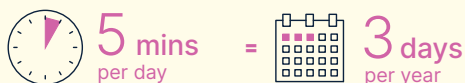


# School is better when your child is here

Going to school every day is the most important part of your child's education. There are 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. The best thing you can do is support your child to get to school every day.

A positive attitude towards school, healthy habits and routines, and parental involvement can support your child's regular school attendance and prevent chronic absence patterns.

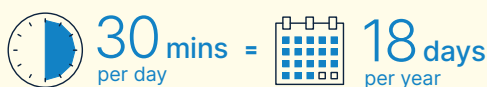
When your child misses just... they miss



When your child misses just... they miss... and over



When your child misses just... they miss



When your child misses just... they miss... and over



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## 1. Establish positive habits to promote attendance

- Set good bedtime and morning routines to make the process of getting to school smoother for everyone. Try to prepare as much as possible the night before, e.g. school uniform, school bag packed.
- Ensure your child gets enough sleep and exercise to support their physical and mental health.
- Talk positively about the importance of school attendance with your child. Explain that it is an important part of growing up, a legal obligation and that you expect them to attend every day.
- Show an interest in your child's school and become involved where possible. Keep notes, newsletters, etc. in a place where they are visible reminders of school news for the whole family. Talk about school activities in a positive manner.
- Discuss any changes to usual routines in advance with your child, such as alternative drop-off and pick-up arrangements, to ensure clarity and minimise anxiety.

## 2. Changes in your child's attitude towards school

We all have those days when it is just too hard to get up and feel motivated to go to work or school, but if this occurs regularly, it may be a sign that your child needs support. Early intervention is vital to address physical, emotional or social reasons for school avoidance before it progresses to chronic absence problems and on to school refusal.

### Signs of school avoidance to look out for

- feeling sick before school, e.g. waking up with a headache, stomach-ache or sore throat
- tearfulness, clinginess and dawdling before school – struggling to get out of bed, leave the house or get out of the car
- complaints about attending school and reluctance to talk about school
- missing classes and being late for class.

### What is happening at school?

Early signs of school avoidance may be identified at school through observations and insights by your child's teachers. Work in partnership with the school to support your child's attendance and wellbeing.

## Further Resources

[Anxiety about going to school](#) – Victorian Government

[Attendance and missing school](#) – Victorian Government

[How can I get my teenager to school?](#) – Victorian Government

[Early Signs of School Avoidance/Refusal](#) – Travancore School

[Tips for Promoting School Attendance](#) – Travancore School

[Understanding School Avoidance and School Refusal](#) – Travancore School

[School refusal: children and teenagers](#) – Raising Children Network

[Understanding school refusal](#) – Headspace

[School refusal](#) – Be You

[Everything you need to know about school refusal](#) – ReachOut

## 3. What can you do when you see the signs?

- Work with your child to understand what is happening and so that they feel supported and empowered. Listen with compassion but be consistent in expectations.
- Speak with your child's teacher(s) about your concerns.
- Consider taking your child to the GP to rule out or address any physical or emotional health problems.
- Request and attend school meetings with your child and their teacher to develop strategies to support increased attendance.



Melbourne Archdiocese  
Catholic Schools