

WA Public School Attendance Information

It is the law for young people to be in school, training or work (or a combination of approved options) from year 1 (or pre-primary from 2013) until the end of the year they turn 17 or meet minimum requirements for secondary school graduation.

The Department of Education breaks absence figures into 'authorised' - where parents or guardians have given the school a valid reason for their child's absence - and 'unauthorised'.

Each public school records students' attendance and publishes this information on the Schools Online website at <http://www.det.wa.edu.au>

Missing school adds up:

- if a child misses an average of five days a term (years 1 to 10), they miss out on approximately one year of school
- if a child misses one day a week of school (from years 1 to 10), they will miss almost two years of school
- if a child misses 1.5 days a week of school (from years 1 to 10), they will miss almost three years of school
- if a child misses two days a week of school (from years 1 to 10), they will miss almost four years of school
- if a child misses three days a week of school (from years 1 to 10), they will miss almost six years of school
- if a child misses five weeks a term (years 1 to 10), they miss almost five years of school.

Common attendance terms:

Attendance rate

State-wide and school attendance rates are the average time all students have attended as a percentage of the total number of days the school is open for instruction.

Truant

The words truant and truancy are regularly used by the media and public to describe any absence from school by a student.

Truanting students are only those who have not arrived at school, or have left the school grounds, without authorisation or parental permission.

Leave passes

Leave passes help schools monitor students who are absent from school by distinguishing between authorised and unauthorised absences.

An example is where a parent of an older student notifies the school that the student has an appointment that they will travel to alone.

Schools also issue leave passes to enable students to go to educational activities, such as workplace learning, to demonstrate they have the appropriate permission to be away from the school.

Authorised and unauthorised absences

The School Education Act 1999 requires the principal of a school to be notified of the cause of any student absence within three days of the commencement of the absence. The principal decides whether to authorise (approve) the absence or not. Principals may request a medical certificate to support the case for an approved absence. If the principal believes the reason provided for a student's absence is not acceptable then the absence is deemed unauthorised.