

# Every day counts

## School is better when you're here

### Attendance fact sheet for primary school students

#### **Do I have to go to school?**

Yes, in Victoria everyone aged from 6 – 17 has to go to school.

Missing one day a fortnight is the same as missing 4 whole weeks of school a year. From prep to Year 12 that adds up to 1.5 years of school!

School is better when you attend. Your friends and your teachers notice that you're away and wonder if you're OK.

#### **Why is regular attendance at school important?**

Right now, being at school is the most important thing you need to do for your future. School helps you build good habits for later on in life. You might think school is just about Maths and English but you're also learning about how to work with other people and how to solve problems.

Being at school every day also means you are becoming more independent as a learner and interacting with your friends and teachers. If you're at school you can get help from your teachers and friends and won't have to try to learn things in your own time.

Being an adult probably seems far away but we know that young people who attend school more frequently have better outcomes after school too. This means they earn more money, have better job opportunities and are generally healthier. So being at school really does make a difference!

#### **Do my parents need to let the school know if I'm going to be away?**

Yes. Your parents need to notify the school within **three days** of your absence.

If you're away from school too much and don't have a reasonable excuse like a serious illness, your parents can also get in trouble.

#### **Are there any good reasons to be away from school?**

No. Unless you are so sick you can't get out of bed or there is an event like a funeral, you should be at school. Every day you are away is a day of classes and social connection you miss out on. Taking a day off for your birthday or go shopping isn't a good reason to miss school.

Even medical and health appointments should be made either before or after school or during the school holidays. This includes family holidays. Your parents are encouraged not to plan holidays during the term but to organise these during the school holidays.

If you do have to be away for some reason, your parents need to contact the school and let them know what's going on. Depending on the situation, the school might provide schoolwork for you to complete.

#### **What do I miss out on if I'm not at school?**

You miss out on all the big stuff – class discussions and all the interaction that happens in a classroom, the chance to get help from teachers and the opportunity to practice skills and gain knowledge. Being away means you might miss out on a lot of learning or that you need to catch up in your time.

If all of that isn't enough to convince you to be at school every day, being away also means you also miss out on playing with your friends. Being away from school a lot can be lonely. It has a big impact on relationships and social connections. Believe it or not, everyone wants you at school and it really is better when you attend.

### **What if I'm having problems getting to school?**

Getting to school on time everyday can be about having a good routine. If you find yourself running late or missing school because you're disorganised, try:

- Asking your parents for help getting ready
- Having a set time to go to bed
- Leaving all technology out of your bedroom
- Packing your school bag the night before with everything you need
- Having a set time for breakfast
- Planning to meet up with a friend so you can travel to school together.

Sometimes though it can just be hard to go to school. You might feel overwhelmed by the work or things might be tough with your friends. Maybe don't feel safe at school or you really dislike a teacher or things at home aren't great. Perhaps you're feeling down or anxious and don't even really know why.

Whatever the situation is, staying away from school isn't the answer. There are lots of people who want to help. Try talking to:

- Your parents or another adult family member
- A trusted teacher
- Wellbeing Coordinator or the school counsellor
- Another trusted adult like your coach

Useful websites/contacts

**Kids Matter** - [www.kidsmatter.edu.au](http://www.kidsmatter.edu.au)

**Youth Beyond Blue** - [www.youthbeyondblue.com.au](http://www.youthbeyondblue.com.au)

**Headspace** - [www.headspace.org.au](http://www.headspace.org.au) or e-headspace [www.eheadspace.org.au/](http://www.eheadspace.org.au/) for online counselling & support

**Reach Out** – [www.reachout.com](http://www.reachout.com)

**Kids helpline** - 1800 55 1800 24 hours a day, 7 days a week or [web counselling](#)