System as per the *Student Absenteeism Guidelines*.

- arranging for follow-up with parents where unexplained absences are significant
- communicating with parents and communities in relation to the need to provide an (acceptable) explanation of a child's absence from school.
- fully complying with the *Student Absenteeism Guidelines* including, where appropriate, the issuing a Letter of Notice to a parent in keeping with the *Student Absenteeism Guidelines*.

### **Teaching Staff**

All teaching staff in a school must;

- accurately record student attendance (refer the *Recording Student Attendance Policy*).
- encourage and promote regular school attendance amongst the students they teach.
- monitor the attendance of individual students and alert support staff to non-attendance which may be of concern/require follow-up.

### **Support staff**

- Home Liaison Officers (HLOs) and Aboriginal and Islander Education Workers (AIEWs) will follow up on student absenteeism at the direction of the principals.
- Schools without an AIEW/HLO will utilise other school staff as appropriate.
- Where appropriate School Counsellors and Wellbeing Behavior Officers will also work with AIEWs and HLOs in case managing students with regular/significant un-notified absenteeism.
- Communicate with parents/guardians and communities what constitutes a sanctioned absence, whether notified or not, for student absenteeism.

### **SAMS Operators/Attendance Data Entry**

Must ensure that unexplained absences are updated in SAMS with information as it is received to accurately reflect reasons for student non-attendance (refer *Recording Student Attendance Policy* and approved DET SAMS Attendance Codes).

## **Attendance and Truancy Officers**

Attendance and Truancy Officers will work with the school and parents where a child has been referred by a school to the Enrolment and Attendance team. They will also assist schools and communities, where practical, to develop and implement whole of community attendance plans.

### **5 RELATED POLICIES**

Recording Student Attendance  
Student Enrolment Procedures

### **6 REFERENCE DOCUMENTS**

*NT Education Act*  
Student Absenteeism Guidelines  
Every Child Every Day - Ensuring enrolment, attendance and participation Flow Chart