



St Lawrence Primary School is required to keep accurate attendance records for all its students.

This includes taking attendance. Attendance must be recorded by teaching staff at least:

- twice per day for primary and specialist schools
- in every class for secondary schools.

Although all school staff are vital in supporting regular student attendance, the Principal is responsible for:

- Keeping accurate attendance records for every child enrolled in the school; these can be stored electronically but must be able to be reproduced in written form.
- Maintaining records for the appropriate period of time under the School Education Regulations 2000.
- Managing alternate attendance arrangements.
- Implementing plans and strategies to encourage regular attendance.

Records must include:

- If the student was physically present or not.
- If the student was attending a different approved activity (the teacher running that activity must also record attendance).
- Any reasons given for an absence.
- If the reason for the absence is reasonable (see examples).
- A flag for unexplained absences (removed if a reason is given later).
- Information about any unsatisfactory attendance at school or classes.
- A mark for half-day attendance if the student is present for at least two hours of instruction.

Authorised absence (EXPLAINED):

A principal can record an absence as 'Authorised' if there has been a reasonable explanation for a student's absence.

A reasonable excuse for the purposes of explaining a school absence can include:

- medical or dental appointments
- bereavement or attendance at a funeral, including Sorry Business
- illnesses and accidents
- unforeseen and unexplained circumstances
- compliance with another law that results in the child's absence
- The child is receiving distance education through a registered school
- The child has been suspended or expelled
- The child is attending or observing a religious event, culture observance or obligation.

Unauthorised absence (UNEXPLAINED)

A principal can record an absence as 'Unauthorised' when there has been no reasonable explanation provided for the absence. If a reason is given to the principal and it is not approved, then the school will notify the parent/carer in writing.

In general, it is expected that these absences would not be excused:

- The parent did not seek approval beforehand, or in accordance with school policy.
- The student was absent due to leisure or social activities without approval.
- The conditions of an authorised absence were not met (for example, a student absence learning plan during a family holiday was not completed).
- The parent has provided no explanation for the absences.

Principals should make sure attendance data is regularly monitored and analysed to look for attendance patterns. Patterns of absences can be across the school, a class or at the individual student level.

Having accurate data, including the reasons for absences, is important for:

- developing improvement strategies for students
- reporting for funding requirements
- using as evidence when there are attendance concerns.

Student Non-Attendance Flow Chart

