

# SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

## School Attendance

"It's NOT OK to Be Away"

There is a legal requirement for students 16 years and under to attend school and for schools to keep records of student attendance. School term dates are available from the Department of Education website

(<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/keydates/termdates.htm>).

Continual absenteeism and irregular attendance can affect the student long after leaving school.

A student's absence from school can significantly limit their learning opportunities and achievement and may lead to:

- Falling behind at school to a level where the child's reading, writing and mathematics skills will eventually limit their employment chances
- Loss of friendships and social problems
- Loss of confidence and low self-esteem
- Risk taking behaviour that may flow on to difficulty with police, drugs and alcohol
- Being unable to find and keep long-term employment

### What is my responsibility as a parent/care giver?

Ensure your child:

- Attends school on ALL school days
- Is on time every day

Ensure you:

- Tell the school if your child is away and the reason why
- Contact the school if your child does not want to come to school
- Arrange doctor and dentist appointments for after school or during school holidays
- Arrange personal shopping trips or special birthday celebrations out of school hours
- Do not allow your child to stay at home for minor reasons
- Identify if there is an issue that can be addressed by contact with the school

### Why is it important for a child to attend school regularly?

- If your child misses the basic skills in primary school they can experience difficulties with their learning
- Regular attendance is essential to make sure learning is not disrupted
- Schools help children develop important social skills, such as friendship building, teamwork, communication skills and a healthy self-esteem

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IT'S SCHOOL  
TO BE AT SCHOOL

## What can I do if my child says they don't want to go to school?

- Let the child know that being at school is important to you
- Let your child know that you value learning and education. Talk about how being late or regular absences from school can disrupt their learning and limit their choices in the future
- Keep a regular morning routine. Set the alarm to allow time to get ready
- Have school uniform, shoes, lunch, homework, hat and everything needed ready the night before school
- Consider not having the TV or computer games on before school
- If children appear unhappy, listen to them and help them be honest and objective about what's happening
- Show your child you are interested in their school and their schoolwork. Ask them about what they are learning and what they do in class and in the playground
- Praise effort and their achievements
- Celebrate their success
- Show and tell others about what your child does at school
- Develop a positive relationship with parents and school staff
- Be part of the school- get involved with activities and events that the school may be running
- Remain calm! Be firm and quietly say that they are going to school and continue with your usual morning preparations
- Speak to your child's teacher, Assistant Principal, Principal or Student Wellbeing Coordinator. This discussion can be confidential (private) and can help the school to put in place strategies to help

## What children gain from 'being at school'

B- elonging to their community and peer group

E- njoyable experiences

I- nteresting and exciting things to do

N- urturing environment

G- aining knowledge

A- dults who listen and are fair

T- rust and respect, given and received

S- kills for living in the world

C- hance to make mistakes and learn from them

H- elp when they need it

O- pportunity to be "themselves"

O- pen doors for the future

L- earning and living experiences

IT'S COOL  
TO BE <sup>AT</sup> SCHOOL