

## School Newsletter Article:



### Attendance Matters: Changes to Student Absences

*Did you know that attending school every day has a big impact on how well your child goes at school.*

*Missing school for whatever reason has a negative impact on students' learning. Because of this, the new Education Act specifies the reasons a child can be authorised not to attend school.*

*It is important that you discuss why your child is absent from school with the school Principal or a staff member as soon as practicable.*

#### Why is this change important?

The changes to being authorised not to attend school will help address absenteeism, which has been a longstanding issue in Tasmania.

The changes to student absences:

- Encourage regular school attendance to help your child to make steady progress with their learning and gain the skills and knowledge needed for success both now and later in life.
- Help your child see themselves as a valuable and enthusiastic member of their classroom with high expectations of their own potential.
- Help you to emphasise to your child the value and importance of their education.
- Ensure there is a consistent statewide approach to authorised absences across all Tasmanian schools.

#### When can my child be authorised not to attend school?

Reasons your child can be authorised to be absent include:

- sickness/incapacity
- medical, legal or related appointments
- natural disaster or extreme weather preventing your child from safely attending their enrolled school
- terminal illness of an immediate family member

- bereavement of a person your child had a close, significant or family relationship with
- having witnessed or been subjected to family violence
- being a participant or official at a recognised National or International sporting, academic or cultural event
- an application for home education being received by the Education Registrar and provisional registration being granted.

#### **What will happen if my child is absent for a reason that isn't listed?**

- The absence will be recorded as an unauthorised absence.
- Principals receive notifications about the number of unauthorised absences your child has.
- Your child's school may send you a letter notifying you of the number of unauthorised absences your child has.
- They will seek to work with you to increase your child's attendance to maximise their learning if the Principal is concerned about your child's attendance.

#### **What happens if my family go on holiday during school term?**

- Schools have always encouraged family holidays to be planned for during the scheduled school holiday breaks.
- If your family decides to take a holiday during school term, you are encouraged to discuss your plans with the Principal or your child's teacher.
- Penalties will not apply if an absence is explained.

#### **Where can I get more information?**

- If you want your child to attend school but need help to do this, your child's school would really like to talk to you about what help you need.
- Please contact your child's school for more information.