



Revised Attendance Codes

FAQs

JANUARY 2025



Te Tāhuhu o
te Mātauranga
Ministry of Education

General questions

What are the attendance codes?

- Attendance Codes are a set of codes schools must use to categorise whether a student is **present**, **justifiably absent** or **unjustifiably absent**.
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Why were the attendance codes changed?

- Previous reviews and feedback from the education sector have highlighted the need for simplified attendance codes to make them easier to administer (i.e. to improve the consistency of data recording and reporting).
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What changes have been made to the attendance codes?

- Eleven codes have been discontinued (a reduction from 26 codes to 15) and merged into existing codes in present, justified and unjustified absence categories
 - No new codes have been created. A table comparing the code sets can be viewed here:
education.govt.nz/news/refreshed-attendance-codes-term-1-2025
 - At this same link you will also find a webinar providing information about the revised attendance codes.
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When will the revised codes take effect?

Student Management System (SMS) providers have implemented the code changes required allowing all state and state-integrated school to use the revised codes from the first day of term 1 2025.

Who can I contact for further support?

An Attendance Code Query Management System (QMS) has been developed and will be available early in Term 1 2025.

For support with your SMS, please contact **your SMS provider**.

For all other support, please contact your **local Ministry office**.

Specific Attendance Code questions

What codes fit within school policy?

- Q** Board approved offsite learning
 - J** Explained and approved
 - E** Explained but not approved
 - M** **Illness / Medical Absence** (we do not want a school policy that requests a medical certificate)
 - L** **Late to class**
 - Schools must define lateness in their school policy. The Ministry does not provide a specific time frame
 - If a student arrives late and the student was initially coded as a **?** 'Unknown', it then becomes an **L** 'Late to class'
 - However, if the student had been at an approved external appointment, then arrived late, this would change from an **L** 'Late to class' to a **D** 'Approved external appointment'
 - ?** **Unknown** – temporary code
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If a school does not manage to confirm a student's whereabouts on the day the ? code is used, will that make our attendance “look bad”?

- The **?** code will be considered as an absence on that day as daily attendance is submitted at 6.00 pm
- The **?** will remain against a student until a confirmed code is used. This could be **T** for **Truant**, or **M** for **Illness / Medical Absence** – or an appropriate code
- Code changes need to be confirmed within 2 weeks
- This latter information is the data that contributes towards the school's termly attendance rates of regular, irregular, moderate or chronic.

Cultural / Religious Event

How would you mark a student who is returning home overseas for a family matter or a cultural/religious event? i.e. we have a lot of families who return to India to receive their religious Sacraments so will take 3 weeks for travel since it is so far.

- The **J** **'Explained and approved'** code covers cultural events
- A school principal has discretion to approve such leave for up to 5 days (section 45), at which point the justified absence would need to change to an **E** **'Explained but not approved'**
- How a school treats cultural events should be clearly outlined in your school policy.

What happens if a student signs out for prayers every Friday?

- If this is part of school policy, this could be coded as **J** **'Explained and approved'** and considered to be a cultural event
- If the student leaves for prayers and chooses not to return for the afternoon, then you would code as **E** **'Explained but not approved'**.

Drivers Test

- Getting a driving test is difficult so it may have to be scheduled during school time
- There will be some discretion as to whether this is a **J** **'Explained and approved'** or an **E** **'Explained but not approved'**, however this should be outlined in your school policy.

Student going overseas

A student going overseas for a wedding?

- A wedding overseas could be coded as a **G** **'Holiday during term time'**
- With principal discretion, a **J** code **'Explained and approved'** could be used, but only for up to 5 days absence.

A student going overseas as a relative is unwell?

- You would use the **J** code **'Explained and approved'** if it fits within school policy. As this is not a holiday, you wouldn't code **G** **'Holiday during term time'**.

Graduated Transition Plan

For a child who is on a graduated transition to school plan, who attends morning and not afternoons, what would this be coded as?

- It depends on what's going on for that learner, it's either a **C** 'Board Approved Offsite Learning' or **J** 'Explained and approved'.

How would you mark a child whose whānau want their child to have a day at home each week due to exhaustion for an undetermined amount of time. Medical professionals are divided on whether this would be the right move for the child.

- A transition attendance plan (TAP) is available for some learners who are unable to attend school full time
- These are signed off by Directors of Education and a medical professional.

Teacher Only Days (student not on site / staff present)

- The Ministry does not collect or report attendance on Teacher Only Days
- For all Teacher Only Days, the timetable should be closed and no codes should be placed against students' names
- This ensures that this day is not included in attendance data for your school
- Please do not enter any attendance codes into your SMS for this day
- The day needs to be removed from your calendar in your SMS, or all classes on that day need to be removed for all students
- It varies with each SMS, so please speak to your provider on how to remove the day from your calendar or classes for that day for all students.

If we have Ministry instructed teacher only days for primary school, our understanding is that the school is technically open as that counts toward our total number of days open for the year. Does that require a specific code?

- The same actions apply as above
- The only difference is that you do not consider these days when calculating half days that the school is open in the year.



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