

Attendance

Policy Scope

This policy relates to ACC Singleton Ltd.

Legislation

The Education Act 1990 and the Education Amendment (School Attendance) Bill 2009 state that it is the parent or guardian's duty to ensure that their child(ren) 'attend the school at all times when the school is open for the child's instruction or participation in school activities except when reasonable causes prevent attendance.

Policy

Students at ACC are expected to attend normal school hours every day of each term. In the event that a student is not in attendance, the college requires parents or guardians to provide an explanation for their child's absence from school.

In order to promote a shared understanding of the importance of attending school, the school:

- is committed to promoting the key messages of "Every Day Counts."
- believes all children should be enrolled at school and attend school all day, every school day.
- believes punctuality, which engenders a healthy respect for work and study, is considered very important.
- monitors, communicates and implements strategies to improve regular school attendance.
- believes truanting can place a student in unsafe situations and impact on their future employability and life choices.
- believes attendance at school is the responsibility of everyone in the community.

The Register of Enrolments

1. The Manager of Administration and the Administration Officers are responsible for the maintenance of the register of enrolments.
2. All student details are maintained in the Quickschools Student Information System. This information includes:
 - a. The name, age and address of students.
 - b. The name and contact telephone number of parents and/or guardians.
 - c. The date of enrolment and, where appropriate, the date of leaving the school and the student's destination.
 - d. The former school (for students 6 years or older)
 - e. The next school destination (for students 17 years or younger)
3. In the event that the next school destination is not provided, refer to the Enrolment Policy for the notification process to the Department of Education Home Liaison Officer.
4. Historical data (prior to the school's implementation of Quickschools) is preserved in the school's Google Drive system in a spreadsheet format.

The Attendance Dataset

1. The school attendance database is located in Quickschools.
2. The attendance database includes the student's daily attendance status:
 - a. Present (For variations - Refer to the School Attendance Register Codes)
 - b. Absence Not Yet Explained (a)
 - c. Late (Pa)
 - d. Absent With Explanation (Refer to the School Attendance Register Codes)
 - e. Half-Day Absence (Pa)
3. The Administration Officer adds a Reason for Absence and the relevant School Attendance Register Code when advised by the parent to the dataset.

Archiving of Attendance Records

1. In the event that a student leaves the school, the Administration Officer will change the status of the student from active to archived in Quickschools.
2. Quickschools retains all student records and attendance records while they are enrolled in school and after they have left the college.
3. The school acknowledges the requirement to:
 - a. Retain the Register of Enrolments for five years after a student leaves the school
 - b. Retain the daily attendance record for seven years after the student leaves the school
4. The data in Quickschools is backed up across two web servers and the data is also backed up through a data snapshot process on a nightly basis.

On Campus Procedures

The Attendance Process for the School Day

1. The classroom teacher will use the Quickschools electronic database, accessible on their laptop, to mark the official attendance at the beginning of the school day.
2. Students who are not present during the marking of attendance are to be recorded as absent. The Quickschools electronic database refers the list of absent students to the school office.
3. Students who arrive after the beginning of the school day are to report to the school office prior to going to class where the school administrator will change their status from absent to late. The student will be given a Late Slip and is required to hand it to their teacher as they enter the classroom.
4. If a student does not possess a Late Slip, they will be sent back to the school office to obtain one.
5. When a student is marked absent from school, the school administrator is to check if the school has been notified of the student's absence verbally or in writing by the parent or guardian. **This check is to occur no later than 11:00AM.**
 - a. **If the student is absent and there is no record of an explanation from a parent or guardian, the school administrator will send an SMS to the parent notifying them that their child is not at school.**
 - b. If the parent or guardian has provided a written explanation, the school administrator will put a copy of the explanation into the student file and mark the absence record on the Quickschools electronic database as absent with explanation.
 - c. If the parent or guardian has not provided a verbal or written explanation, the school administrator will leave the absence record as "absent without explanation".
6. The school administrator is to follow up each absence by sending an email note requesting an explanation from the parent or guardian within a 7 day timeframe from the first day of any period of absence.
7. If the school does not receive an explanation of the absence from the parents within 7 days, the principal or delegate will take all reasonable measures to contact the parents within 2 school days after the 7 day timeframe has elapsed (if contact has not already been made). If contact cannot be made or an explanation not given, the Principal will write a formal letter asking to conduct a formal meeting with the parents.

Casual teachers, off-site activities and limited access to the internet or Quickschools.

1. Casual Teachers are provided with a hardcopy of the class roll and are required to send it to the school office
2. In the event of limited access to Quickschools (sports carnivals, school camps, excursions, internet connectivity problems etc) a hard copy of the roll is taken and then sent to the school office by either a student runner, phoned, emailed or messaged.

How does the school ensure that attendance records are accurate each school day?

1. If an attendance roll has not been taken, the school administrator will contact the teacher by either phone or a student messenger.
2. The school administrator emails a list of absent students to all staff each day.
3. Teaching staff are required to check this list against their own attendance records and inform the school administrator immediately of any errors.
4. If an error has occurred, the teacher responsible is notified.
5. In the event that a teacher continues to produce attendance errors or forget to mark the roll, the Principal is informed.

Monitoring the attendance of Year 12 students

1. Year 12 students who are permitted to arrive late or leave early are required to sign in and out at the school office and ensure that a school administrator has been informed.
2. The school administrator will check their attendance against the Quickschools attendance database.
3. Precise times of arrival or departure will be recorded by the school administrator.
4. Students participating in regular, timetabled school activities such as vocational education training that necessitate them leaving school premises will be provided with a letter from the school authorising their absence from the school to carry out those activities.
5. Any concerns relating to Year 12 student flexible attendance will be referred to the Principal.

How does the school monitor students leaving school during school hours?

1. Parents or guardians are to notify the school office if their student is leaving school during school hours.
2. Precise times of arrival or departure will be recorded by the school administrator.
3. The school administrator will inform the classroom teacher if a student is going to leave school during school hours.
4. The classroom teacher will send the student to the school office at the time of departure.
5. Students are not permitted to leave the school unless formal arrangements are made through the school office.
6. Parents and guardians are not permitted to collect their child from a classroom.

When can a student be granted exemption from attendance?

1. The principal has the authority to grant a Certificate of Exemption (as per Section 25 of the Education Act 1990) for the following:
 - a. sick leave to students whose absences are satisfactorily explained as being due to illness.
 - b. an exemption from school attendance for periods totalling up to 100 days in a 12 month period for any one student
 - c. full-time apprenticeship or traineeship before completing Year 10. Approval will mean exemption from attendance at school totalling up to 100 days in a 12 month period for any one student

- d. part-time apprenticeship or traineeship before completing Year 10 totalling up to 100 days in a 12 month period for any one student.
2. Certificates of Exemption will be copied and maintained in the student's file.
3. Certificates of Exemption can be granted after an absence has occurred.

Applications for Leave due to Travel

1. Either local or international, is no longer considered eligible for consideration as an exemption under the Exemptions from Attendance and Enrolment. Parents or applicants are required to complete an Application for Extended Leave and it is at the principal's discretion to accept the reason provided by the parent or applicant relating to the travel request.
2. The principal can request travel documentation from the parent, including a travel itinerary or e ticket, as the school needs evidence of the travel which must be attached to the application.
3. There is no minimum or maximum period of time that a parent may request leave for the student, however, if the leave request exceeds a school term, enrolment in distance education or another school may be considered.
4. If the principal accepts the reason and agrees to grant a period of leave to the student then the principal will complete a Certificate of Extended Leave and record 'L' for the given period on the school's attendance register. The parent should be issued with the original Certificate of Extended Leave (as they may be required to produce the Certificate on demand from the Department of Immigration) and a copy of the Certificate and the application should be kept on the student's file. Related documents are available from the AIS.

The School monitors and manages Regular Non-Attendance as follows:

1. Reports are generated regularly and provided to the Management Group (School Executive - Principal, Curriculum Coordinator and Administration Coordinator) for review.
2. The college may observe trends in student attendance which identify regular non-attendance at the college.
3. A child is considered to have an unsatisfactory school attendance when they have:
 - a. regular absences without explanation (despite follow-up from the school)
 - b. regular absences and explanations provided by parents are not accepted by the principal, or
 - c. extended periods of absence without an explanation or the explanation is not accepted by the principal. An extended period of absence may be consecutive or irregular patterns of non-attendance.
4. The Principal or their delegate will notify the parent or guardian and request an explanation of the regular non-attendance.
5. If the non-attendance is not resolved, the Principal or their delegate will write to the parent/guardian requesting an immediate resolution.
6. The school will implement strategies for improving attendance in attempting to restore a student's attendance. For example a student may be placed on a plan to improve attendance, which outlines agreed actions and the persons responsible (e.g.

the student, the parent/s and the school), with the intention of restoring the student's attendance to a satisfactory level.

7. The principal may seek further advice and assistance about attendance plans from the AIS Student Services Team. If strategies such as an attendance plan are not successful in restoring the attendance of the student then further action may be pursued.
8. Failing resolution, the college will unenroll the student.

Frequent absences being explained as illnesses?

1. Where frequent absences are explained as being due to illness, the principal will consult with parents regarding the health care needs of the child.
2. The Principal can request that the parents provide a medical certificate if they have concerns with the explanation provided, or where there is a history of poor attendance.
3. Where the principal has concerns about the medical certificates being produced for absences they can ask the parents to request that the medical certificate states "the child is unfit for school" on specified dates.
4. If the principal has ongoing concerns they can request the parent's consent for a doctor to provide information to the school about their child's health condition. It is essential the school has all relevant information so that the learning and health care needs of the student can be addressed. If the request is denied or if the principal is still not satisfied with the reason for absence, they can record the absence as 'unjustified'. The principal must consider whether the habitual absence or parental attitude places the child or young person at suspected risk of harm.
5. The principal will seek information from prescribed bodies under Chapter 16A of the Children and Young Persons (Care and Protection) Act 1998 where they have ongoing concerns regarding a student's safety, welfare or wellbeing. They should also contact the Child Well-being Unit (CWU) or if they believe the student is at risk of significant harm the police.

Policy Review

On change of legislation or at the direction of the School Board of ACC Singleton Ltd.

Policy Version

4.0

Appendix 1

School Attendance Register Codes

Attendance Register Codes – Explanation of Student Absence

The symbol 'X' is to be used for the first and last day that the student attended for each term.

Schools must use the following symbols to record an absence or variation in attendance, *in addition to* the appropriate attendance register code shown on the following pages.

Symbol	Meaning
a	The student was absent for the whole day
Pa	The students was late or was absent for part of the day. The time of arrival or departure must be recorded.

The following attendance register codes are to be used to record the explanation of student absence and **are counted** for statistical purposes.

Symbols to be used for explanation of student absence		
Symbol	Meaning	Notes
A	The student's absence is unexplained or unjustified. This symbol must be used if no explanation has been provided by parents within seven days of the occurrence of an absence or the explanation is not accepted by the principal It is at the principal's discretion to accept or not accept the explanation provided.	To be also used if the principal does not accept that an absence (e.g. for extended leave/travel during school term) is in the student's best interests and that the reason is unjustified.
S	The student's absence is due to sickness or as the result of a medical or paramedical appointment. In these cases: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - a medical certificate is provided or - the absence was due to sickness and the principal accepts this explanation. Principals may request a medical certificate in addition to explanations if the explanation is doubted, or the student has a history of unsatisfactory attendance. 	
L	An explanation of the absence is provided which has been accepted by the principal. This may be due to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - misadventure or unforeseen event - participation in special events not related to the school - domestic necessity such as serious illness of an immediate family member - attendance at funerals - travel in Australia and overseas - recognised religious festivals or ceremonial occasions. 	Note that this code is to be used if the reason for the absence (e.g. extended leave/travel) is accepted by the principal. The principal may consider an Application for Extended Leave/Travel from parents, and provide a Certificate for Extended Leave/Travel, if approved.

E	The student was suspended from school	

Attendance Register Codes – Variation in attendance

Only the following attendance register codes must be used to record a variation in attendance – they are **not** counted as an absence for statistical purposes. In addition to recording the reason for a variation in attendance, the duration of the variation must be recorded.

Symbols to be used for explanation of student absence		
Symbol	Meaning	Notes
M	The student was exempted from attending school and a Certificate of Exemption has been issued by a delegated officer.	
F	The student is participating in a flexible timetable and not present because they are not required to be at school. This could include participation in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - HSC Pathways Program - Best Start Assessments - Trial or HSC examinations - VET courses 	The “F” code is no longer only for senior students participating in a flexible timetable. The code should also be used in independent schools for students attending external tutorial centres and other programs that are school authorised.
B	The student is absent from the school on official school business. This symbol is recorded where the principal approves the student leaving the school site to undertake, for example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - work experience - school sport (state and national events) - school excursions - student exchange 	Note that where the “B” code is used for sport, it is only when the student is representing the school at state and national events. If this is not the case, then an Exemption from Enrolment should be considered.
H	The student is enrolled in a school and is required or approved to be attending an alternative educational setting on a sessional or full time basis. The symbol is recorded where a student accesses education settings separate to their mainstream school such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - tutorial centre and programs - behaviour schools - juvenile justice - hospital schools - distance education 	In most cases this code will only be used by government schools, with the exception of students from non-government schools attending hospital schools. The “F” code, not the “H” code is to be used by independent schools for students attending external tutorial centres and programs that are school authorised.