

My child won't go to school. What should I do?

You should contact the principal as soon as possible to discuss the issue and ask for help. The principal may seek support from a home school liaison officer or Aboriginal student liaison officer.

Home school liaison officers and Aboriginal student liaison officers have been specially trained to help you with your child's attendance. They work with school communities to encourage all students to attend school regularly.

Do you have problems with getting your child to school, for some of the following reasons?

- won't get out of bed
- won't go to bed
- can't find their clothes, books, homework, school bag
- school lunches not ready
- slow to eat breakfast
- homework not done
- watching television late at night or when they should be getting ready for school test or presentation at school
- birthdays
- screaming and not letting go of you.

Here are some suggestions which are based on setting regular routines:

- Have a set time to be out of bed
- Have a set time to go to bed
- Have uniform and school bag ready the night before
- Make lunches the night before
- Have a set time for starting / ending breakfast. A routine is important.
- Set time for daily homework activities
- Turn the television on for a set time and only if appropriate
- Be firm, children must go to school
- Provide lots of positive encouragement
- Be firm, a birthday is not a holiday
- Time your arrival at school to coincide with bell time and leave quickly. If arranged with the teacher beforehand, place your child's hand into that of the teacher and then leave.

What Might Happen if my Child Continues to Have Unacceptable Absences?

Some of the following actions may be undertaken

- **Attendance Meetings and Compulsory Attendance Conferences**

Parents (and sometimes their child) can be asked to go to a meeting with school personnel and other officers to help identify strategies to support the child and family. The aim of these conferences is to further identify issues which are impacting on a child's attendance. The outcome is for the parties to agree to undertake certain actions to improve the child's attendance.

- **Applications to the Children's Court -A Compulsory Schooling Order**

The aim is to assist a family and/or child to address the issues which are preventing satisfactory school attendance but has the added enforcement of a Court's powers.

- **Prosecution in the Local Court**

If all attempts fail to improve a student's attendance, action can be taken in the Local Court and the result can be fines up to a maximum of \$11,000.



REGULAR SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

INFORMATION FOR PARENTS

Why must I send my child to school?

Education in New South Wales is compulsory. This means all children from six years of age and under the minimum school leaving age are legally required to attend school.

From 2010, all New South Wales students must complete Year 10. After Year 10 and until they turn 17 years of age students must be:

1. in school or registered for homeschooling, or
2. in approved education or training (e.g.TAFE, traineeship, apprenticeship) or
3. in full-time, paid employment (average 25 hours per week) or in a combination of work, education and/or training.

Principals are legally responsible for keeping accurate records of student attendance and the reasons for any absences.

Principals are also responsible for deciding if the reason given for an absence is justified. For this reason, Principals may request medical certificates or other documentation for long or frequent absences explained by parents as being due to illness.

If Principals don't consider an explanation to be satisfactory, they will record the absence as unjustified.



Must I send my child every day?

YES. It is a condition of enrolment that you send your child to school every day. A small number of absences may be justified if your child:

- has to go to a special religious ceremony
- is required to attend to a serious and/or urgent family situation (eg a funeral)
- is too sick to go to school or has an infectious illness

Why is regular attendance at school important?

Regular school attendance will help your child to develop the skills needed to access the world of work and other opportunities. Attending school every day makes learning easier for your child and helps children to build and maintain friendships with other children.

Did you know?

If students miss as little as eight days in a school term, by the end of primary school they will have missed a year of education.

Why is arriving at school on time important?

Arriving at school and class on time:

- ensures that your child doesn't miss out on the important learning activities scheduled early in the day when they are most alert
- helps your child to learn the importance of punctuality and routine
- gives your child time to greet their friends before class and therefore reduces the opportunity for classroom disruption

Lateness (partial absence) must be explained to the school the same way as other absences .

What should I do if my child has to be absent?

If your child has to be absent from school, it is important to tell the school and provide a reason for your child's absence.

To explain an absence parents and carers may:

- send a note, fax , text or email to the school
- telephone the school, or
- visit the school.

All absences must be explained to the school. The principal has the right to question parents' or carers' requests for their child to be absent from school. They also have the right to question any explanation given.

What should I do if our family is going on holiday in school time?

Parents and carers are encouraged not to withdraw their children from school for family holidays. Families should try to arrange holidays during school vacations. If your family holiday is during school time, inform the school principal in advance and request leave and/or an exemption from school.

Must my child attend all activities, including daily fitness and sport?

YES. Sport and other physical activities help to keep your children healthy. Children are expected to attend all regular school activities, including sport. Do not keep your child away from school for the following:

- birthdays
- shopping
- minding other children
- routine check-ups or care such as haircuts
- minor family events
- sleeping in.

Medical and other health appointments for your child should be made either before or after school or during the school holidays.

Is my child counted as absent when attending school endorsed activities such as sport or an excursion away from the school premises?

NO. Students involved in off-site activities organised by the school must not be marked as absent. If you take a child to a school approved 'sports carnival' without an accompanying staff member your child is marked present.



What if I want my child to attend lessons (music, tutoring, coaching) outside school during school hours?

Involvement in private lessons, such as ballet and music classes, conducted outside the school during school hours may not be conducive to the effective operation of the school or to the education of your child.

Students' involvement in extra-curricula activities will usually be limited to outside school hours. If you insist on removing your child during the school day you will then be required to formally write to the Principal advising him/her of your decision to continue to remove your child during school hours and state clearly that you take full responsibility for your child's safety and education during such absences. You should also agree to follow the procedures with respect to "signing out and signing in" your child.

The principal retains the right to decide upon the quality of schooling provided to any child in these circumstances and whether the child can continue to be enrolled at the school. If you withdraw your child from school for private lessons an unjustified absence will be recorded and dealt with in the usual manner.



Do you need an interpreter?

Interpreting services are provided where possible for parents and carers who do not speak or understand English well and for deaf parents and carers who use sign language. For more information on interpreter services contact your school or phone the Telephone Interpreter Service and have them contact the school. The telephone number to ring is 131 450.