
Theodore Primary School Attendance Policy and Procedures

This policy and procedure should be read in conjunction with:

ACTED Attendance at ACT Public Schools Policy and

ACTED Education Participation (Enrolment and Attendance) Policy

This procedure applies to all children of compulsory education age enrolled at Theodore Primary School.

A child is required to be enrolled and attend school or apply to be registered for home education no later than 14 school term days after the day the child turns six years old or begins to live in the ACT.

Parent/carers are responsible for notifying the school of their child's absence. At Theodore Primary School parent/carers can notify the school of their child's absence by phone, email, written note or reply to the daily SMS sent to families. Parent/carers do not have to meet the school attendance requirement on a particular day if they have a reasonable excuse for the child not attending school on that day.

Examples of a 'reasonable excuse' for a child's absence may include:

- illness, including recovery from major illness, injury or medical condition
- medical or dental treatment
- bereavement
- religious or cultural observation
- sanctioned extended absence in relation to children of travelling families
- 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, or
- participation in interstate, national, or international academic or sporting event or equivalent.

Principals are required to follow-up unexplained absences. When unexplained absences reach a maximum of seven days in a school year, principals will commence official procedures to ensure that students meet the school attendance requirement, in consultation with their School Network Leader. Partial day unexplained absences will be counted as one day.

Procedures for following up unexplained absences:

Class teacher initial communication

When the class teacher becomes aware of a child being absent for seven days in a term without reasonable explanation, they will notify their team leader. The class teacher makes initial contact with the family to enquire about the child's absence and encourages their return to school. The class teacher also offers the family a chance to have a support meeting at school. The classroom teacher records the contact as a meeting on Sentral.

School Leader follow-up

If the child's attendance does not improve after the initial classroom teacher communication, the class teacher refers this to their team leader. The team leader makes a follow-up communication with the parent/carer and asks them to come to the school for a meeting to create a plan to support the child's regular attendance at school. This meeting could involve the classroom teacher and/or the Family and Community Co-ordinator or other relevant staff such as the principal, deputy, DECO or school psychologist. The school leader records the contact with the family as a meeting on Sentral.

Principal/Deputy Principal Intervention

If the child's attendance does not improve the child is referred to the principal/deputy principal by the classroom teacher, team leader or administration staff. The principal/deputy principal will contact the parent/carers to advise them that a formal letter will be dispatched, advising them of their responsibility to ensure their child attends school regularly. This letter will be generated from Sentral and sent to the parent/carer via email and as a hard copy in the mail. The letter advises the parent/carer to contact the school within 7 days to arrange a meeting to discuss support for the child to attend school regularly. If this meeting takes place it will be recorded as a meeting on Sentral.

Parent/carers who fail to contact the school or attend a meeting after the initial letter is dispatched will receive a second letter and further follow-up contact from the principal/deputy principal. In this communication the parent/carer will be told that a report will be made to Child Youth Protection Services and a referral made to NSET.

August 2019

Due for review in 2021

