

## INFORMATION FOR PARENTS

# THE IMPORTANCE OF ATTENDANCE HABITS IN THE EARLY YEARS

Developing the habit of going to school every day is vitally important so your child does not miss out on important ideas, concepts, knowledge and skills they need for future learning.

Going to school every day helps children learn the important life skill of 'showing up' – at school, at work, to sport and other commitments.



### Did you know?

- In the early years of school, many concepts, such as literacy and numeracy, are taught in a sequence. This means that if your child is often away from school, it can make it difficult to catch up later.
- The Western Australian Telethon Kids Institute has found that the attendance habits set in Kindergarten and Pre-Primary are likely to continue throughout a child's school life, so it is important for them to go to school every day.
- The *School Education Act 1999* requires all enrolled students to attend every day that their school is open.
- [FREE TEXT FIELD FOR SCHOOLS TO ADD OWN MESSAGE TO FACT SHEET].
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### What can you do?

It is an exciting time for the whole family when your child starts school. You can help to make sure they have a positive first experience by providing your child with routines that help them know what to expect and feel secure in new environments. This can reduce their anxiety about going to school and help them develop independence and confidence.

For more information please contact:

(Name and contact details for staff member who deals with absences related to holidays during school)



### You can help by:

- arranging for your child to meet a friend before school so they can go in together
- volunteering and helping out at school at least once a term
- getting clothes/uniforms and lunches ready the night before
- arriving and collecting your child from school on time
- making sure your child gets nutritious meals each day and enough sleep each night
- making appointments with doctors, dentists and specialists outside school time
- making holiday plans during school holidays and not during school terms.

If your child is unwell or you are having trouble getting your child to school, please let the [teacher, front office, year coordinator, student services, principal] know straight away. By having information about your child's absences, we are better able to help you.

[FREE TEXT FIELD FOR SCHOOLS TO ADD OWN MESSAGE TO FACT SHEET]

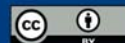


### What will the staff at [School name] do?

- Offer developmentally, socially and culturally responsive learning opportunities.
- Monitor every student's attendance including talking with you about any absences.
- Work with you to overcome problems affecting your child's attendance.
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### **Information for schools**

Prior to use, principals should make a professional judgement on the information contained within this resource to ensure its relevance and validity within the context of their school.

This may include:

- adapting text within the resource where required
- whether the content is suitable for the whole school, a target group, or in individual cases
- whether the information would be best received as a supplementary resource to a meeting or face-to-face conversation with a parent or community member
- utilising key messages within this resource over a period of time as part of existing communications with parents and the community, rather than distributing the fact sheet as a once-off complete resource. For example, via SMS, the school app or social media, within the school newsletter, at assemblies or school events.

### **The requirements**

While enrolment in Kindergarten is not compulsory, it is compulsory for all enrolled students to attend school, or participate in an educational program of the school, on the days on which the school is open for instruction (Section 23 of the *School Education Act 1999*). This includes students enrolled in Kindergarten, and post-compulsory aged students enrolled in year 12.

Some functions of the *School Education Act 1999* relating to student attendance are not applicable for non-compulsory-aged students, such as attendance panels and prosecution.

### **The research**

The Telethon Kids Institute report, [\*Student Attendance and Educational Outcomes: Every Day Counts\*](#) found that attendance patterns are established very early and are consistently maintained throughout a student's school career. The report highlighted the need to target the early years in order to improve attendance before patterns become established and more difficult to change.

### **Recording absences in the early years**

In accordance with *Section 3.1 of the Student Attendance policy and procedures*, WA public schools are required to maintain accurate attendance records for every enrolled student, including the pre-compulsory year, Kindergarten (whether school-based or at a community Kindergarten).

Schools should record absences using the relevant lesson attendance codes. The Principal has the authority to determine which code is most applicable for each circumstance.

The purpose of these codes is for schools to be able to disaggregate their attendance data to determine common reasons for absence.

### **Communicating with parents**

Informing parents of the critical learning, concepts or activities that their child will be missing and the potential impact may assist in communicating with parents about why attending every day is important.

### **Support**

Join the [Student Attendance Connect Community](#) to connect with other WA public school staff about communicating with parents and strategies.