



## Attendance and Absenteeism

Patterns of attendance and absence that are set up in the early years usually persist through education and life. Regular attendance at school is important to a child's learning and development.

Poor attendance may lead to learning difficulties because children who are frequently absent are likely to miss learning the basic skills needed for their future education.

Children are required to attend school from when they turn 6 until they turn 16. From the age of 16 to 17 students must be in an approved educational program.

### When is it acceptable for children to be absent?

Situations where it is acceptable for a child to miss school include times when the:

- child is too sick to leave the house
- child has an infectious illness such as gastro enteritis, chicken pox or measles
- child needs to attend medical or dental appointments that could not be made out of school hours
- school principal is provided with a genuine reason that prevents the child attending school
- child has been granted an [exemption from school](#)
- child has been sent home or suspended from school for disciplinary reasons.

If a student is absent due to reported illness for three or more consecutive days the principal can ask for a medical certificate.

### Informing school about your child's absence

It is important to notify the school of your child's absence and the reason for it. If you are unable to notify the school in advance, send a note covering the days missed when your child returns.

### Refusal to attend school

A child's refusal to go to school can be very distressing both to parents and the child. Non-attendance can take different forms. While some children may refuse to leave home, others may leave the house but not attend school or slip away from the school (truancy).

There are many reasons why children refuse to attend school:

- separation anxiety
- learning difficulties
- not having friends
- being bullied at school
- not getting along with teachers.

### What to do if your child refuses to attend school

**If you have difficulty with your child attending school you should immediately contact the school to seek help. There are many staff members who can assist you. You can discuss your concerns with your child's teacher, deputy principal or the school principal.**

For more information on how to help your child with their attendance or visit the [parenting and child health website](#)

or please phone the parents' hotline on 1300 364 100