



School Attendance Register Codes

Changes to Codes Commencing 2015

Changes from 2015

The Minister for Education has approved changes to the use of the Attendance Register codes for 2015.

The changes implement the *ACARA National Standards for Student Attendance Data Reporting*. ACARA developed the National Standards to establish nationally consistent parameters for the collection and reporting of student attendance data.

Holidays

As part of the implementation of the National Standards, holidays taken by students outside of school vacation periods will now be **included** as absences. **A Certificate of Exemption can no longer be granted for this purpose.**

Families are encouraged to holiday or travel during school vacations. If travel during school term is necessary the following considerations apply:

- If the principal **accepts** the reason for the absence, the absence will be marked as “L”
- If the principal does not believe the absence is in the student’s best interests and does not accept the reason, the absence is unjustified and will be recorded as “A”
- If the period of absence is in excess of 50 days, the student may be eligible to enrol in Distance Education.

For that period the student’s enrolment transfers to the distance education school.

Note: A student cannot be enrolled in more than one school concurrently (including Distance Education)

Leave

The revised use of the “L” code relating to holidays means the 15 day limit on its use has been removed.

Schools can request the completion of an Application for Leave Form for holidays within the school term. DEC is developing templates for an application for leave and a certificate of extended leave. Once approved, AIS will make these templates available for use by schools.

Principals should consider the conditions/consequences applicable to the acceptance of an Application for Leave.



Other codes

The recent changes to the Attendance Register Codes include the redefinition of some codes:

- The “**F**” code is no longer only for senior students participating in a flexible timetable. The code now includes students participating in programs and assessments such as: HSC Pathways Programs, Kindergarten entry assessments (e.g. Best Start), trial or HSC exams or VET courses.
- The “**B**” code includes student exchange and allows for some additional flexibility around its use.
- The “**H**” code is used when a student is enrolled in a school and is required or approved to attend an alternative educational setting on a sessional or full time basis.

Accepting explanations

- The “**A**” code is to be used if no explanation has been provided by parents within seven days of the occurrence of an absence or the explanation is not accepted by the Principal. It is at the principal’s discretion to accept or reject the explanation provided.
- If a student’s absence is due to sickness the “**S**” code is used. The principal may request a medical certificate in addition to an explanation if the explanation is doubted or the student has a history of unsatisfactory attendance.

Record keeping

Schools need to ensure they have policy and procedures to monitor regular attendance and to ensure that records are current, accurate and accessible. The procedures should reflect how attendance is marked, followed up and records maintained at that particular school. BOSTES requires that student records should be kept for six years after the student has turned 18 years of age.

2015 Attendance Register Codes

Definitions

Only the following attendance register codes **must** be used to record the:

- explanation of student absence, and/or
- variation in student attendance.

Attendance Register Codes	
Symbols to be used for explanation of student absence	
Symbol	Meaning
A	<p>The student's absence is unexplained or unjustified. This symbol must be used if no explanation has been provided by parents within seven days of the occurrence of an absence or the explanation is not accepted by the principal</p> <p>It is at the principal's discretion to accept or not accept the explanation provided.</p>
S	<p>The student's absence is due to sickness or as the result of a medical or paramedical appointment. In these cases:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- a medical certificate is provided or- the absence was due to sickness and the principal accepts this explanation. <p>Principals may request a medical certificate in addition to explanations if the explanation is doubted, or the student has a history of unsatisfactory attendance.</p>
L	<p>An explanation of the absence is provided which has been accepted by the principal. This may be due to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- misadventure or unforeseen event- participation in special events not related to the school- domestic necessity such as serious illness of an immediate family member- attendance at funerals- travel in Australia and overseas- recognised religious festivals or ceremonial occasions.
E	<p>The student was suspended from school</p>

Attendance Register Codes Symbols to be used to record a variation in attendance (not counted as an absence for statistical purposes)	
Symbol	Meaning
M	The student was exempted from attending school and a Certificate of Exemption has been issued by a delegated officer.
F	<p>The student is participating in a flexible timetable and not present because they are not required to be at school. This could include participation in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - HSC Pathways Program - Best Start Assessments - Trial or HSC examinations - VET courses
B	<p>The student is absent from the school on official school business. This symbol is recorded where the principal approves the student leaving the school site to undertake, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - work experience - school sport (regional and state carnivals) - school excursions - student exchange
H¹	<p>The student is enrolled in a school and is required or approved to be attending an alternative educational setting on a sessional or full time basis.</p> <p>The symbol is recorded where a student accesses education settings separate to their mainstream school such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - tutorial centre and programs - behaviour schools - juvenile justice - hospital schools - distance education

¹ Note: In most cases this code will only be used by Department of Education and Communities schools, with the exception of students from non-government schools attending hospital schools.

2. Note: For Independent Schools use "F" not "H" for students attending external tutorial centres and programs that are school authorised.

Recording the duration of an absence or variation in attendance

In addition to recording the reason for an absence or the reason for a variation in attendance, the duration of the absence or variation must be recorded.

Manual Attendance Registers

Department of Education and Communities schools that maintain manual attendance registers and do not use electronic means for maintaining student attendance must use the following symbols with the appropriate attendance register code for recording the reason for absence or a variation in attendance:

- a** - The student was absent on that day.
- Pa** - The student was late or was absent for part of a day. The time of arrival or departure must be recorded.

Note: The symbol 'X' is to be used for the first and last day that the student attended for each term.

Electronic Attendance Registers²

For **Department of Education and Communities schools** using electronic means for maintaining student attendance (OASIS, EBS4 or compliant third party systems), when recording a partial absence, the precise time of arrival and/or departure must be documented.

When information is transferred to OASIS from other compliant electronic systems, or from manual attendance registers, whole day absence (a) will be shown as W and partial absence (Pa) will be shown as P.

² Note: This only applies to Department of Education and Communities Schools.