

Enrolment, Attendance, Transfer and Withdrawal of Students

Ministry of Education Guidelines to Schools

Legal Requirements - Education Act.

The legal provisions for enrolment and attendance of a child in a school are stated in The Education Act 1986/87 and Amendment No 8 1992:

“ECE child” means a child between the ages of three and a half years and five years attending an early childhood education centre.

Section 31: Compulsory attendance:

- (1) Subject to the provisions of Section 32 and 33, it shall be compulsory for every child
 - (a) to be enrolled at a school registered under this Act in accordance with the following paragraphs:
 - (i) a child who attains the age of 5 years in and between the months of January and April shall be enrolled at the commencement of the first term of the school year;
 - (ii) a child who attains the age of 5 years in and between the months of May and August shall be enrolled at the commencement of the second term of the school year;
 - (iii) a child who attains the age of 5 years in and between the months of September and December shall be enrolled at the commencement of the third term of the school year
 - (b) to attend a school registered under this Act from the date of enrolment to the end of the school year during which the child attains the age of 15 years.
- (2) Attendance at any ECE centre by any ECE child shall be voluntary whether or not the child is enrolled at a school.

Ministry of Education Guidelines

1 Enrolment:

Responsibilities of Primary and Secondary School Principals and Teachers in charge of ECE Centres:

Enrolment procedures:

The parent/caregiver of the child will enter all details on the School Enrolment Card (see Appendix A) and *either*: have the card endorsed by the Registrar of Births *or* return the card to the Principal with the child's current passport or a copy of his/her birth certificate.

Application:

- (a) Every child residing in the Cook Islands, who has attained the age of 3 ½ years and wishes to attend ECE.
- (b) It is compulsory to enroll every child who has attained the age of 5 years under (i) or (ii) or (iii) above.
- (c) Every child between the ages of 5 years and 16 years whose parents are contracted worker(s) from an overseas country, or returning Cook Islands citizens or permanent residents shall be enrolled.
- (d) Every overseas student beyond the age of 16 wishing to attend a secondary school shall be enrolled.
- (e) Permission from the Secretary of Education is required before children of visitors are enrolled.

The Principal, having received a School Enrolment Card shall enter details in the school's Register of Admission & Withdrawal (Appendix B) or on the Excel spreadsheet.

2 Transfer between schools during the year:

Responsibilities of the Principal of the current school.

Where a student or parent/caregiver gives advice that a student intends to transfer to another Cook Islands school during the course of the school year the Principal of the student's current school shall, as soon as possible:

- (a) Advise the Principal of the student's intended new school by phone, fax or e-mail:
 - that the student is leaving and give last day at current school
 - if the student has been issued with a "School Clearance Certificate", (see Appendices C1 & C2) (and provide reasons if the certificate has not been issued);
 - the approximate date the student can be expected to be admitted to the new school;
 - the student's current year level.
- (b) Post to the Principal of the new school:
 - (i) The student's "Student Achievement Profile" booklet (primary students only)
 - (ii) The student's Health Card.
- (c) Enter the student as "withdrawn" in the school's Register of Admissions & Withdrawals.
- (d) Check that the class teacher has made the appropriate entry in the Register of Attendance.

Responsibilities of the Principal of the new school.

Principal of the new school shall proceed to admit the student:

1. Enter the student's full name and date of admission in the school's Register of Admission and Withdrawal.
2. Advise the student's class teacher to enter admission details in the Register of Attendance
3. Provide the student with an orientation programme as per school policy.
4. Contact the Principal of the previous school to determine any issues when the student fails to report to school for admission
5. Advise the Manager of Student Support at MoE if no satisfactory explanation is received in (4) above.

Note: Where advice is received that a "Clearance Certificate" has not been issued to a transfer student, for whatever reason, the Principal shall proceed to admit the student as above. The Principal in consultation with the Principal of the student's previous school may agree to facilitate the recovery of any school property not returned and make arrangements for the return of these to the previous school.

3 Transfer between schools at the end of year (whole class)

The following procedures apply to a class of Year 6 or Year 8 students who will leave school at the end of a school year and will be enrolling at a **new** school the following year.

Each student will advise the Principal of the new school in which he/she intends to enroll next year.

Responsibilities of the Principal of the current school.

- (a) To ensure that every student obtains clearance from school and is issued with a "Clearance Certificate - Primary" and/or advise the Principal of the new school as to why a Clearance Certificate has not been issued to any student(s).
- (b) Enter details on "Ministry of Education – Student Transfers at End of Year" form(s) (see Appendix D) and send (or e-mail) these forms to the Principal(s) of the new schools together with the "Student's Achievement Profiles" (if from Year 6).
- (c) Withdraw all students who are leaving from the school's Register of Admissions and Withdrawals.

Responsibilities of the Principal of the new school.

At the start of the new school year the Principal of the new school(s) shall proceed to admit all students:

- 1) Enter the student's full name and date of admission in the school's Register of Admission and Withdrawal.
- 2) Advise the students' class teacher to enter admission details in the Register of Attendance.
- 3) Provide the student with an orientation programme as per school policy.
- 4) Contact the Principal of the previous school to determine any issues when a student fails to report to school for admission.
- 5) Advise the Manager of Student Support at MoE if no satisfactory explanation is received in (4) above.

Note: In the case where advice is received that a "Clearance Certificate" has not been issued to a student, for whatever reason, the Principal shall proceed to admit the student as above. The Principal in consultation with the Principal of the student's previous school may agree to facilitate the recovery if possible of any outstanding school property and make arrangements for the return of this to the previous school.

4 Students leaving school during school year.

Responsibilities of the Principal of the current school (Primary & Secondary).

The Principal of every school is responsible to ensure that:

- 4.1 If the student is leaving the country for further education in an overseas institute – then the procedures set out in **2 (above) Transfer between schools during the year** should be followed.

Responsibilities of a Secondary Principal.

4.2 If the student is leaving school for any reason (other than in 4.1) then the Secondary Principal is responsible to ensure that:

- (a) The student wishing to leave has attained the age of 16 years
- (b) **The student has completed school clearance and is in receipt of the "School Clearance Certificate – Secondary"**.
- (c) The student is withdrawn from the Register of Admissions & Withdrawals and the relevant class Register of Attendance.
- (d) Details are entered in the Students Leaving Form (see 5 below).

5 Students leaving school at end of school year

Responsibilities of a Secondary Principal.

The Secondary Principal is responsible to ensure that:

- (a) Every student wishing to leave has attained the age of 16 years.
- (b) **Every student has completed school clearance and is in receipt of the "School Clearance Certificate – Secondary"**
- (c) All students are withdrawn from the Register of Admissions & Withdrawals.
- (d) Details are entered on form "Student Leaving Form" (see Appendix E) for all students who have left school *during* the year and at *the end* of the year and this form is then filed at the School.

6 Register of Attendance

Responsibilities of Class/Form Teacher:

The class/form teacher is responsible for the management of the Register of Attendance within the following guidelines:

- (a) Directions for marking the Register of Attendance are stated on the back of the Register (see Appendix F). The following are to be noted carefully.
- (b) The Register is to be marked **twice** each day (morning and afternoon)
- (c) Students who are present at school are to be recorded thus - (mark (/) for morning attendance and (\) for afternoon attendance). N.B. (×) indicates present am and pm
- (d) Students who are absent are marked with an “a” in pen.
- (e) For all absences for which an explanation is received in accordance with the school’s policy (phone, note, medical certificate), circle the (a) to indicate that an explanation has been received. Written explanations are to be retained by the school (class teacher or school administration) until the end of the school year when they may then be disposed of.
- (f) The number of half-days present for each student will be entered on to the summary page at the end of each term under “times present” for each week. They need to be totaled as per the headings on the inside back cover. The attendance will be recorded on student mid and end of year reports.
- (g) A student who enrolls or leaves school during the year (with clearance) is to be recorded as “entered” or “left” in the Remarks column.
- (h) An ECE child (between 3 ½ years and 5 years) or a student over the age of 16 and who is marked as absent “a” (without explanation) for 20 consecutive school days is to be withdrawn from the Register of Attendance and this will be noted in the remarks column as “left”.
- (i) A non-attending student between the ages of 5 years and 16 years will continue to be marked as absent “a” until such time as the Principal receives advice from the Secretary of Education to withdraw the student.

Responsibilities of the Principal of the school:

The Principal is responsible to ensure that:

- (a) A system is developed to monitor teachers’ management of the Register of Attendance in compliance with these guidelines and school policy.
- (b) As part of the school’s annual end-of-year report to the Ministry, provide a summary of non-attendance/truancy giving:
 - (i) the total number of absences across all classes throughout the year - both explained absences (a) and unexplained absences “a”
 - (ii) the total number of unexplained absences “a” across all classes throughout the year.

7 Truancy – Non Attendance

Truancy is defined as one or more days of unexplained absence from school – which are marked in the Register of Attendance as “a”

Introduction:

Principals are to be aware that the most critical factor in dealing with truancy is for the school administration to take the **earliest possible** intervention. The longer the period that a student is absent from school the less the likelihood of the student returning to school.


Other than following the truancy procedures set out below, Principals should investigate the reason(s) for a student’s unexplained absent. Truancy is often closely linked to: poor/low achievement (particularly a low level of literacy), poor/low self esteem, bullying at school, or unusual home circumstances (looking after younger siblings), dissatisfaction with curriculum delivery.

Responsibilities of the Principal:

Procedures will vary from school to school and island to island as different groups and bodies are responsible for dealing with truancy. However Principals are expected to follow these broad guidelines:

- (a) Investigation of an unexplained absence should commence no later than the third consecutive day of non-attendance. i.e. where the Register of Attendance has been marked as "a" for three consecutive days.
- (b) The school will have an established system and a person who is delegated to contact the student's parent/caregiver. Contact should be by the most direct means i.e. phone, home visit or message via a reliable courier.
- (c) Contact with the parent/caregiver should resolve the majority of short-term truancy cases. In each instance the parent/caregiver should be asked for an explanation of the absence and where the explanation relates in any way to the school's administration or the standard/quality of the delivery of the curriculum, the Principal should investigate the reasons given and make appropriate changes to policies, procedures and/or the curriculum delivery to try to prevent further similar absences from school.
- (d) For students between the ages of 5 years and 16 years and where the school administration has completed the procedure outlined in (b) **and** the student continues to be absent from school for a period of a further 3 days, then the Principal shall report the matter to both the appropriate outside authority and the Secretary of Education on the form "Report on Truancy" (see Appendix G) The Principal will not withdraw the student until instructed to do so by the Secretary of Education. The class/form teacher shall continue to mark the student as "a" until instructed by the Principal to remove the name of the student. (For Rarotonga schools the person responsible for follow up action is the Child Youth & Adolescent Officer of the Department of Internal Affairs; for schools in the Southern Group islands the person is the community Welfare Officer of the Department of Internal Affairs and for the Northern Group islands where there is no government appointed Officer, an authorized member of the School Committee may be asked to act as an unofficial truancy officer).
- (e) For ECE children between the ages of 3 ½ years and 5 years and for a student over the age of 16 years the Principal will carry out step (b) above and should the student continue to be absent from school, then the Principal shall advise the parent/caregiver in writing that the student will be withdrawn from the school after 20 days of continuous absence. The Principal shall proceed to withdraw the student from the Register of Admissions and Withdrawals. There is no legal requirement to report these students to either the Secretary of Education or the external agency.
- (f) In persistent and serious cases the Child Youth & Adolescent Officer or community Welfare Officer may proceed to take further action under the Prevention of Juvenile Crimes Act (1968) by reporting the matter to the Juvenile Crime Prevention Committee (JCPC). The Principal of the school and the Secretary of Education will be notified accordingly.

Appendix A – School Enrolment Card

<p>COOK ISLANDS</p>		<p>MINISTRY OF EDUCATION</p>
<p>SCHOOL ENROLMENT CARD</p>		
<p>1. Full name of child _____ (as shown on Birth Certificate or Passport)</p>		
<p>2. Date of birth: _____ (as shown on Birth Certificate or Passport)</p>		
<p>3. Sex of child: _____</p>		
<p>4. Island of birth: _____</p>		
<p>5. Full name of Parent/caregiver: _____</p>		
<p>6. Home address: _____ Tapere _____ Village: _____</p>		
<p>7. Phone Number: _____ Home _____ Work _____</p>		
<p>8. Other contact details: _____</p>		
<p>Special medical conditions: _____</p>		
<p>Signed: _____ Date: _____</p>		
<p>Relationship to child: _____ (Parent, grandparent, caregiver etc)</p>		

Reverse of card


<p><u>INSTRUCTIONS:</u> Please complete all details on the other side of this card and return to the Principal of the school in which you wish to enroll your child.</p> <p>You will need to have this card endorsed by the Registrar of Births on your island OR Return this card to the Principal, with :</p> <p>Either a copy a the child's Birth Certificate Or the child's Passport</p> <p>You should advise the Principal of any medical conditions that affect your child _____</p> <p>Registrar of Births: I _____ verify that _____ was born on _____</p> <p>Signed: _____ (Registrar of Births) _____ (Island)</p> <p>Principal: I verify that evidence of date of birth has been sighted on the student's Birth Certificate or Passport _____ Principal</p>

Appendix B Register of Admissions and Withdrawals.

The Ministry's policy is for schools to progressively move towards electronic storage of admission and withdrawal data on students. Schools should continue to use their current Register (hard copy) in the mean time until advised otherwise.

Schools wishing to commence an electronic Register for Admission and Withdrawals are encouraged to do so using the Excel spreadsheet provided by the MoE. Long term storage of this data is important and the school must ensure it has installed a good back up system and also have files printed to hard copy


Appendix C1 – School Clearance Certificate – Primary

<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;">COOK ISLANDSMINISTRY OF EDUCATION</div> <p style="text-align: center; margin-top: 10px;">SCHOOL CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE—PRIMARY</p> <p style="text-align: center;">This Certificate is issued to _____ of _____ school.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">I certify all property belonging to the school is accounted for and all sums of money owing to the school have been paid.</p> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; margin-top: 20px;">_____ Principal_____ Date</div>
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Reverse of card

<p>Name of student _____</p> <p>Class teacher: Check all books, equipment and school property issued to the above student have been returned in good condition. I certify that all school property has been returned in good condition</p> <p>_____ Class teacher</p> <p>Library teacher: Check all library books issued to the above student have been returned in good condition. I certify that all library books have been returned in good condition</p> <p>_____ Librarian</p> <p>Office: Check that all money owing to the school has been paid, including money from damaged or lost books and/or equipment I certify that all money owing to the school has been paid in full.</p> <p>_____ Office/Principal</p>
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Appendix C2 - School Clearance Certificate - Secondary

COOK ISLANDS		MINISTRY OF EDUCATION
SCHOOL CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE—SECONDARY		
This Certificate is issued to _____		
of _____ school.		
I certify all property belonging to the school is accounted for and all sums of money owing to the school have been paid.		
_____ Principal		_____ Date

Reverse of Card

Name of student _____	
Subject teachers: Check all books, equipment and school property issued to the above student have been returned in good condition.	
Subject: _____	Subject: _____
Teacher: _____ Date: _____	Teacher: _____ Date: _____
Subject: _____	Subject: _____
Teacher: _____ Date: _____	Teacher: _____ Date: _____
Subject: _____	Subject: _____
Teacher: _____ Date: _____	Teacher: _____ Date: _____
Library teacher: Check all library books issued to the above student have been returned in good condition. I certify that all library books have been returned in good condition	
_____ Librarian	
Office: Check that all money owing to the school has been paid, including money for damaged or lost books and/ or equipment I certify that all money owing to the school has been paid in full.	
_____ Office/Principal	

Appendix D

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION – STUDENT TRANSFER AT END OF YEAR

Instructions: Complete **two or more** copies of this form.

Send one copy to each of the schools in which students will be enrolled next year

For students who have cleared school send the Clearance Certificate with this form (tick last column)

Current School: _____ Island: _____

New School: _____ Island: _____

First Name	Surname	DoB	Last class	Clearance Certificate

Signed _____
(Principal)

Date: _____

Appendix E

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION – STUDENT LEAVING FORM

School: _____ Island: _____

FULL NAME		Age Y M		Year Level	Highest Qual attempted	DESTINATION As given by student
1						
2						
3						
4						
5						
6						
7						
8						
9						
10						
11						
12						
13						
14						
15						
16						
17						
18						
19						
20						

N.B. Destination means one of:

- Employment (state type if known)
- Staying at home
- Overseas – work
- Overseas – further education
- Other

Signed _____ Date: _____
(Principal)

Instructions: Complete this form during the year (when a student leaves school) and at end of school year and Fax to The Secretary of Education, Ministry of Education - Fax 28357.

Appendix F Register of Attendance

DIRECTIONS (to replace current instructions on back of Register)

The register of attendance is a legal document that can be requested in a court of law. It must be an accurate record of student attendance at any one time.

1. Enter only those children who have been enrolled and entered into the Admission and Withdrawal Register.
2. Where students from more than one year level are combined in a single class leave a few blank lines between the year groups.
3. Write the student's surname first, in alphabetical order, eldest year group first, boys first followed by girls.
4. In the columns for "Age" and "Time since entering first School" enter the number of completed years and months as on the 1st day of January (Student Management systems can print these reports out for class/form teachers)
5. Under the words "First Week", "Second Week" etc. enter the dates on which the school week begins and ends
6. Mark attendance twice each day in only blue or black pen. You must not use pencil. Enter a (/) in the morning and (\) in the afternoon. Enter "a" for a student who is absent. If the absence is explained by way of phone call, medical certificate, or note then circle the "@" to indicate an explained absence.
7. At the end of each week count the number of half days of attendance of each student for the week and enter the number in the appropriate column ("1st Week", "2nd Week", etc.) of the section headed "Times Present".
8. At the end of the term total number of days present and enter in "Total for Term". Total also the number of days absent, both explained absence "@" and unexplained absence "a" and enter each total in the column to the right "Total for Term" thus: 3 – 6 indicates 3 days of explained absence and 6 days of unexplained absence.
9. From the Register of Attendance enter the number of days the student has been present on the student's report form
10. If a student is admitted to the class after the start of the school year, note the fact in the Remarks column and state the term and week of admission thus – "Entr'd – 1st Term Week 3" In the same way note when a name is removed from the register, when a student has left school, thus "Left – 2nd Term Week 4".
11. **Please note, under no circumstance must twink be used to correct a mistake.**

Appendix G Report on Truancy

Complete two copies – send one copy to the Child Youth & Adolescent Officer of the Department of Internal Affairs; or for schools in the Southern Group islands to the Welfare Officer of the Department of Internal Affairs – send the other copy to The Secretary of Education.

School: _____	Date: _____
Name of Student: _____ (First name) _____ (Surname)	
Sex: _____	Date of Birth _____ Age: _____
Name of Parent/Caregiver: _____	
Address of Parent/Caregiver: _____	Phone: _____
First date of unexplained absence: _____	
Number of days of continuous unexplained absence: _____	
Action so far taken by school administration _____	
_____ (Principal)	