

## Related Policies

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Enrolment Policy for Catholic Systemic Schools

## Purpose

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- To clarify the responsibilities of ACT Catholic System schools in encouraging attendance, reporting and dealing with absenteeism as determined in the *Education Act 2004* (the Act)
- To clarify the statutory obligations or parents under the Act
- To provide consistency in school attendance record keeping procedures throughout the ACT Catholic School System
- To ensure that attendance data is credible and accurate

Attendance records may be required as proof of a student's enrolment and attendance for a variety of purposes, such as eligibility for Youth Allowance or matters being dealt with by the Family Law Court.

## Policy

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This policy outlines the responsibilities of schools in the ACT Catholic School System (the System) regarding student enrolment and attendance.

## Definitions

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### **Approval Statements**

This is a formal statement issued by the Chief Executive permitting a child or young person to engage in specific employment or training for a defined period

### **Attendance Records**

Any and all hard copy documents or electronic records, which in some way record both the attendance and non-attendance of a child at school, scheduled sessions at the school and/or an approved educational course

### **Authorised Person**

A person appointed by the Chief Executive of ACT Education and Training Directorate (the Directorate) under Section 119 of the Act

### **Compulsory School Age**

A child is of compulsory school age if the child is at least 6 years old and under the age that the first of the following happens: the child completes Year 12 or the child is 17 years old

### **Exemption Certificate**

Is a certificate issued by the Chief Executive exempting a child from the requirement to be enrolled with an education provider or registered for home education; or the full-time participation requirement

### **The System's record keeping system**

The computer application and database used in the System to record details of student enrolments and related matters. This is currently known as MAZE

**Parent**

A person having parental responsibility for a child under the *Children and Young People Act 2008*, including a person who is a carer, i.e. a person who provides regular and substantial care for the child or young person

**Strict Liability Offence**

An offence that does not require proof of negligence or intent. It applies irrespective of a person taking reasonable care

**Student**

A person who is enrolled as a student in a school in accordance with section 100 of the ACT

**Procedures**

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**1. Enrolment Procedures**

- 1.1. At the time of enrolment of the child, proof of residency, in the form of an electricity account, tenancy agreement, current driver's licence or similar, must be shown to the Principal of the school, or the Principal's delegate. Proof of age and identity (e.g. a birth certificate or passport and immunization records) must also be shown to the Principal, or the Principal's delegate, at the time of enrolment
- 1.2. Parents/carers will be asked to update student residential data at the beginning of each year.

**2. Unique Identification Numbers**

- 2.1. All Schools will be allocated a block of unique identification numbers (ID numbers). These ID numbers must be used by the school when enrolling a child
- 2.2. The unique identification number will also be used when a child is provisionally registered or registered for home education
- 2.3. This identifying number will remain the same throughout the child's education in the ACT even when the child changes schools, moves between the government and non-government sectors or is home educated at any point.

**3. Keeping of registers and records of enrolments and attendances**

- 3.1. The Act provides for the keeping of registers and records of enrolment in schools and attendance at school in sections 99 and 100. Section 100 (1) (b) of the Act requires that a record of the attendance or non-attendance of a student must be kept for every day when the school is open for attendance
- 3.2. Attendance records must clearly show whether the child was present and if not, the reason for the absence in all cases.

**4. Entering of data in registers of enrolment and records of attendance**

- 4.1. Enrolment information should be entered directly onto the System's record keeping system (MAZE) by the school. The Catholic Education Office has access to each school's MAZE data
- 4.2. A central register of enrolment and attendance is kept by the Directorate
- 4.3. Relevant information recorded in MAZE, such as discontinued enrolment, is provided to the central register by the Catholic Education Office.

**5. Name under which a child is enrolled**

- 5.1. The entry of enrolment on the System's record keeping system must indicate the birth certificate name of the student. This is the name under which the student is officially enrolled
- 5.2. If, however, one of the following conditions apply, a Principal can enroll students under an alternative name or change existing records to indicate the new name:
  - A signed consent from both parents, indicating approval to use the new name, is provided
  - A court order is provided authorizing the use of the new name
  - A statutory declaration is provided by the enrolling parent indicating that the child has had no contact with the other parent for a period of five years and his or her whereabouts is unknown
  - A signed consent from one parent and proof that the other parent is deceased. This can take the form of a statutory declaration by the enrolling parent or a death certificate
  - A birth certificate issued in the new name
  - Proof of adoption
- 5.3. Where one of the above conditions cannot be met, no change of name is to be made and the parent requesting the name change is to be informed that no change will be made until one of the conditions can be met
- 5.4. If a parent raises a concern about their child being known under another name with a Principal, the parent must be advised that a further change would only be made if there is a court order or written agreement of both parents.

**6. Keeping of attendance records**

- 6.1. To ensure consistency in the keeping of attendance records, all schools must employ the codes outlined by the Catholic Education Office when recording absences and the reason for absences
- 6.2. Attendance records provided to a class teacher must be marked for each scheduled session as per below:
  - Preschools, each preschool session, regardless of the length of time of the session
  - Primary schools, the morning session and the afternoon session
  - Secondary colleges, each timetabled class or activity
- 6.3. When a child is on a graduated return to school (after an absence due to illness or for other reasons), s/he must be marked present for the time spent at school and absent with parental approval for the time not at school
- 6.4. The status of the child as a child on graduated return must be recorded on the child's file held by the school.

**7. Management of records**

- 7.1. Principals have a responsibility to ensure that records of all enrolments and attendance are made in accordance with Division 2 of the *Territory Records Act 2002* which outlines agency responsibilities in relation to record management by making and keeping records and ensuring accessibility of information
- 7.2. All records pertaining to enrolment and attendance must be available for inspection by an authorised person, on production of an authorised person's card. This is a legal requirement under Section 101 (1) of the *Education Act 2004*. The Principal must comply with such a request as failure to do so is a strict liability offence and may incur a fine. Other action may also be taken e.g. disciplinary action

- 7.3. Section 101 (2) of the Act states that the Chief Executive of the Directorate or an authorised person may request access to stated information about enrolments or attendances of children at the school or course during a stated period of time. Principals must comply with such a request as failure to do so is a strict liability offence and may incur a fine
- 7.4. Section 101 (3) of the Act states that an authorised person may make copies of the register of enrolments and attendances or any part of that register
- 7.5. Principals are required, under Section 101 (4) of the Act, to take reasonable steps to assist the authorised person exercising his/her functions in regard to the inspection of registers of enrolment and attendance. Failure do so is a strict liability offence and may incur a fine.

## **8. Compulsory attendance of school age children**

- 8.1. Under Section 11 of the Act, it is the parents' responsibility to ensure that a child who lives in the ACT, is of compulsory school age and is enrolled at a school attends:
- The school on every day, and during the times on every day, when school is open for attendance
  - Every activity of the school (including attendances at an approved educational course) that the school requires the child to attend
- 8.2. Parents must have a reasonable excuse for not complying with the compulsory attendance requirements in the Act
- 8.3. If parents do not have a reasonable excuse they are liable under the Act and may be fined. This is a strict liability offence
- 8.4. Examples of a 'reasonable excuse' for a child's absence might include:
- Illness, including recovery from major illness, injury or medical condition
  - Medical or dental treatment
  - Bereavement
  - Religious or cultural observation
  - Family holidays or extended visits overseas
  - Attendance at a wedding
  - Attendance at court or other legal hearings or meetings associated with hearings
  - Participation in sanctioned debates, eisteddfods, sports, musical or theatrical productions not directly arranged by the school
  - Participation in territory, interstate, national or international sporting event or equivalent
  - Sanctioned extended absence in relation to children of travelling families
- 8.5. Section 12 of the Act applies where the Chief Executive of the Directorate believes on reasonable grounds that:
- A child of compulsory school age lives in the ACT
  - The child is not enrolled at a school or registered for home education
- 8.6. Section 12 (2) of the Act states that the Chief Executive of the Directorate may give written notice to a parent of the child requiring the parent to give the Chief Executive of the Directorate the details about the child stated in the notice within 7 days after the day the parent receives the notice
- 8.7. If the Chief Executive of the Directorate gives notice to the parent, the parent must comply with the notice. Failure to do so is a strict liability offence and may incur a fine
- 8.8. If a young person wishes to engage in a training or employment alternative they must have an Approval Statement from the Directorate to do so. This does not apply to education options including study or vocational training at a registered training organisation, university or higher
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education provider. Application packs and further information about the application process are available from the Directorate website: <http://www.det.act.gov.au/> . This does not include casual work undertaken by young people in addition to their education

- 8.9. An exemption certificate may be sought when it is not appropriate to require a child or young person to be enrolled or registered, or to meet the full-time participation requirements of the Act. Examples of this include:
- An exemption from the full-time participation requirement due to health reasons
  - Undertaking an apprenticeship/traineeship
  - Part-time training/part-time work
  - Part-time education/part-time work
  - Full-time employment/graduated return to work

The Chief Executive has the authority to issue an exemption certificate. Applications and further information about the application process are available from the Directorate website: <http://www.det.act.gov.au/> .

## **9. Encouraging school attendance**

- 9.1. Based upon the provisions of the Act, schools must develop their own attendance procedures, which, where possible, should be negotiated with the school community
- 9.2. The school-based procedures must clearly state the school's policy on attendance recording, monitoring and follow up processes, including the ways in which the school will work together with the students, parents, teachers and the wider community to encourage regular attendance
- 9.3. The Principal will assess regular school attendance on a case by case basis having due regard for the individual circumstances of each child
- 9.4. The school attendance policy must be communicated to students, parents and staff at least each semester
- 9.5. Schools need to provide the information on attendance procedures to new staff and to relief teachers at the commencement of employment
- 9.6. Individual school policies must clearly outline the procedures for Principals in notifying parents of non-attendance of a child
- 9.7. Principals should be aware that the responsibility for attendance of a child lies with the parents under the Act
- 9.8. A school's policy must include provision of support and strategies to work closely with appropriate individuals, parents and community organisations having regard for social, cultural and religious factors associated with indigenous children, children from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds and socially disadvantaged children
- 9.9. The Act mandates that Principals must refer parents and children to support services when school procedures encouraging attendance are not successful
- 9.10. Further, it provides for the Principal to require the parents and the child to meet with an authorised person (see Section 102 (3)). The role of the authorised person will vary in each case depending on individual circumstances. The Principal will contact the Catholic Education Office to discuss the individual needs of the child and negotiate the involvement of an appropriate authorised person through the Non-Government Schools Section at the Directorate
- 9.11. The school attendance policy must state procedures for pre-arranged absences. The school may make available educational materials to children in some instances of pre-arranged absence

9.12. When a student leaves a school, but is still of the age of compulsory attendance, the parents must inform the school of the child's future school which is entered into the MAZE database. Failure to do so will result in the Principal making notification to the Catholic Education Office and the Directorate.

## References

Children and Young People Act 2008 (ACT)

<http://www.legislation.act.gov.au/a/2008-19/current/pdf/2008-19.pdf>

ACT Education Act 2004

<http://www.legislation.act.gov.au/a/2004-17/current/pdf/2004-17.pdf>

Territory Records Act 2002

<http://www.legislation.act.gov.au/a/2002-18/current/pdf/2002-18.pdf>

Education Options (other than school)

[http://www.det.act.gov.au/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0003/584364/Enrolment-Policy-updates.pdf](http://www.det.act.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0003/584364/Enrolment-Policy-updates.pdf)

Post Year 10 Alternatives

[http://www.det.act.gov.au/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0003/584364/Enrolment-Policy-updates.pdf](http://www.det.act.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0003/584364/Enrolment-Policy-updates.pdf)

Education Participation Requirements

[http://www.det.act.gov.au/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0003/584364/Enrolment-Policy-updates.pdf](http://www.det.act.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0003/584364/Enrolment-Policy-updates.pdf)

Non-Government School Attendance

[http://www.det.act.gov.au/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0003/584364/Enrolment-Policy-updates.pdf](http://www.det.act.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0003/584364/Enrolment-Policy-updates.pdf)

## Forms

Application for Exemption from Attendance at School (ACT)

<b>Approved By:</b>	Service Area Leadership Team
<b>Issuing Service Area:</b>	School Services
<b>Implementation Date:</b>	January 2005
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<b>CEO Contact Officer:</b>	Head, School Services
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