



Standing Committee on Education and Community Inclusion

Inquiry into Annual and Financial Reports 2021-2022

ANSWER TO QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE

Asked by Mr Davis on 31 October 2022: Minister Berry took on notice the following question(s):

Reference: uncorrected proof transcript 31 October 2022, page 38 – 40

MR DAVIS: Thank you. This one should be a quick one. It is a little while ago that I moved a motion in the Assembly, in June 2021, when I asked to give effect to an ongoing policy of support for teachers and students to allow for students to attend organised peaceful protests or demonstrations that accord with the policies around the management of peaceful protests. Can I confirm that such a policy has been written and shared amongst schools so there is an understanding?

Ms McMahon: Not a specific policy. The policy exists already to allow children to attend events outside of school. That is with parental permission. Part of the curriculum is also dedicated to understanding civics and citizenship, through the humanities curriculum. In that, teachers will teach students at age-appropriate levels, what it means to have a voice and to have a say within our democratic processes. So, no child will be told not to attend a political or a particular process or a way of demonstrating or having their choice, but is up to their parents to give them permission not to be at school. That is their responsibility and we would not question that, but we certainly need that level of permission. If a child does not attend school without their parents' permission, we would send a notification to the parents to let them know that that child was not at school on that day and seek a response from the parents as to why they were not there.

MR DAVIS: Naturally. Could I ask: would you mind taking on notice providing to the committee a copy of that policy?

MR DAVIS: I understand that. I knew what existed previous to this term of government and my view was that it was not sufficient, which is why I brought a substantive motion to the Assembly in June 2021, so I am interested to see if there has been any work as a result of that motion and whether the policy has been updated. That is why I am interested in the most recent copy of the policy.

MR DAVIS: Could I just ask then to expand the question on notice: if you would not also mind providing the committee with examples of how that has been communicated. I ask that because it has been put to me that there is still not the kind of level of understanding of that policy, that such a motion in the Assembly was my intention. I would appreciate that.

In relation to:

Copy of policy for that pertains to attendance and absenteeism and how is it communicated to parents.

Minister Yvette Berry: The answer to the Member's question is as follows:–

The ACT Education Directorate maintains the *Compulsory Education, Student Enrolment and Attendance Policy*, which is available through the ACT Education public website:

www.education.act.gov.au/publications_and_policies/School-and-Corporate-Policies/student-administration/enrolment-and-attendance/compulsory-education-student-enrolment-and-attendance-policy

This policy advice is available to families on the Education Directorates website at:

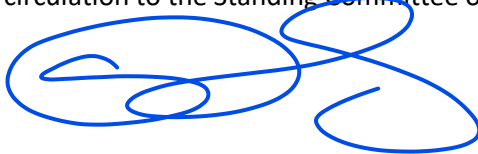
www.education.act.gov.au/public-school-life/at-school/attendance

Schools also communicate regularly on attendance expectations with their school communities.

This policy was reviewed and updated in February 2022.

Approved for circulation to the Standing Committee on Education and Community Inclusion

Signature:



Date:

16/11/22

By the Minister for Education and Youth Affairs, Minister Yvette Berry