

The Importance of Punctuality and Attendance at School

Why Being on Time and Attending School is Important

Going to school every day and being on time helps students learn better and stay confident. Missing school or being late can make it hard to keep up and understand lessons. It can also affect friendships and future opportunities. Good attendance instils responsibility and helps students succeed in school and life. All of us - parents and teachers - should expect and encourage students to attend school regularly for a better future.

Regular attendance and **punctuality** are essential for overall development and academic success. Missing school, even for a few days or arriving late consistently, can lead to significant gaps in learning, making it difficult for students to keep up with their peers. Over time, frequent absences or lateness can affect a student's confidence, social skills and future aspirations. Establishing good habits of punctuality and daily school attendance encourages self-discipline, personal responsibility, and a strong work ethic that will benefit students throughout their lives. **Please help us:** when we all prioritise consistent attendance at school, we all contribute to the best possible educational outcomes and future success. Let's work together to be better!

We might think that one or two days a week doesn't seem much. Let's add up...one day = 20%

| If a student misses: | That equals: | Which is: | Over 13 years of schooling, this is: |
|----------------------|-------------------|-------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 1 day per fortnight | 20 days per year | 4 weeks per year | Nearly 1.5 years |
| 1 day per week | 40 days per year | 8 weeks per year | Over 2.5 years |
| 2 days per week | 80 days per year | 16 weeks per year | Over 5 years |
| 3 days per week | 120 days per year | 24 weeks per year | Nearly 8 years |

How about 10 minutes late a day? Surely that won't affect a student's attendance or learning?

| If a student misses: | That equals: | Which is: | Over 13 years of schooling, this is: |
|----------------------|-----------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 10 minutes per day | 50 minutes per week | Nearly 1.5 weeks per year | Nearly half a year |
| 20 minutes per day | 1 hr 40 mins per week | Over 2.5 weeks per year | Nearly one year |
| 30 minutes per day | Half a day per week | 4 weeks per year | Nearly 1.5 years |
| 1 hour per day | One day per week | 8 weeks per year | Over 2.5 years |

Now the legal bit – for parents and students

The law of New Zealand is very clear: you must send your children to school - full time, until the age of 16. The only exceptions are: sickness (including dental/medical treatment), attending a funeral, an emergency that requires the student's presence, or a student is representing their country at an officially sanctioned sport or cultural competition or event (eg Te Matatini, the Olympic Games). **These absences are 'Justified'.**

At times, opportunities present themselves for all kinds of wonderful experiences, which parents can justify: overseas experiences, family occasions etc. However, the law is clear 'students must attend school'. Therefore, even with the Principal's approval, if a parent makes the choice not to send their child to school, that absence will be coded as 'Explained'. Please understand that this is considered '**Unjustified**' because it does not meet the 'exceptions' stated in the legislation (above). Where parents make their choice, no matter the reasons, it will fall under the unjustified category (for the ministry's statistics and the media's headlines). For our school, attendance makes a difference: it is key to our Learning Behaviours, which contributes to our "Age Quod Agis" celebration of success. A teacher cannot make a judgement of behaviour if a student is absent from class.

Learning for **all** students at SHGC is: full time; face to face; on-site. There are no options for online learning. We understand that parents will make choices that you are free to make and defend, however, when we do not hear from you about your child's absence, that's when things get serious: we follow up on all **Truancy**.

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What can I do if I am struggling to get my child to attend school?

First, we understand. There are genuine reasons for some young people to do their best to avoid school. However, allowing your child to stay away from school might bring immediate short-term relief, but, if they continue to miss school, returning can feel harder and harder as they fall behind with their learning and begin to feel socially isolated from their friends and teachers. Very quickly, a habit of school avoidance can set in.

From our experience, students rarely 'grow out' of this; and the longer they stay home, the harder it is to get back to a school routine. In fact, staying home makes things worse: it prevents the growth of coping skills. So, it's important to remember that school is more than credits and awards; it is a place of formation where we learn to navigate the challenges of life: and for teenage girls, happy, healthy friendships are essential to their development and maturity. A sense of belonging is crucial: being at school supports this positive mindset.

Please contact us so we can support you and your child to re-engage in school. Our Dean Team will work closely with you both to co-construct a plan of support for re-engagement with school and learning.