NEWSLETTER ITEMS THAT CAN BE USED OVER A TERM TO REMIND PARENTS OF THEIR RESPONSIBILITIES AND TO OFFER ASSISTANCE

Celebrate Attendance
Hints and Tips No. 1: Responsibilities

Parents or caregivers are required - by law - to provide a written or verbal explanation to the Principal within seven days of any absence as to why their child was not at school.

It is important that the school receives a written or verbal explanation because:

1. It is a parent’s legal obligation to explain their child’s absence within seven days.
2. It is a requirement that the school investigate all unexplained absences.
3. It avoids the school and the School Attendance Officer from making unnecessary investigations.
4. It is the way the school knows that your child was legitimately absent and not truanting from school.

If you have any difficulties in providing a written explanation for your child’s absence, please contact your school principal.

Celebrate Attendance
Hints and Tips No. 2: Teaching good habits

It is important for parents to make attending school a priority.

Allowing children days off for birthdays, to look after younger children, to go shopping, to keep you company or because they were tired from a late night, not only sends the wrong message to your child. It is also against the law.

Children who get used to having days off school for these kinds of reasons develop an attitude that their attendance at school is not very important. This can become a big issue as a child gets older.

Teach your children that being on time is important. Children that are often late to school miss the part of the school day when the teacher explains new activities. The beginning of the day is also when many students are freshest and can concentrate better.

Students that are late on a regular basis may become the target for comment by other students and often as a result isolate themselves from their peers.

Celebrate Attendance
Hints and Tips No. 3: Writing notes

Parents or caregivers are required by law to provide an explanation to the principal to say why their child was absent from school.

A note of explanation should contain:
1. Date that the note was written;
2. Child’s name;
3. Days/dates the child was absent from school;
4. The reason the child was absent;
5. The signature of the child’s parent or caregiver.

If more than one child from the same family has been absent a separate note for each child should be written.

A note should be brought to school on the first day the student returns to school after an absence. Your school is required to investigate all unexplained absences where a child has been absent and no explanation has been received within two days.

Did your child give the note to their teacher? This can sometimes be a problem with younger children.
Celebrate Attendance
Hints and Tips No. 4: Good Attendance

There are a number of sound reasons for you to ensure that your child attends school regularly.

Firstly, attending school every day makes learning easier. For younger students, missing the basic skills often leads to learning problems later on and for older student's absenteeism often interferes with academic progress. Friendships with other students are also easier if your child attends school regularly.

The law in NSW states that all children between the ages of 6 and 15 years are required to attend school. Sickness or injury, attendance at a special religious ceremony or a serious family situation are satisfactory reasons for non-attendance. Please let the school know why your child is not at school and provide an explanation on your child's return to school.

Birthdays, haircuts, pension days, Mondays etc are not satisfactory reasons for absence from school. Also try whenever possible to arrange your holidays in school vacation times.

Please contact your school principal if you need any help or have any questions.

Celebrate Attendance
Hints and Tips No. 5: Tips for Parents

Going to school is important. It makes learning easier for your child and helps build and maintain friendships with other children.

- Keep your child home only when they are sick.
- Advise the school of any absence.
- See doctors and dentists after school times.
- Friends are important.
- Show an interest in your child’s friends
- Invite friends to come and play
- Encourage your child to play with other children.

Helping your child have a happy day at school is important for you and your child.

If you are having difficulties in getting your child to school you should contact the principal as soon as possible to discuss the problem and ask for help.

The principal may ask a Home School Liaison Officer to contact you for further assistance and advice.

Celebrate Attendance
Hints and Tips No. 6: School Community

Everyone in the school community has a role to play in helping with school attendance.

Having students attend school is extremely beneficial to the future of local communities. However, many students do not attend school regularly or fail to attend at all.

Schools, parents and caregivers, local community members and businesses are all an essential part of providing and supporting education in our schools.

The NSW Department of Education and Training employs Home School Liaison Officers across the state. These officers are teachers who support schools and the school community to ensure that all students attend school regularly.

Parents having difficulty getting their child to school should not hesitate to contact either the school principal or the Home School Liaison Officer at your nearest Department of Education and Training office.

Call toll free 131 536 for your nearest regional office.
Celebrate Attendance
Hints and Tips No. 7: Getting to school on time

It is essential to establish a regular routine each morning and arriving at school on time is an important part of your child’s morning routine. It is important to be at school on time because:

• It sets up good habits for the future.
• It provides social benefits – good play time and discussion among friends.
• The school day usually begins with the teacher giving out information to students. Eg. Any changes to school routines, coming events etc.
• It is an opportunity for important teacher pupil interaction before school.
• There is plenty of time for ordering lunches if needed.

Celebrate Attendance
Hints and Tips No. 8: Tips for Parents

There are some simple yet effective tips that parents can follow to ensure their child has a happy day at school.

Make sure your child has a good nights sleep.
Make sure you and your child get up early enough to

• have breakfast
• get lunch ready
• pack a school bag
• get dressed

Be organised – help your child pack bags and have homework and sports gear ready for the next day.
Be involved with your school – meet with your child’s teacher and talk regularly.

• Offer your support and help.
• Read notes from school and reply on time.
• Phone the school if you want information.
• Listen to your child read.
• Show an interest in homework.