



School Attendance Codes

Key

P	Present for half day calculations
U	Unjustified absence
J	Justified absence
O	Overseas (justified)

School Code	Classroom	Attendance/absence type	Explanations – The following explanations are provided as common reasons why a student may be absent from school. The <i>Reporting category</i> column indicates if a School Code is counted as Present, Justified Absence or Unjustified Absence for Ministry reporting purposes. This does not preclude the principal from using discretion over any specific student absence.	Truancy Code*	½-day calc**
P	In class	Present	Student is in their regular class. (This includes supervised study)	P	P
L	In class	Student is late to class	School policy will determine when this code is used. Eg. School policy may recommend that a student more than 10 minutes late is coded "L". Note this code does not contribute to the student's or school's absence or truancy rate.	P	P
V	In class	Examination or Unsupervised Study – student is on the school-site	Students sitting examinations at school (if the SMS can provide attendance marking during exams). Unsupervised study – school process verifies student is on the school-site. Note that supervised study is recorded as a regular timetabled class.	P	P
I	Not in class	Internal school appointment or activity – Dean, DP, sports administrator, coach, attendance officer etc	This can include students who are out of class for various school appointments including: form teacher, dean, senior management, counsellor, sports administrator, coach, nurse, careers, as well as students on an administration activity such as messenger, collecting attendance etc. It does not include a student who has been removed from his/her regular class and sent to the administration area for disciplinary reasons. This student would be coded P in the class and the code would probably be changed to R by the senior staff member dealing with the student.	P	P
N	Not in class	On a school-based activity	A school-based (on-site) activity, for example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> cultural/sporting presentation/practice including swimming/athletic sports one-to-one tuition either as tutor or tutored 	P	P
R	Not in class	Removed (temporarily) from regular class (internal school student isolation)	This code is for students who for a time period had an arrangement for alternative supervision. This may be in the administration corridor or in another teacher's class, instead of the student's regular scheduled class	P	P
S	Not in class	Sickbay	Student is known to be in the school's sickbay	P	P
A	Not in class	Attending Alternative Education	The student is not in class, is on the school roll but funded elsewhere	P	P
Z	Not in class	Secondary Tertiary Programme (including Trades Academies)	The student is participating in a part-time (off-site) approved Secondary Tertiary programme that includes Trades Academies. The school is not entitled to be funded.	P	P
F	Not in class	Attending an off-site course/class, or learning from home	The student is not in class but is on a legitimate off-site school-based course. Also used where student is known to be learning from home (for example, during lockdowns).	P	P
Q	Not in class	Attending an off-site school-organised activity such as trip/camp	A school-organised off-site activity including overseas : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> school trip (sporting, cultural or academic) school camp 	P	P

W	Not in class	Work experience	Student is working for a recognised employer as part of their course (Gateway is an example)	P	P
D	Not in class	Medical Appointment – doctor or dentist	Current legislation means this type of absence is counted as present for ½ day summaries. There must be documentation verifying the appointment. This code is not to be used for a stay in hospital. Use code "M"	J	P
K	Not in class	Attending a Teen Parent Unit	The student is not in class, is on the school roll but funded elsewhere	J	P
H	Not in class	Attending a Health camp/Regional Health School/Residential School	The student is not in class but in an approved environment for which the school is entitled to be funded	J	P
Y	Not in class	Attending an Activity centre	The student is not in class but in an approved environment for which the school is entitled to be funded	J	P
C	Not in class	Involved in Justice Court proceedings	Under existing legislation this type of absence is deemed to be Present when calculating ½ day summaries	J	P
M	Not in class	Student absent due to short-term illness/medical reasons	Student is at home, or in hospital, because of illness or other medical reason. Depending on school policy a medical certificate may be requested for prolonged illness. eg three days, or as policy requires.	J	A
J	Not in class	Justified absence – the reason is within the school policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unplanned absences such as a bus breakdown, accident, road closure, extreme weather conditions etc • Planned non-attendance such as national/local representation in a sporting or cultural event in New Zealand or overseas. • Approved absence (also overseas) including bereavement, visiting an ill relative, exceptional family circumstances or a Section 27. 	J	A
U	Not in class	Student is Stood down or Suspended	Student is Stood Down or suspended according the conditions of Section 14 of the Education Act 1989. (This code is for the period of the stand down/suspension. It does not include the day the stand down was imposed.)	J	A
X	Not in class	Exam leave Unsupervised study – student is off-site	Code X is not considered an attendance or an absence and is ignored in the Ministry's attendance calculations. A student coded entirely as code X for a half-day will not be counted at all for that half-day. Note that supervised study is recorded as a regular timetabled class.	J	A
O	Not in class	Overseas Posting	Student accompanying or visiting a family member who is on an overseas posting (up to 15 weeks). Eg, military or diplomatic. If the student is overseas for over 15 weeks, please use Code E.	O	A
T	Not in class	No information provided – truant (or throw-away explanation)	An absence where either no information is provided, or the explanation is trivial (throw-away): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I didn't feel like Maths so I took the period off • I had to finish an important assignment • I went down to the river • I went to the shops • We had a test and I wasn't ready for it 	U	A
E	Not in class	Student is absent. The reason is Explained, but Unjustified	The explanation for the absence is accepted by the school as the reason for the absence. But the reason does not fit within the school's policy as a justifiable reason to take the student off school. (Even though the parents may consider the absence was justified and may have provided a written explanation). Eg, "Molly had to stay home to look after her younger brother". For New Zealand and overseas holidays use code "G".	U	A
G	Not in class	Holiday during term time	When a student is on a New Zealand or overseas holiday during the school term, the absence is unjustified. A parent's note does not provide justification.	U	A
?	Not in class	Unknown reason (A temporary code)	This is the initial entry for a student not in class and the reason is unknown. It will be edited as relevant information becomes available about the reason for the absence. If required, the SMS can be set by the school to automatically change the '?' code to a T after a configurable number of school days (eg 7)	U	A

School closures

A School Board can close the school (for instruction) for reasons including:

- an emergency (earthquake, flood, etc); or
- to protect the health and safety of its students and / or staff
- strike closure

The school calendar should be adjusted in the Student Management System (SMS) to show such days (or ½ days) as a non-school day and this means the students' attendance cannot be marked.

If the school's SMS cannot make a ½ day adjustment in the calendar, then students should be marked J (justified absent).

In the case of a strike closure, although the school is closed for instruction, the Secretary expects boards to consider providing supervision for those students who do turn up. These students will not have their attendance marked because they are not attending school for the purposes of instruction, and the SMS will not allow it if it has been adjusted correctly. Note that Boards have ongoing responsibility for the safety of students while under supervision at the school, whether or not the school is also open for instruction.

* **Truancy codes** are designed to allow schools to monitor unjustified absences from class and the school site (eg, truancy, holidays during term time) vs. justified absences from class and the school site (eg, doctor, dentist, activity centre).

** **½ day calculations codes** relate to schools meeting legislative obligations (as per the [attendance regulations](#)) and also relate to resourcing audit requirements. This is also the basis of the Ministry's reporting of attendance statistics (in particular around 'regular attendees').