

EVERY DAY COUNTS

Secondary School Attendance

Fact sheet for parents and carers of Koorie children and young people

In Years 7-10, students miss on average almost a week every term - that's four weeks of school per year.



Going to school every day is the single most important part of your teenager's education. Students learn new things at school every day – missing school puts them behind.

Why it's important

We all want our students to get a great education, and the building blocks for a great education begin with students coming to school each and every day.

Students develop good habits by going to school every day – habits that are necessary to succeed after school, whether in the workplace or in further study.

Missing school can have a big impact on students academically and socially. It can affect their test results, including VCE, and, just as importantly, it can affect their relationships with other students, and lead to social isolation.

There is no safe number of days for missing school – each day a student misses puts them behind, and can affect their educational outcomes.

Each missed day is associated with falling behind in subject topics and assessment tasks, and lead to fewer subject choices and may impact on achievement in years 11 and 12.

Getting in early

It's never too late to improve attendance – going to school more often can lead to better outcomes. Even at Year 9, when attendance rates for all students are lowest, going to school more often can make a big difference. Every day counts.

Schools are there to help – if you're having attendance issues with your teenager, speak to your school about ways to address those issues.

What we can do

The main reasons for absence are:

Sickness – There are always times when students need to miss school, such as when they're ill. It's vital that they're only away on the days they are genuinely sick, and setting good sleep patterns, eating well and exercising regularly can make a big difference.

"Day off" – Think twice before letting your teenager have a "day off" as they could fall behind their classmates – every day counts.

Truancy – This is when students choose not to go to school without their parent's permission. There can be many reasons for truancy; the best way to address this is for schools and parents to work together.



While all absences are bad for academic performance, unexcused absences are a much stronger indicator of lower reading and maths achievement.

If for any reason your teenager must miss school, there are things you can do with your school to ensure they don't fall behind:

- Speak with your home room teacher or year level coordinator and find out what work your teenager needs to do to keep up.
- Develop an absence learning plan with your teacher and ensure your teenager completes the plan.

Remember, every day counts. If your teenager must miss school, speak with your home room teacher or year level coordinator as early as possible.

Openly communicating with your teenager's school about all absences is a good way to prevent attendance issues being escalated to a School Attendance Officer. A School Attendance Officer is a Department of Education and Early Childhood Development Regional Director who has authority to follow up attendance issues.

If after this, your teenager continues to miss school, the Department can issue you with an Infringement Notice.

If you're having attendance issues with your teenager, please let your year level coordinator, principal or other relevant staff member know so you can work together to get your teenager to school every day.

Further information

For more information and resources to help address attendance issues, visit:

www.education.vic.gov.au/school/parents/behaviour/Pages/studentattendance.aspx

The Koorie Education Workforce can provide a range of supports for Koorie students and families on attendance and other school issues.

Koorie Engagement Support Officers in particular can play a key role in assisting you to work with your teenager's school to resolve any issues that might be impacting on their school attendance and can also connect you and your teenager to other support services if needed.

To get in contact with a Koorie Education Coordinator, who will put you in contact with a Koorie Engagement Support Officer, see:

<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/contact/Pages/wannikregional.aspx>