

Shared Responsibility

Ensuring regular attendance at preschool and school is a shared responsibility between parents/caregivers, preschools and schools.

If you are having problems with your child's school attendance, first contact their school to talk about it and ask for help.

If your child misses too much school your school will contact you to work through ways to address the problem. If you do not cooperate with the school and your child to improve their attendance, you could face a penalty.

Every day matters in the school life of a child or young person. Each day of attendance has a positive effect on their development and future success.

As early as preschool, regular absence can be a predictor of later attendance patterns. Even missing one day a week of school from reception to year 10 adds up to missing 2 years and 1 term of schooling.

Children and young people who do not attend school regularly also miss out on planned learning experiences, sequences of instruction and class participation. The impact of this loss is compounded with each absence. It is also more difficult for them to build positive relationships with others.

Poor student attendance has 2 categories:

- Habitual non-attendance: where a student has 5 or more absences for any reason in a term (average of 1 day per fortnight)
- Chronic non-attendance: where a student is absent for 10 days or more days in a term for any reason (average of 1 day per week).

Role of schools

By identifying attendance problems early, your preschool or school can help support your efforts to get your child to school every day.

Education is so important that any barriers to attendance, learning and wellbeing must be investigated so that children and young people can be present and engaged in their learning.

Effects of missing school

Long-term studies have shown that not completing school can be linked with poor life outcomes including, poor physical and mental health, poverty and involvement with the criminal justice system.

In contrast, regular attendance at school contributes to opportunities for success, including a population that is better educated and healthier, with improved job choices, financial independence and higher overall wellbeing.

Due to a range of factors, including systemic barriers and life circumstances, Aboriginal children are absent from school about twice as much as non-Aboriginal children. The department will work with Aboriginal families and communities to reduce these barriers and support attendance.

To notify the school of an absence call 8521 2400 or write a note in your child's diary.

Information sourced from:

<https://www.education.sa.gov.au/supporting-students/health-safety-and-wellbeing/attendance>



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ATTENDANCE INFORMATION

What is your child's attendance like and what can be done to help improve this?



What to do if your child refuses to attend school?

First contact their school to talk about it. You can discuss your concerns with your child's teacher, wellbeing leader, year level manager, deputy principal or the school principal.

If you do not cooperate with the school and your child to improve their attendance, you could face a penalty.

Refusal to attend school

A child's refusal to attend school may be the result of several other factors such as:

- separation anxiety
- learning difficulties or anxiety
- peer relationship issues including bullying
- teacher relationships issues
- feeling bored or disengaged at school.

Some children may leave the house but not attend school or slip away from the school (truancy).

Informing school about your child's absence

You need to notify the school of your child's absence and the reason for it. If you can't do this in advance, send a text message or phone on the day or send a note covering the days missed when your child returns.



When it's acceptable for children to be absent

It is acceptable for a child to miss school when:

- they are too sick to leave the house
- they have an infectious illness such as gastroenteritis, chicken pox or measles
- they need to attend medical or dental appointments that could not be made out of school hours
- they have been granted an exemption from school
- they have been sent home or suspended from school for disciplinary reasons
- the school principal is given a genuine reason that prevents the child from attending school.

If a student is absent due to reported illness for **3 or more consecutive days**, we encourage a medical certificate to be presented to the school.

Attendance Ladder

How close is your child to 100%?

0 days off school	100%	Perfect!
Equates to 2 days off school each year	98%	Excellent
Equates to 13 days off school each year	93%	Good
Equates to 22 days off school each year	88%	Concerned
Equates to 32 days off school each year	83%	Very Concerned
Equates to 47+ days off school each year	75% or Below	Extremely Concerned

EVERY SCHOOL DAY COUNTS

Varied reasons why children miss school

Many factors affect children's attendance at school such as:

- illness or injury
- family problems
- medical or dental appointments
- family holidays or culturally significant occasions.

Young people may also be dealing with challenging life events such as:

- homelessness
- grief and loss
- caring for ill or disabled parents
- complex family responsibilities or dynamics that have a negative impact on their education.

It is crucial that children and young people feel accepted, valued, safe and respected in their lives, including at schools and preschools.