

Attendance and Absence Recording Guide

Updated 27 January 2026

Ensure you refer to the current [Attendance and Absence Recording Guide](#) on the Policy and Advisory Library (PAL).

If you would like this information in an accessible format such as large print or audio, please contact the department's Wellbeing, Health and Engagement Division at student.engagement@education.vic.gov.au

Attendance and Absence Recording Guide

This guide describes the attendance and absence codes for Victorian government schools and assists schools to record attendance accurately.

Schools must record and monitor student attendance and absences to:

- meet their duty of care owed to students
- minimise the risk of reasonably foreseeable harm as a requirement of the [Education and Training Reform Act 2006 \(Vic\) \(ETRA\)](#).

The correct use of the codes will enable schools to know the whereabouts of a student at any given time, during the school day. This is important to:

- prioritise the safety and wellbeing of all students by monitoring their attendance
- assist in identifying and resolving barriers to education. If a student is absent often, they may need additional support to attend school
- verify that a parent/carer is complying with their duty under [Education and Training Reform Act 2006 \(Vic\) \(ETRA\)](#). Parents/carers must ensure that their child, if of compulsory school age, attends school at all times the school is open for instruction
- enable the department to meet reporting requirements at a state and national level.

Recording Attendance

Student attendance must be recorded **twice** per day in **primary** schools and in **every class** in **secondary** schools.

Note: for schools or campuses with alternate attendance requirements to mainstream settings, please ensure the process for marking attendance includes recording at least twice per day.

Schools must only use the codes in this Guide. Third-party software packages for recording attendance must align to the codes in this Guide.

Schools must use code **100 – Present** when a student is on-site at school, except when the student is:

- receiving on-site health and wellbeing support (**204 – Health and wellbeing, on-site**)
- participating in a school-organised sports activity (**611 – Sports**)
- undertaking an in-school suspension (**400 – Suspension, on-site**)
- helping on the school site (**603 – Student duty**).

When a student is absent from school and a reason has not yet been established, schools must use code **500 – Unexplained**. This must later be updated if an explanation is provided by the student's parent/carer.

Where a parent/carer provides an absence reason which the school does not approve, schools must use the absence code **806 – Parent choice, school unapproved** and communicate this decision to the student's parent/carer. See [Attendance PAL](#) for resources to support communication with parents about attendance.



See **ALL CODES** at a glance

Student attendance uploading requirements

Once per day, schools using a third-party software product to record attendance must ensure student attendance data is imported:

- automatically via eduHub writeback or,
- manually into CASES21.

For support using CASES21 for attendance management, see the [CASES21 Administration User Guide](#).

Absence reporting

All accountable student absences are monitored and reported by the department to determine student, school, region, and state attendance rates.

Specifically, codes which are counted as absences are:

Code	Description
200	Medical or illness
205	Healthcare appointment, off-site
208	School refusal or school can't
210	Social services or justice
211	Bereavement
212	Sorry Business
300	Truancy, off-site
401	Suspension, off-site
500	Unexplained
804	Extended family holiday
805	Religious or cultural observance
806	Parent choice, school unapproved
807	Parent choice, school approved

Unapproved Absences

When reviewing attendance, **absences of most concern are unapproved absences**.

These can indicate the need for additional support to address a student's engagement at school.

Unapproved absences are those coded:

Code	Description
300	Truancy, off-site
500	Unexplained
806	Parent choice, school unapproved



Missing **one day per fortnight** adds up to missing **four weeks** of school a year.

Inactive status/Whereabouts unknown



See **ALL CODES** at a glance

All Codes at a Glance

Click on the box of each category for further descriptions and advice on responding to absences.

Medical, health and wellbeing



*Medical or illness	200
Health and wellbeing, on-site	204
*Healthcare appointment, off-site	205
*School refusal or school can't	208

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* **Accountable absence**



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Medical, health and wellbeing

Code	Description	Advice
Medical or illness 200*	<p>Student is not at school because they:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> are unwell due to a physical or mental health concern and this is impeding their ability to be at school and learn have been injured or become unwell at school and have been sent home are in hospital have a chronic health condition or pain have menstrual or pelvic pain are receiving treatment for head lice (refer to the Head Lice policy on PAL). 	<p>Before approving an absence, a principal can take steps to confirm that the student is ill.</p> <p>A medical certificate is generally not required. However, a principal may, at their discretion, request one.</p> <p>Where a student has an ongoing health condition, this may result in ongoing absences or medical appointments during school hours. Schools are encouraged to work with parents/carers in these instances. This can support the student's attendance and engagement with their education.</p> <p>For students with a longer-term medical condition requiring an absence of 3 months or more, see 'Inactive Status'.</p>
Health and wellbeing, on-site 204	<p>Student is at school but not in their allocated class as they are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> in sick bay attending an on-site appointment (for example, Doctors in Secondary School), a dental appointment (for example, Smile Squad), NDIS support at school, or counselling with the school's Mental Health Practitioner attending a dedicated wellbeing (or other) space for support (for example, spending time in the Wellbeing Coordinator's office) undertaking a school-based re-engagement activity or support outside of the classroom but on the school site. 	<p>If consent for a student to access an on-site health and wellbeing service or support has been provided by the student, as per the department's mature minor policy, student privacy must be considered when recording the student's attendance. If necessary, the student's attendance at this time could be recorded using code 100 – Present, rather than using the health and wellbeing code.</p>
Healthcare appointment, off-site 205*	<p>Student is not at school as they are attending:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> an appointment with a medical practitioner a dental appointment an allied health appointment or assessment (including an NDIS appointment) counselling another medical appointment, off-site. 	<p>If a student has frequent healthcare appointments and/or medical absences, the school may consider seeking additional information about the student's condition, why they require significant time away from school and how the school can support the student's return.</p>
School refusal or school can't 208*	<p>Student is not at school as they are experiencing significant emotional distress around attending school and the parent/carer and school are working together to support the student and address the issues and barriers to attendance.</p>	<p>If the school and parent/carer are not working together, schools must record the absence using code 806 – Parent choice, school unapproved.</p>

* **Accountable absence**



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Family and culture

Code	Description	Advice
Bereavement 211*	<p>Student is not at school as they are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> attending a funeral away due to the death of a friend or family member. 	<p>Offer support as required.</p> <p>If the absence is related to Sorry Business use code 212.</p>
Sorry Business 212*	<p>Student is not school as they are gathering with their family due to grief or loss within the Koorie community.</p>	<p>For more information, please refer to Coding Koorie cultural absences.</p>
Extended family holiday 804*	<p>Student is not at school as they are on an extended family holiday. Their parent/carer has received prior approval from the principal for the absence and a Student Absence Learning Plan has been considered.</p>	<p>If the requirements for an extended family holiday absence are not followed, record the absence using code 806 – Parent choice, school unapproved</p> <p>For short-term holidays, such as long weekends, a parent choice absence code (i.e. 806 or 807) must be used at the school's discretion.</p>
Religious or cultural observance 805*	<p>Student is not attending school due to religious or cultural observance.</p>	<p>If the absence is related to Sorry Business use code 212.</p>
Parent choice, school unapproved 806*	<p>Student is not at school and their parent/carer has:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> provided a reason for the absence (for example, shopping, visiting friends), but the school does not consider this a reasonable excuse provided a reason for the absence, but approval has not been sought in advance or in accordance with school policy or conditions of approval (for example, requirements for extended family holiday or school refusal or school can't) advised the school that their child is unable to attend due to a requirement to work in the family business (for example, farm work, in a restaurant or shop) advised the school that the student is attending private tutoring or a re-engagement program that is not organised by the school. 	<p>If the reason provided has not been accepted, advise the parent/carer of this in writing.</p>
Parent choice, school approved 807*	<p>Student is not at school and:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> their parent/carer has provided an absence reason that does not align with any other code. Parent/carer has sought and received approval from the principal. the school has been advised that this is due to a public transport-related strike, and the student is unable to find alternative transport for that day. 	<p>This includes special circumstances, unavoidable causes, unforeseen circumstances, or an ill family member.</p> <p>It can include when a student is unable to get to school due to an emergency or a critical incident, provided that the school is aware of the situation.</p>

* **Accountable absence**



Education, curriculum and study – page 1 of 2

Code	Description	Advice
Educational activity, off-site 600	<p>Student is not at school as they are attending an off-site educational activity organised by the school, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> an extension university class school organised performing arts (for example, music class, drama) cultural education (including Koorie cultural activities. Refer to Coding Koorie cultural absences) an external exam driver education an exchange program a transition or orientation day for a new school re-engagement or behaviour support program organised by the school, off-site. 	<p>This code is not to be used for Flexible Learning Options (FLOs). If a student is absent from a FLO setting, their absence should be recorded according to the code that reflects the reason for their absence.</p> <p>See: Exempt or dual enrolment code 802 for advice on recording attendance for students in FLO settings.</p> <p>For absences due to student attendance at a contracted re-engagement program (Years 7 to 10) delivered by a Registered Training Organisation (RTO), use code 613.</p> <p>See: Re-engagement Programs (Years 7 to 10)</p>
Community service 602	The class is undertaking a community service elective.	N/A
Student duty, on-site 603	Student is helping on the school site.	N/A
Excursion 604	Student is attending a curriculum-related activity such as a museum, art gallery or local place of interest off-site.	N/A
Camp 606	Student is away for a school organised camp.	N/A
TAFE 608	<p>Student is off-site attending a:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> TAFE or VET class VET work placement school-based apprenticeship or traineeship. 	N/A
Work experience 609	Student is attending school-authorized work experience.	N/A
Study leave, off-site 612	<p>Student is not required to be at school as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> they have been given study leave a study period has been scheduled into the student's timetable there are no timetabled classes for the remainder of the day. 	<p>Schools are advised to use this code for off-site study leave only (when the student is not expected to be on-site, or when it is known they have left the school grounds).</p> <p>For absences related to end of year exams, see: Exempt or dual enrolment code 802.</p> <p>To meet their duty of care requirements, schools must ensure the requirements for students to be on-site or off-site during study periods are clear and are communicated in writing to parents/carers and students.</p>



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Code	Description	Advice
Contracted re-engagement program 613	Student is not at school as they are attending a contracted <u>Re-engagement Program (Years 7 to 10)</u> endorsed by the Regional Director.	<p>The re-engagement program provider is responsible for recording student attendance and for sharing this information with the student's base school. If a student does not attend their re-engagement program, the student's school must be notified on the day of absence and the absence recorded using the code that reflects their reason for absence.</p> <p>For students who are not at school or their re-engagement program as the program is not open full time and attendance on this day or at this time is not required, use code 802 – Exempt.</p> <p>The Navigator program is not a re-engagement program for attendance recording purposes. Students in Navigator should have their absence recorded as the code that reflects the reason for their absence.</p>
Learning from home, exceptional 624	The whole class, year level or school is learning from home in response to an emergency or critical incident.	<p>This requires approval from the Regional Director.</p> <p>See absences as a result of school operations and administration for coding situations where a school closes but remote learning is not delivered.</p>
Prep transition 626	Prep students are not at school as they are not required to attend early in the school year, or due to prep interviewing or testing.	<p>This code should only be used during Term 1.</p> <p>Schools are advised to manage the entry and exit of students on-site via their standard sign-in process for days where short term attendance is required for testing or interviewing.</p>
Modified timetable 627	Student is not at school as they are not required to attend on this day or at this time as per their modified (reduced hours) timetable arrangement.	See: <u>Modified Timetable policy</u> .



Sports and performing arts

Code	Description	Advice
Sports 611	<p>Student is participating in a school-organised sporting activity such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • school sports day • regional sporting event • training session for sports day • school arranged swimming lesson. 	For student absences due to swimming and water safety programs, use code 620 .
Swimming and water safety program 620	Students are participating in on-site or off-site swimming and water safety program as part of their health and physical education.	This code should only be used to record attendance for this specific program.

Elite sporting or performing arts

When considering an absence request due to a sporting or performing arts commitment during school hours, principals must determine if the commitment is at an elite level.

For this purpose, 'elite' is defined as competing or performing nationally or internationally through a **recognised sports or performing arts organisation**.

Recognised sports or performing arts organisations are listed on the below websites:

- [national sporting organisations](#) recognised by the Australian Sports Commission
- [state sporting associations](#) recognised by Sport and Recreation Victoria
- [artistic companies](#) recognised by Creative Australia

Recognised organisations can also be Australia-based artistic companies that contract students in a professional capacity.

Students who are absent due to elite sporting or performing arts commitments, if approved by the school, must be recorded as **807 – Parent choice, school approved**.

If a student is absent due to a sporting or performing arts commitment which the principal determines as not meeting the elite level as described above, use code **806 – Parent choice, school unapproved**.

If a student is engaged in a professional capacity in the entertainment industry during school hours, they must seek an exemption from school attendance as per the following process – [Students employed or seeking employment during school hours in the entertainment industry](#).



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Social services or justice

Code	Description	Advice
Social services or justice 210*	<p>Student is not at school because they are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • required to attend court • required to attend a supervised access visit with their parent/carer • required to meet with their youth justice case manager • in police custody • undertaking a Child Protection or Orange Door-related activity • absent due to safety concerns resulting from reported family violence • undertaking other youth justice-related activities. 	N/A
Truancy, off-site 300*	<p>Student is not at school and does not have permission to be absent. Their parent/carer:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • may be aware of the absence but does not approve, or • does not know about the absence and believes the student is at school. 	<p>If a student is truant but on the school premises (for example, not in class when they are meant to be) they must be marked as present using the code 100 – Present. Where possible, a note that they are not in class at this time should be added to their record. This will reflect that the parent/carer has met their obligation under ETRA to ensure their child attends school. It is also critical for schools to manage their duty of care obligations and have an accurate record of which students are on-site at any given time.</p>
Suspension, on-site 400	Student is undertaking a suspension on-site.	Refer to suspension guidelines .
Suspension, off-site 401*	Student is suspended and not permitted to attend school.	Refer to suspension guidelines .

* **Accountable absence**



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School operations and administration

Code	Description	Advice
Exiting 701	Student is not at school and is in the process of un-enrolling from the government school system.	A student cannot be exited from a school without a known destination. All absences must be recorded under this code until the exit process has been completed in CASES21.
Transferring 702	Student is not at school and is transferring to another government school, including post-expulsion.	A student must only be exited in CASES21 once enrolment is confirmed at the new school. All absences must be recorded under this code until the student transfer process has been completed in CASES21. Refer to PAL Transfers Policy .
Exempt or dual enrolment 802	<p>Student is not at school as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> they are in Year 11 or 12 and have finished exams, or they are not required to sit exams, so their school year has ended. This is determined by the school. they have an approved exemption for short-term employment in the entertainment industry under Ministerial Order 714 they have a dual enrolment and are attending another school or specialist setting part time on this day, such as home schooling, Virtual School Victoria or enrolment in a hospital school. <p>For students attending a contracted re-engagement program (Years 7 to 10) or a Flexible Learning Option (FLO):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the student is not able to attend as the FLO setting or contracted Re-engagement Program is not open full time and attendance on this day or at this time is not required. 	<p>Refer to PAL for further information about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> School dates policy Students employed or seeking employment during school hours in the entertainment industry Home schooling and partial enrolments.
Industrial action 901	School staff are on strike and there are no classes.	N/A
Student free 904	Students are not required to attend school due to a curriculum or student free day (for example, parent teacher interviews or report writing).	Use code 626 for Prep transition days during Term 1.
Emergency school closure 919	<p>School is temporarily closed by Regional Director as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> an emergency event directly impacts the school the department has been advised by emergency services or relevant government departments to close the site due to an emergency (for example, a pandemic, bushfire or flood) there is an essential service disruption compromising safety of the school site (for example, a power disruption with no workaround, an inability to contact 000 with no workaround). 	<p>This requires approval from the Regional Director.</p> <p>The use of this code is also suitable for circumstances where the school has enacted their pre-emptive action plan for site closure in line with Bushfire At-Risk Register (BARR) or Category 4 status (elevated fire danger day/Catastrophic fire danger day) where no relocation or learning from home option is enacted.</p>



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Late arrivals and early departures

The following codes apply when a student arrives late or departs school early.

Schools should monitor for lateness and early leaving patterns as they can be an indicator of disengagement or other pressures on the student from outside the school, such as caring responsibilities.

Code	Description
Late arrival at school, parent approved 111	Student is late to school. Their parent/carer is aware of this and has contacted the school to advise of the situation.
Early departure from school, parent approved 112	Student departed school early to attend an appointment with their parent/carer. Note: Any student sent home early because of a suspension must be recorded using code 401 – Suspension, off-site.
Late arrival at school, parent unapproved 113	Student is late to school and their parent/carer is not aware and/or has not approved this.
Early departure from school, parent unapproved 114	Student leaves school early without parent/carer approval.



Long-term absences and inactive status

A student's enrolment status must remain 'active' in CASES21 in instances where:

- they are absent for a defined and reasonable period of time and an explanation has been provided. In this instance, a 'reasonable period of time' is determined as anything less than 3 months.
- they are disengaging from school or there are ongoing attendance concerns. With support from Area staff, schools are expected to continue to work with the student and their family to:
 - identify the barriers to attendance
 - consider what supports the student needs for improved attendance.

Recording absences for students who are disengaged will help to demonstrate eligibility for some student supports, such as the Navigator program.

If a student is absent for **more than 3 months** and intending to return to the school, it may be appropriate to make their enrolment temporarily 'inactive' in CASES21. Their enrolment status must be reactivated on their return. When the 'inactive' status is selected, it is mandatory to enter an absence code. Schools must choose the absence type most appropriate to the student's situation.

This advice applies to absences of more than 3 months due to:

- extended family holiday and a [Student absence learning plan](#) has been considered
- student travelling overseas and enrolling in another school
- pregnancy with a [Student health support plan](#) and, where reasonable, a [Student absence learning plan](#) has been considered
- medical illness, including mental health with a [Student health support plan](#) and, where reasonable, a [Student absence learning plan](#) has been considered.

Schools are encouraged to seek advice from Area Health, Wellbeing and Specialist Services when considering using 'inactive' status for longer-term absences.

It is **important to note** that setting a student's enrolment status to 'inactive':

- may not meet the attendance criteria to be counted in the [Student Enrolment Census](#).
- may result in them not being visible in the school's student management system.
- is not the same as exiting a student. A student retains their enrolment even when their status is changed to 'inactive'. **The school remains responsible for the student's duty of care.**

Schools must support all students enrolled at their school to remain engaged with their education and take reasonable steps to:

- assist the student to transfer to another education setting or,
- support a return to full-time attendance.

In instances where a student is determined to be 'whereabouts unknown'

Once a whereabouts unknown referral has been lodged, regions may advise schools to make the student 'inactive' while appropriate steps are taking place to locate the student.

In this instance, schools must use the code **500 – Unexplained** when changing the student's enrolment status to 'inactive'.

Where the student's whereabouts is unknown, and their enrolment has been made 'inactive', this does not limit the ability for the student to be counted towards the school's enrolment. For more information see [Student Enrolment Census](#).