

Information for parents – Attendance at secondary school

Going to school every day is vitally important so your child does not miss out on important ideas, concepts, knowledge and skills for future learning. At our school we want your teenager to do their very best. To get the best education, they need to go to school every day.

The teenage years are a time for young people to develop independence and find their place in the world, including how they take part in their school life.

By working together, our school community can support your child's attendance.

What can you do to help?

- Act early. It is important to understand and work on the underlying reasons why your teenager is not going to school.
- On average, teenagers need eight to nine hours sleep a night to be healthy and alert. Maintaining a daily routine helps. This may include monitoring internet, mobile phone and television use at night to ensure sleep is not disturbed.
- Try not to make appointments or take holidays during school time. This can make it difficult to catch up on missed school-work, and cause anxiety about attending school.
- Don't let your teenager stay home unless they are genuinely sick.
- Don't let your teenager stay home to finish an assignment that is due. Make attendance the number one priority.
- Teach them that attending to commitments is important.

Do you need to let the school know if your teenager will be away from school?

- Yes, you need to let office staff know the reason why your teenager is going to be or has been absent from school as soon as possible.
- Don't feel the need to 'cover up' the reason for your teenager's absence.
- Be honest so we can work with you and your teenager to improve their attendance.
- Having information about why your teenager is missing school helps us plan for their return, and to work out whether we can provide any further help to you.
- Have clear expectations about after school jobs. Make sure work does not impact on their ability to get to school each day or interfere with study.
- Encourage extracurricular activities such as sport and creative activities. They can help your teenager develop positive relationships and experience success, helping them feel more motivated.

- Monitor your teenager's attendance and learning at school. Periodically check with the school to find out how things are going.
- Avoid taking over or giving your teenager the impression you are solving their problems for them. Improving attendance requires the school, parent and student to work together.
- If your teenager delays getting ready for school so they are late, encourage them to still go to school.
- Ask school staff for help if you are struggling to get your teenager to school.

What will staff at our school do to help?

- Offer relevant and culturally responsive learning opportunities to engage students.
- Monitor every student's attendance and work with you to overcome problems affecting your teenager's attendance.
- Talk with you about involving support staff such and other agencies or organisations to help.
- Talk with you about local services that may also be able to help such as Headspace, Samaritans Youthline and Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS).

For more information you can contact the school to arrange for an interpreter.

Information for parents – When is it OK to miss school?

It is important for children to attend school all day, every day.

When is it OK to not go to school?

An OK reason is one that prevents your child from getting to school. This could include:

- your child is unable to attend because they are sick
- attending cultural or religious observances such as sorry time and funerals
- an unavoidable medical appointment
- an unavoidable natural event such as flood waters or a cyclone

The Principal decides if the reason given for your child's absence is acceptable.

It's NOT OK to miss school if your child:

- is celebrating a birthday
- is going on a family holiday
- is visiting family and friends
- has slept in or had a big weekend
- is looking after other children
- has sport or other recreational activities that have not been approved by the school
- has appointment such as haircuts and minor check ups

If possible, routine medical and other health appointments should be made either before or after school, or during the school holidays.

Do you need to let the school know if your child will be away from school?

Yes, you need to let the school know the reason why your child is going to be, or has been, absent from school as soon as possible. Where possible, please discuss any upcoming absences in advance so we can let you know of important learning or activities your child will miss out on.

This requires a responsible person, usually a parent, to provide a reason for the absence within three school days.

Having information about why your child is missing school helps us plan for their return to school and work out whether we can provide any further help to you.

Why is going to school so important?

- At school, many concepts such as literacy and numeracy are taught in a sequence. Missing school means missing out on learning – which can often make it difficult to catch

up later. This is particularly important in the early years when essential foundation skills are being taught.

- Going to school every day helps children learn the important life skill of ‘showing up’ – at school, at work, to sport and other commitments.
- Research from the Western Australian Telethon Kids Institute shows that every day at school counts towards a student’s learning. Students who attend regularly, generally do better at school and in life.