

Information for schools

Student absence reason codes scenarios

This document provides detailed scenarios to guide assigned officers in deciding which absence reason code should be applied.

Table 2 of the [Roll marking in state schools procedure](#) provides absence reason codes for assigned officers to use to categorise absences identified through local school processes or according to the notification and explanation provided by a parent/carer/student (if they are mature age or independent).



Summary of student absence reason codes

Reason	Code	Explanatory notes	Considered reasonable	Counted as an absence
School activity	A	Student is participating in an authorised school activity for school purposes.	✓	⊗
Attendance not required	B	Student is not required to attend school on this day as it is not included in their educational program.	✓	⊗
Excursion	C	Student is participating in a school excursion . ↗	✓	⊗
Sorry Business	D	Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander students participating in Sorry Business*. <small>*'Sorry Business' is an expression used by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people for a time of mourning in the community.</small>	✓	✓
Off-campus activity	F	Student is participating in an authorised activity that is away from the school campus. These activities will be regular and ongoing in nature.	✓	⊗
Family reasons	G	Student is absent due to family circumstances beyond the influence of the student. The parent is aware that their child is absent and an explanation has been provided to the school.	✓	✓
Holiday	H	The parent, or the student if they are living independently ↗ (DoE employees only), has informed the school that the student/family is taking a holiday. Note that holidays during the school term should be discouraged. If the absence is more than 10 consecutive days, an exemption may be considered. Refer to Exemptions from compulsory schooling and compulsory participation .	✓	✓
Illness and medical appointments	I	The parent, or the student if they are living independently ↗ (DoE employees only), has informed the school that the student is sick.	✓	✓

Find out more

<https://ppr.qed.qld.gov.au/attachment/table-2-absence-reason-codes-for-reasonable-and-unreasonable-excuses.docx>



Reason	Code	Explanatory notes	Considered reasonable	Counted as an absence
Unauthorised	J	The excuse given for a student absence is deemed as unreasonable by the principal. The reason (with any supporting evidence) as to why an explanation is considered unreasonable must be documented in OneSchool.	⊗	⊙
Natural disaster	N	Student is unable to attend school due to an extreme weather event/natural disaster.	⊙	⊗
Other	O	Only use this code if no other absence reason code is suitable and the principal has determined that the excuse provided by the parent or student (where the student is independent ² (DoE employees only), an adult, or where it would be inappropriate to ask the parent) is reasonable.	⊙	⊙
Short suspension	P	Student is suspended for 1 to 10 days under s.283 of the EGPA.	⊙	⊙
Long suspension	Q	Student is suspended for 11—20 days under s.283 of the EGPA, or for a student who is on a charge-related suspension and has not enrolled at a school of distance education.	⊙	⊙
Suspension pending exclusion	R	Student is suspended pending an exclusion decision by the principal.	⊙	⊙
Sport (representative) If non-representative sport, use Code O - Other.	S	Student is representing their school, district, region, state or nation, or officiating at a sporting event which is recognised by the school (refer to Queensland Representative School Sport ² for the full list of representative sports).	⊙	⊗
Unexplained	U	No reason given for the student's absence.	⊗	⊙
Work experience	W	Student is participating in a work experience program ² approved and organised by the school.	⊙	⊗
Exemptions	Z	Student has been granted an exemption from schooling. Refer to Exemptions from compulsory schooling and compulsory participation. ² <i>Refer to Guidelines for recording attendance of students who are enrolled but not attending school and cannot be located, and students who have been granted an exemption from schooling ²</i>	⊙	⊗

A

School activity

Student is participating in an authorised school activity for school purposes.

Counted as absence?

NO

Examples:

Performing in a school choir, band or dance group; participating in youth parliament or council; attending a hospital school.

Scenario:

A Year 9 student is selected to represent their school at a regional youth parliament event. The event is scheduled during school hours and has been approved by the principal. The student is actively participating in debates and discussions as part of their school's representation.

A – School activity applies.

Scenario:

A Year 6 student is performing with the school band at a local community event, which is part of the school's music program. The performance is scheduled during school hours and is supervised by school staff.

A – School activity applies.

Scenario:

A Year 10 student is attending a hospital school while recovering from a medical condition. The hospital school has coordinated with the student's regular school to ensure continuity of education.

A – School activity should be used for the days the student participates in the program.

B

Attendance not required

Student is not required to attend school on this day as it is not included in their educational program.

Counted as absence?

NO

Examples:

Year 12 students with a four-day timetable; exam blocks with no scheduled exams; students in a youth detention centre.

Scenario:

A Year 12 student has a flexible timetable that includes four days of attendance per week. On Fridays, the student is not required to attend school as part of their approved educational program.

B – Attendance not required applies.

Scenario:

A Year 10 student is on a charge-related suspension and is accessing an educational program from home. The school has been informed of this arrangement.

B – Attendance not required should be used for the duration of the program.

Scenario:

A Year 5 student is accessing a part-time educational program (DoE employees only), attending school 3 hours per day, to enable them to recover from a traumatic event.

B – Attendance not required should be used for the time the student is not participating in a full-time program, as outlined in their part-time plan.

Scenario:

During exam block, a Year 11 student has no scheduled exams on a particular day.

The student is not required to attend school on that day, so **B – Attendance not required** applies.



C

Excursion

Student is participating in a school excursion.

Counted as absence?



NO

Examples:

Class visits to venues outside school; school camps and overnight excursions.

Scenario:

A Year 7 class is visiting a local museum as part of their history curriculum.

The excursion is a full-day activity, and all participating students are supervised by school staff.

C – Excursion should be used for these absences.

Scenario:

A Year 5 student is participating in a day-long excursion to a wildlife sanctuary to support their science studies.

The activity is organised and supervised by the school, so **C – Excursion** should be used.



D

Sorry Business

Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander students participating in Sorry Business.

Counted as absence?



YES

Examples:

Cultural activities related to a recent family bereavement; grief for a close family member.

Scenario:

An Aboriginal student is absent to attend the funeral of a close family member and participate in a time of mourning with the community. The family has informed the school, and the absence is culturally significant.

D – Sorry Business should be used to record this absence.

Scenario:

A Torres Strait Islander student is absent for a week due to extended family grieving practices, which include cultural ceremonies and gatherings.

The school has been notified, and **D – Sorry Business** applies for the entire period.

F

Off-campus activity

Student is participating in an authorised activity that is away from the school campus.

Counted as absence?

NO

Examples:

Flexible arrangements; attendance at a TAFE or other training provider course; participation in a school-based apprenticeship or traineeship.

Scenario:

A Year 11 student is attending a TAFE course as part of their vocational education program. The course runs every Wednesday morning, so **F – Off-campus activity** should be used for these absences.

Scenario:

A Year 10 student is participating in a school-based apprenticeship and is required to work off-campus one day a week. **F – Off-campus activity** applies for these days.

Scenario:

A Year 9 student will be participating in a behaviour management program for 2 days per week and attending school for the remainder of the week as part of a flexible arrangement.

F – Off-campus activity applies for days the student is absent from school and attending the other program.

G

Family reasons

Student is absent due to family circumstances beyond their influence.

Counted as absence?

YES

Examples:

Moving house; transport issues; family member is ill or in hospital.

Scenario:

A Year 8 student is absent for two days because their family is moving to a new house. The parents have informed the school in advance, and the absence is unavoidable.

G – Family reasons should be used for these absences.

Scenario:

A Year 5 student is absent for a day because their parent is hospitalised, and no alternative care arrangements are available.

The school has been notified, and **G – Family reasons** applies.

Scenario:

A Year 3 student is absent for a morning due to transport issues caused by a car breakdown.

The parent has contacted the school to explain the situation, so **G – Family reasons** should be used.

**H**

Holiday

Student/family is taking a holiday during the school term.

Counted as absence?

**YES**

Examples:

Family holiday during term time.

Scenario:

A Year 4 student is absent for a week because their family is travelling interstate for a holiday.

The parents have informed the school in advance, and the absence is recorded as

H - Holiday.

Scenario:

A Year 11 student is absent for 3 days due to a family trip to attend a wedding in another state.

The school has been notified, and **H - Holiday** applies.

Scenario:

A Year 6 student is travelling overseas with their family for 6 weeks during a school term. The parent/carer has notified the school but has not applied for an exemption.

H - Holiday applies.

**I**

Illness and medical appointments

Student is sick or attending medical/dental/health professional appointments during school hours.

Counted as absence?

**YES**

Examples:

Illness; attending a doctor's appointment; school refusal due to anxiety.

Scenario:

A Year 3 student is absent for 2 days due to the flu.

The parents have informed the school, and **I - Illness and medical appointments** should be used.

Scenario:

A Year 9 student is absent for half a day to attend a scheduled, off-site dental appointment.

The school has been notified, and **I - Illness and medical appointments** applies.

Scenario:

A Year 7 student is experiencing school refusal due to anxiety and is absent for 3 days.

The parents have provided a medical certificate, and **I - Illness and medical appointments** should be used.



Unauthorised

The excuse given for the student's absence is deemed unreasonable by the principal.

Counted as absence?

YES

Examples:

Leisure activities; shopping; truancy.

Scenario:

A Year 7 student is absent because their family decided to go shopping for the day.

The principal deems this reason unreasonable, so **J - Unauthorised** should be used.

Scenario:

A Year 10 student skips school without informing their parents or the school.

When the parent is contacted to clarify the reason for the absence, they are unable to provide a reasonable excuse. **J - Unauthorised** applies.

Scenario:

A Year 5 student is absent to attend a friend's birthday party during school hours.

The principal has determined this is not a reasonable excuse, so **J - Unauthorised** should be used.



Natural disaster

Student is unable to attend school due to an extreme weather event or other natural disaster.

Counted as absence?

NO

Examples:

Flooding; bushfires; cyclones.

Scenario:

A Year 6 student is unable to attend school for 3 days due to severe flooding in their area, which has made roads impassable, so **N - Natural disaster** should be used.

Scenario:

A Year 10 student did not attend school and is instead learning from home, due to a cyclone warning. **N - Natural disaster** applies.

Scenario:

A Year 8 student is absent for a week because their family home was damaged in a bushfire, and they are unable to travel to school. **N - Natural disaster** should be used.



Other

No other absence reason code is suitable, and the principal has determined the excuse is reasonable.

Counted as absence?

YES

Examples:

Situations not covered by other codes.

Scenario:

A Year 9 student is absent for a day to attend a cultural event that is deemed reasonable by the principal.

O - Other should be used.

Scenario:

A Year 6 student is absent for a morning to attend a funeral.

The principal has approved this as a reasonable excuse, so **O - Other** should be used.

Scenario:

A Year 8 student is absent for a day to participate in a local club sport competition.

The principal has approved this as a reasonable excuse, so **O - Other** should be used.



Short suspension

The student is suspended for 1 to 10 days under section 283 of the Education (General Provisions) Act 2006 (Qld) (EGPA).

Counted as absence?

YES

Scenario:

A Year 8 student is suspended for 5 days following a behaviour incident that breached the school's code of conduct. The suspension is formally documented, and the school has communicated the decision to the student's family.

P - Short suspension should be used for the duration of the suspension.



Long suspension

The student is suspended for 11 to 20 days under section 283 of the EGPA, or the student is on a charge-related suspension and has not enrolled at a school of distance education.

Counted as absence?

YES

Scenario:

A Year 9 student is suspended for 15 days following a serious breach of the school's Code of Conduct. The school has provided the family with information about support services and the process for re-engagement.

Q - Long suspension should be used for the duration of the suspension.

**R**

Suspension pending exclusion

The student is suspended while awaiting a decision about exclusion by the principal.

Counted as absence?

**YES**

Scenario:

A Year 10 student is suspended pending an exclusion decision following a serious behavioural incident. The school is conducting a thorough investigation and has communicated the process to the family.

R - Suspension pending exclusion should be used for the duration of the suspension period.

**S**

Sport (representative)

Student is representing their school, district, region, state, or nation in a recognised sporting event.

Counted as absence?

**NO**

Examples:

District trials; state championships; School Sport Australia events.

Scenario:

A Year 8 student is participating in a state-level swimming championship as part of the school's representative team.

S - Sport should be used for the absence.

Scenario:

A Year 11 student is officiating at a regional athletics event recognised by the school.

S - Sport applies.

Scenario:

A Year 10 student is representing their school in a district basketball tournament that takes place over 2 school days.

S - Sport should be used for the absences.

**U**

Unexplained

No reason has been given for the student's absence.

Counted as absence?

**YES**

Scenario:

A Year 5 student is absent for 2 days, and the school has not received any communication from the parents/carers explaining the absence.

U - Unexplained should be used until an explanation is provided.

Scenario:

A Year 9 student is absent for a week, and despite multiple attempts to contact the family, no reason has been given.

U - Unexplained applies.

W

Work experience

Student is participating in a work experience program approved and organised by the school.

Counted as absence?

NO

Examples:

Work placement as part of a school program.

Scenario:

A Year 10 student is completing a 2-week work experience placement at a local veterinary clinic as part of their school's career education program.

W - Work experience should be used for the duration of the placement.

Scenario:

A Year 11 student is participating in a one-day work shadowing program organised by the school.

W - Work experience applies for that day.

Scenario:

A Year 12 student is absent for 3 days to complete a work placement at a local engineering firm, which is part of their vocational education program.

W - Work experience should be used.

Z

Exemptions

Student has been granted an exemption from schooling.

Counted as absence?

NO

Examples:

Refer to the [Exemptions from compulsory schooling and compulsory participation procedure](#). 

Scenario:

A Year 8 student has been granted an exemption from schooling for 6 months due to a serious medical condition. The attendance exemption is recorded in [OneSchool](#)  (DoE employees only), and an **All Day, Z - Exemption** absence is automatically created for each school day within the exemption period that falls on a past or current school day.