

EVERY DAY COUNTS

SECONDARY SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

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.



SCHOOL IS BETTER WHEN YOUR TEENAGER IS THERE

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 & VCAL, 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 and post-school pathways.

Getting in early

It's never too late to improve attendance. Even in the middle years, when school can seem the most challenging for students and when attendance rates can be at their lowest, going to school more often can make a big difference.

Every day counts.

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

IN VICTORIA SCHOOL IS COMPULSORY FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE AGED 6 – 17 YEARS

Student Absences

The main reasons for absence are:

Sickness – There are always times when students need to miss school, such as when they are 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.

Family holidays - It's vital that holidays are planned during school holidays where possible, and not during the term. If you are planning to go on holiday during term time, make sure that you talk to your school in advance, and work with them to develop an absence learning plan.

"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 or skip out of school during the day. There can be many reasons for truancy; the best way to address this is for schools and parents to work together.

While all absences can affect academic performance, DET's statistics show that unexcused absences are a much stronger indicator of lower reading and maths achievement.

School refusal - School refusing children experience significant emotional distress not only when going to school but also at the thought of going to school; they may be absent from school for weeks or even months at a time. School refusal differs from truancy as children generally stay home with the knowledge of the parents and despite their best efforts to encourage their child to go to school. See: [My child or teenager has anxiety](#)

BEING AWAY FROM SCHOOL FOR 1 DAY A FORTNIGHT EQUALS MISSING 1.5 YEARS OVER 13 YEARS OF SCHOOL

If your teenager is away

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:

- Inform the school via your teen's Form/Home Room teacher or Year Level Coordinator
- Find out what work your teenager needs to do to keep up.
- Develop an absence learning plan with your teenager's teacher and ensure they complete 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 Training Regional Director who has authority to follow up attendance issues. Chronic or ongoing attendance issues that are escalated can lead to an Infringement Notice being issued to parent/s.

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

TOP ATTENDANCE TIPS FOR PARENTS

- Schools want to work in partnership with parents – act early if you have any concerns by contacting your child's school and asking for advice and support
- Remember that every day counts
- There is no safe number of days for missing school – each day a student misses puts them behind, and can affect their educational outcomes and their social connectedness
- Talk positively about school and the importance of attending every day
- Open and prompt communication with your child's school about all absences is a good idea
- Avoid making routine medical and dental appointments during the school day or planning family holidays during the term
- Seek help from your school if you are concerned about your child's attendance and wellbeing. Schools want to work in partnership with parents to support student attendance and wellbeing.

FURTHER INFORMATION

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

<https://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/teachers/studentmanagement/attendance/Pages/improve-attendance.aspx>

STUDENT ATTENDANCE AT BOX HILL HIGH SCHOOL

Using your parent login details on COMPASS is our preferred method of absence notification, however alternatively you could phone or send us an email using the details below.

For all attendance, absences, early leaving and late arrivals communication please contact:

Attendance Coordinator: **Ms. Sonia Francis**
Phone No (Absence Hotline): 9875 9139
Email: sonia.francis@education.vic.gov.au

All students coming after the commencement of the first class and leaving the school before the end of the school day must use their Student ID Card to register at the COMPASS Kiosk which is located outside the General Office

ABSENCES

If a student is absent on any school day, the parent/guardian must notify the school before classes start at 8.35am.

If you send an email to sonia.francis@education.vic.gov.au, you need to clearly state the following:

- Student's name
- Form group
- Date of absence
- Reason for the absence
- Parent/Guardian name

The Attendance Coordinator's number is 9875 9139. If you notify us by phone, a written notification via COMPASS or email, including all the details listed above must also be provided.

The school will determine if the absence is an approved absence (refer over the page)

ABSENCE NOTIFICATION BY SMS

Parents/guardians will receive an SMS message at 10:30 am if:

- A student is marked absent Periods 1 and 2, and
- No explanation for the absence has been given to the Attendance Coordinator, and
- No explanation has been entered on COMPASS.

Having received an SMS a parent/guardian needs to immediately use one of the methods listed above to explain the absence. If no response is received, a further email will be sent later in the day.

LONG TERM ABSENCE

If a student is intending to miss significant class time such as a holiday, parents/guardians must supply a written request at the time of booking (not the day before leaving) to the Attendance Coordinator, who will then seek approval from the Principal.

Once approval has been granted parents/guardians should contact all the classroom teachers to inform them of the temporary absence including whether any work is able to be completed during this time.

LATE ARRIVALS

If a student arrives late to school for any reason or returning to school after an appointment, they must:

- Step 1:** Sign-in using their Student ID Card at the COMPASS Kiosk.
- Step 2:** Provide a valid reason, preferably with a note from the parent/guardian including the same information as requested in "Absences".
- Step 3:** COMPASS Kiosk will print out a **COMPASS Arrival Pass** which the student must then take to their classroom teacher. Hand in written note to the Attendance Coordinator.

Parents will be notified if a student consistently arrives late for no valid reason.

EARLY LEAVERS

A student needing to leave the school grounds for any reason during the day must:

- Step 1:** Have a written note (or COMPASS approval) from parent/guardian.
- Step 2:** See their Year Level Coordinator before school begins to obtain a **Coordinator signed Early Leavers Pass**.
- Step 3:** Show the pass to the classroom teacher to be excused from class if leaving during class time.
- Step 4:** Sign-out using the COMPASS Kiosk. It will print out a COMPASS Departure Pass
- Step 5:** Hand the **Coordinator Signed Early Leavers Pass** to Attendance Coordinator or staff at the General Office before leaving school grounds. Keep the COMPASS Departure Pass as approved permission.

ILLNESS WHILE AT SCHOOL

Any student who feels sick or has an injury while at school must first report to the First Aid Officer at the General Office. The school will then contact the parent to collect their child, if it is deemed necessary. A student who is ill will then have their absence Early Leaver pass processed at the General Office.