

COMPULSORY SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

Information for parents and carers

Education for your child is important and regular attendance at school is essential for your child to achieve their educational best and increase their career and life options. Schools work in partnership with parents and carers to encourage and support regular attendance of children and young people. When your child attends school every day, learning becomes easier and your child will build and maintain friendships with other children.

Legal responsibilities for PARENTS AND CARERS ▼

Education in New South Wales is compulsory for all children between the ages of six years and below the minimum school leaving age. The Education Act 1990 requires that parents ensure their children of compulsory school age are enrolled at, and regularly attend school, or, are registered with NSW Education Standards Authority for home schooling.

Once enrolled, children are required to attend school each day it is open for students.

The importance of ARRIVING ON TIME ▼

Arriving at school and class on time:

- Makes sure that students do not miss out on important learning activities early in the day
- Helps students learn the importance of punctuality and routine
- Give students time to spend time with their friends before class
- Reduces classroom disruption

Lateness is recorded as a partial absence and must be explained by parents or carers.



Absences FROM SCHOOL ▼

Sometimes your child may need to be absent from school. Justified reasons for student absences may include:

- being sick, or having an infectious disease
- having an unavoidable medical appointment during school hours
- being required to attend a recognised religious holiday
- exceptional or urgent family circumstances (e.g. attending a funeral)

Following an absence, you must provide your child's school with an explanation of the absence within seven school days. However, the school may contact you to discuss the absence if they have not received an explanation from you within two days.

Principals may decline to accept an explanation that you have provided if they do not believe the absence is in the best interest of your child. In these circumstances your child's absence would be recorded as unjustified. When this happens, the principal will let you know the reasons why they have made this decision.

The school may request medical certificates or other documentation when frequent or long-term absences are explained as being due to the child's illness. Principals may also seek parent's permission to speak with medical specialists to obtain information to collaboratively develop a health care plan to support your child. If the request is denied, the absences can be recorded as unjustified.

When your child has difficulties

ATTENDING SCHOOL ▼

You should contact the school as soon as possible to discuss the issue and ask for help. Strategies to help improve attendance may include a referral to support within the school or linking your child with appropriate external support networks.

The principal may seek your assistance to help develop an Attendance Improvement Plan that identifies the issues that prevent your child from attending school regularly and collaborates with you and your child to seek strategies to enable your child to get to school.

Consequences of

CONTINUED ABSENCES ▼

Some of the following actions may be undertaken:

- **Compulsory Schooling Conferences**

You may be asked, along with your child, to attend a Compulsory Schooling Conference that is convened by a person authorised by the Secretary of the NSW Department of Education. The conference will help to identify the supports your child may need to have in place, so they attend school regularly. The school, parents and agencies will work together to develop an agreed plan (known as undertakings) to support your child's attendance at school.

The Compulsory Schooling Conference is the final school-based intervention that can be taken to address matters of unsatisfactory school attendance. It is important to understand that the school may refer the case to the Department of Education Legal Services to take further action where children of compulsory school age continue to have unacceptable unexplained or unjustified absences from school, despite attempted interventions at the school level.

- **Compulsory Schooling Order**

If your child's attendance at school remains unsatisfactory the Department may apply to the Children's Court for a Compulsory Schooling Order. The Children's Court magistrate may order a Compulsory Schooling Conference to be convened.

- **Prosecution in the Local Court**

School and Department legal staff remain committed to working in partnership with you to address the issues which are preventing your child's full participation at school. In circumstances where a breach of compulsory schooling orders occurs further action may be taken against a parent in the Local Court. The result of court action can be the imposition of a community service order or a fine.

Travel during

TERM TIME ▼

Families are encouraged to travel during school holidays. If travel during school term is necessary, discuss this with your child's school before the proposed period of travel. An Application for Extended Leave-Travel may need to be completed. Absences relating to travel will be marked as leave on the roll and will contribute to your child's total absences for the year.

In some circumstances students may be eligible to enrol in distance education for travel periods over 50 school days. This should be discussed with your child's school principal.



School LEAVING AGE ▼

In New South Wales, students must complete Year 10 or its equivalent. After Year 10, and up until they reach 17 years of age, there are a range of flexible options for students to complete their schooling.

Working in PARTNERSHIP ▼

Working collaboratively with students and their families is the best way to support the regular attendance of students at school. We look forward to working in partnership with you to support your child to fulfil their life opportunities.

Please get in touch with the school for support with getting your child to school.