



Why coming to school every day is so important for your child

Dear families,

Being an independent parent-run school, we are able to create a school environment that focuses on the areas that are most important to us.

We have the freedom to incorporate strong beliefs such as environmentalism and sustainability into our curriculum. We can also choose to ignore state school rules – such as, ‘no tree climbing’, ‘no bare feet’ – that we feel impinge on letting children be themselves.

So why not be relaxed about attendance too? While we fully understand the importance of travel, special occasions, even occasional rest days, we also know how vital regular attendance is for each child’s learning and social development.

Does regular attendance really matter?

- Being in class every day, allows children to build incrementally on their learning. They are less likely to feel overwhelmed. Consistency makes it easier for them to absorb new knowledge and move to the next level in their abilities.
- Children, who are frequently absent, tend to fall behind their classmates which can lead to ongoing self-esteem issues. Regular attendance is even more critical for a child who is struggling with an area of work. Practising every day with their teacher and aides will help this child overcome learning hurdles more quickly.
- Socially, children who are often absent can find it more difficult to maintain friendships or to feel fully part of the class or school. Frequent absences may make school seem scary when the child does attend.

If your child often does not want to come to school, please speak to us. Together, you and your child’s teacher can identify the underlying reason and work together to address it.

Because absences due to illness are inevitable, we ask that families are committed to regular attendance the rest of the time to ensure that their child’s education and connection to the school does not suffer.

On the back of this letter, we have included a summary of our attendance procedure for you to refer to when needed.

Sincerely,

The Management Committee

Attendance procedure - What to do if your child is absent

Unexpected absence

Please call or email the office by 10am to let us know the reason that your child is absent. It is important that we know that you are aware your child is not at school.

- Sickness or medical appointment
- Inability to attend (eg car broken down)
- Special family occasion (eg wedding, religious festival)
- Family emergency

If a child is absent for five days and we have not been able to speak with the family, we are required to initiate a procedure that eventually culminates in a report to the school liaison officer.

Low attendance or repeated lateness

If your child's attendance is below an acceptable level, or absences/late arrivals are impacting on their education, we will ask you to meet with your child's teacher. Together we can identify the causes of absences and develop a plan to improve attendance.

In the unlikely event that a family refused more than two requests to meet or attendance continued to be low with no evidence of efforts to improve, we are required to implement our procedure which ultimately leads to the student being unenrolled and the family reported to the Department of Education and Communities liaison officer.

Planned absence

If you know ahead of time that your child will be away from school, please let us know by calling or emailing the school (less than 5 days) or completing an *Exemption from attendance request* form (over 5 days) for review by the committee and teachers.

A committee member and/or your child's teacher will contact you if they feel an extended absence will be harmful to your child's education. In this situation, we will work with you to develop a reasonable solution.

We believe travel is a wonderful opportunity for learning outside of school and support families who choose to take children out of school for this reason. It may benefit some children to take work with them so that they do not fall behind their classmates. For others, an activity, such as a travel journal, can help them maintain their skills. Your child's teacher can provide ideas.