



Attendance Policy

Related Policies

A.C.T. Education Act
Attendance at School (ACT) CEO Policy
C.E.O. Employment Policy
Enrolment Policy

Purpose

At St Thomas the Apostle, in accordance with the *Education Act 2004*, we believe all children must attend school each day except in incidences involving sickness, family holidays, specialist appointments, or special occasions. Children need to know that school is a safe and happy place. At St Thomas the Apostle we provide 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. Staff, including new staff and relief teachers, are regularly reminded of attendance procedures.

Policy

In accordance with CEO Policy, *Attendance at School (ACT) 2013*, teachers at St Thomas';

- will work closely to ensure that all children are kept safe at school,
- will be reminded regularly of their obligation in relation to bullying and the reporting of bullying,
- will mark the roll daily and follow up unexplained absences by contacting parents,
- will ensure attendance data is recorded according to directions set out in the roll document
- will sign, date and file notes of absence,
- will report prolonged unexplained absences to the Principal who will contact the family.

Procedures

A class roll is a legal document and is a mandatory requirement for all registered schools in the A.C.T. St Thomas the Apostle Primary School, in alignment with the directions given by the A.C.T. Department of Education (non-Government Schools Office) and in consultation with the Catholic Education Office, has developed the following school policy on the marking of rolls.

The table below is in accordance with the table provided on the inside of the first page of the CLASS ROLL, as provided by the Catholic Education Office. In addition to the mandatory codes, it should be noted that the staff at St Thomas', at the request of the guidelines, have nuanced the reason/s for the codes relating to being partially present in the morning and evening, as well as the codes that refer to excursions and being absent at an alternative sanctioned program.

If attendance becomes a challenge for a student or family, teachers are committed to working closely with the appropriate individuals, parent and community organisations having regard for social, cultural and religious factors associated with indigenous students, students from culturally and linguistically diverse background and socially disadvantaged students. **If absences occur without explanation beginning with a 3 day period the teacher will report the absences to the Principal.** The Principal informs the Catholic Education Office (CEO) of serious attendance issues.

When school procedures are not successful, the Principal writes to parents, requesting that they and the student meet with an authorised person for the purposes of working together to resolve issues that may be hindering the child's regular attendance. Parents must comply with this written request. The role of the authorised person will vary in each case, depending on individual circumstances.

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: www.det.act.gov.au.

The following codes are used in class rolls at St Thomas the Apostle School:

CODE	REASON	NOTES
\	Attended in the morning.	If a child arrives after 11am they are marked as absent.
/	Attended in the afternoon.	If a child leaves before or at 1.15pm they are marked as absent.
X	Attended entire day.	Physically present at roll call for the whole of a scheduled session.
L	Absent with parental approval.	The school has received an explanation of the absence.
A	Absent without approval.	The school has not received an explanation of the absence.
S	Illness.	Absence due to an injury, illness or other medical condition.
C	Cancelled class.	The school cancels a timetabled class.
E	Excursion.	Attending any excursion organised by the school, accompanied by a staff member i.e. trip to Questacon, swimming carnival. If excursion is part-day then the roll is marked accordingly.
P	Partial attendance – late.	If a child arrives in time to be marked as present in either a morning or afternoon roll call, but is late, a note will be provided by the parent/s that details the reason/s for the lateness.
Z	Suspended.	If a student is suspended from school, in accordance with the St Thomas the Apostle SWAMP policy and the A.C.T.

		Education Act, they are marked with this code.
W	Work experience.	Attending work experience as part of the school program.
I	Absent at an alternative sanctioned program.	Attending a school sanctioned program that is not a regular part of the school curriculum. Examples include: attending A.C.T athletics carnivals, attending interstate chess championships.
D	Exemption Certificate	Exemption Certificate issued by the Director-General or delegate for ACT residents, releasing the child from their participation obligations for a specified period.

Clarifications

1. **Marking Rolls:** Rolls will be marked in the morning and the afternoon. If a child is present in the morning or afternoon, they will be marked as \ or / respectively. If a child is absent, they will be marked as 'a' in blue or black pen. When the reason for the absence is made known, the appropriate code is written above the 'a' i.e. A. This is written in either blue or black pen.
2. **Partial attendance:** if a child is late but is still marked as present for either the morning or afternoon session, a late note is required from the parent/s. If a child arrives at school late, s/he is signed in by his/her parent/s. If the parent has a note explaining the reason why s/he is late, the child takes this to the class and gives it to the teacher. If the parent/s is/are not forthcoming with a note explaining the reason for the child's lateness, the school secretary issues the child with a note to give to the class teacher (Appendix 1). The teacher then sends a note home requesting an explanation for the child's lateness.
3. **Requests for absence explanations:** if a child is absent for any reason, partial or whole day, or is late, and if parents do not send notification to the school, a note is sent home to the parents/care givers requesting an explanation. If after two requests an explanation is not forthcoming, the student will be marked absent as 'A' (see appendix 2).
4. **Verbal Confirmation:** If a parent informs a member of the school community that his/her child will be absent, the message is noted written down and passed on to the class teacher (see Appendix 3).
5. **Filing Notes:** all absence notes are collated and stapled each week (i.e., week 1, week 2). All notes are initialed/signed and dated by the class teacher/s. Notes are collated in week of absence. At the end of the term, these collated notes are sent to the front office in an A4 envelope which is labeled with the class name, the school term and the calendar year. They are archived by the Assistant Principal.
6. **Counting Absences:** At the end of each term, absences are counted and recorded in the horizontal and vertical columns. Absences marked 'I' and 'E' are not counted as absent.

7. **Collection of rolls:** Rolls are collected mid-term and at the end of term. At the end of each school term, the school rolls are collected and checked by the Assistant Principal, and signed accordingly, as per CEO policy (office keeping). At the end of the school year, they are archived.
8. **Care of Rolls:** All rolls will be covered and be labeled with the class name, year and teacher's name.

References

CEO Policy, *Attendance at School (ACT) 2013*

ACT Education Act 2004

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

ACT Application for Exemption Certificate www.det.act.gov.au

<https://intranet.cg.catholic.edu.au/StaffServices/Forms/Lists/CEO%20Forms/Attachments/470/ACT%20Application%20for%20an%20Exemption%20Certificate.pdf>

Forms

Appendix 1 Notification of Late arrival to School

Appendix 2 Absent Note

Appendix 3 Record of Verbal Notification of Absence

Approved by:	Principal
Issuing Group:	St. Thomas the Apostle Primary School
Implementation Date:	January 2008
Supersedes Policy Dated:	2005
Policy last updated:	2013
Review Date:	2015

Appendix 1



Notification of Late Arrival to School

_____ in class _____ has arrived to school at
_____ am/pm on _____.

Please circle one of the following:

A reason for late attendance is supplied (see accompanying note from parent.)

A reason for late attendance is not supplied.

Signed: _____ (secretary)

Date: _____

Appendix 2



Absent Note

Dear _____

Our records indicate that your child _____ was absent from school on the following date/dates. _____.

A written explanation of all absences is a legal requirement for our class rolls. Please assist your child's teacher in complying with these requirements by completing the form below.

My child _____ was absent on _____

because _____.

Signed _____ **Date** _____

Appendix 3



Record of Verbal Notification of Absence

Date _____

Roll Class _____

To _____

RE _____

Message

Signed _____(secretary)