



KILBREDA COLLEGE WELLBEING SCHOOL AVOIDANCE TOOL KIT

As a parent be sure to have someone who can support you in this journey as it can be very difficult to see your child struggling; such as a friend, family member or neighbour.

Emotional based school avoidance tips



Signs your daughter may be avoiding wanting to go to school

- Frequent requests to stay at home or tearfulness before school, especially after weekends or holidays
- Often late for school – dawdling to school, missing public transport, running away, delaying school drop off or skipping classes
- Frequent physical complaints before or during school – headaches, stomach aches, sore throat – with no signs of actual illness
- Complain of anxiety symptoms – sweating, racing heart, breathing difficulties, butterflies
- Excessive visits to first aid



STEP 1

Steps to take when your daughter is avoiding going to school

- First you should talk to your child and acknowledge their feelings and listen to what they have to say – What don't they like about going to school, what some of their worries are, what do they like, what are some problems...
 - Possible reasons they may not want to attend:
 - ✓ They are being bullied
 - ✓ School work is too difficult
 - ✓ They find school boring
 - ✓ A mental health concern such as anxiety
 - ✓ They are having trouble with their teacher
 - ✓ There is an issue with other children at school
 - ✓ A family situation is affecting them
 - ✓ There are social issues
 - ✓ They are having behavioural issues
- Remind them of the importance of attending school regularly:
 - To gain more knowledge
 - To gain access to university or other pathways such as TAFE
 - Better employment opportunities
 - To develop skills
 - To develop friendships
- Encourage them that you want them to be successful at school and beyond
- Reassure that you will work together with the school to make school a safe and happy place for them



STEP 2

- Let the school know there is a problem as soon as possible, so that the issues can be addressed – the sooner the issues are addressed the better the outcome
- The school will guide you to the resources that may be required to support your daughter. For example: counselling if there is a mental health concern



STEP 3

- Present when meeting with the school as a “united front”
 - > Always include your daughter in these meetings
- Develop a plan to transition back to school together
- Ensure that your daughter has a voice when developing the plan
 - > This ensures that she has consented to the plan



STEP 4

- Have a firm and consistent approach – prepare that there may be push back from your daughter.
- Each day is a new day
 - > If your daughter does not attend one day try again the next
- Anticipate difficulties and be prepared to find solutions
 - > Have a Plan B which may mean adapting the original plan for that day



What can I do to help my child attend school?

- Be a good role model
 - > Show them how you attend your work, appointments and commitments
- Set the expectation that they have to attend school each day, even in some capacity
 - > For example, homeroom and period 1
- Not attending school is not negotiable
- Have the same routine each day and stick to it
 - Morning routine – wake up on time, set breakfast time
 - Afternoon/Evening routine - Set homework time, pack school bag at night, ensure they have everything they need for the next day, prepare lunch and have a consistent bedtime
- Do not reward the behaviour of staying at home
 - > if your daughter refuses to go to school, do not let them have access to their phones/ Netflix
- Limit technology in their bedroom at night
- Ensure they get to school on time
 - > Use reliable transport to get to school, plan to meet up with a friend so they can travel to school together
- Support the development of positive peer relationships outside of the classroom
 - > Encourage your daughter to take on hobbies or join sports/clubs
- Know the attendance policy and keep up to date of your daughter’s attendance
 - > What time does your daughter need to be at school? What happens if she is late? How to let you know if she does not attend?
- Have open lines of communication with school
 - > Know your daughter’s year level leader or a teacher from the beginning of the year, it is easier then to know who to contact if an issue arises and address issues sooner rather than later
- Avoid having family holidays outside of term time – missing several days can make catching up very difficult



Additional Resources:

- Online Psychology sessions are also available at www.someone.health

Helplines:

- Lifeline 13 11 14 or www.lifeline.org.au
- Kids Helpline 1800 55 1800 or kidshelpline.com.au
- Beyond Blue 1300 22 4636 or online chat on www.beyondblue.org.au
- Parentline Australia 1300 301 300
- Headspace: Online chat on headspace.org.au/ehespace