

Appendix 5: Parent Factsheet: School Attendance Requirements



ACT
Government
Education

PARENT FACTSHEET

School Attendance

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.

ACT Public School Student Attendance and Roll Marking Procedure [00047/01] is the unique identifier of this document. It is the responsibility of the user to verify that this is the current and complete version of the document, available on the Directorate's website at http://www.education.act.gov.au/publications_and_policies/policy_a-z.