
Attendance Matters!

— A guide to good attendance in —
Loreto Balbriggan

There are many factors that are out of our control over the course of our education that will stop us from coming to school, but why should we strive for excellent attendance?



Achieve Your Goal

Let us look at some of the positives!

Did you know that good attendance also comes with huge benefits!

Academic achievement

Evidence shows that students with the highest attendance throughout their time in school perform better in exams.

Research found that pupils who performed better both at the end of primary and secondary school missed fewer days than those who didn't perform as well



1. Tusla – The Child and Family Agency; Developing the Statement of Strategy for School Attendance: Guidelines for Schools

Social development and well being

We can all agree that one of the best things about coming to school is getting to see our friends.

While this is enjoyable for us, it is also very important for us, as it develops our social skills, improves interactions with both peers and teachers.

All of this also has a huge impact on our overall well being.

So when should I not come to school?

As we mentioned previously, it will not always be possible for us to have 100% attendance.

So when should I not come to school?



Over to you! What do you think causes absenteeism?

LOSS AND
BEREAVEMENT

SEPARATION, DIVORCE,
OR CHANGE IN FAMILY
DYNAMICS

MOVING
HOUSE

PARENT/GUARDIAN PHYSICAL OR
MENTAL HEALTH DIFFICULTIES

FAMILY

A PARENTING STYLE THAT IS
OVERPROTECTIVE OR UNDER
INVOLVED

BEING THE YOUNGEST
CHILD IN THE FAMILY

FAMILY
STRESS

FAMILY HISTORY OF
RELUCTANT SCHOOL
ATTENDANCE

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

CHILD IN ROLE OF CARER

COST OF EDUCATION

BULLYING AND CYBERBULLYING

STARTING
PRIMARY SCHOOL

TRANSITION TO
SECONDARY
SCHOOL

STAFF
CHANGES

SCHOOL

ACADEMIC DEMANDS ARE TOO
HIGH OR TOO LOW

PERFORMANCE
ORIENTATED SCHOOLS

EXAMS/
TESTS

PEER RELATIONSHIP
DIFFICULTIES

POOR STUDENT TEACHER RELATIONSHIPS

CULTURAL DIFFERENCES BETWEEN SCHOOL AND FAMILY

ANXIETY | SEPARATION ANXIETY

ADDITIONAL NEEDS (LEARNING, SENSORY,
MENTAL HEALTH, NEURODIVERSITY)

DIFFICULTIES IN
SPECIFIC SUBJECTS

STUDENT

HISTORY OF ABSENTEEISM

FEAR OF FAILURE AND
POOR SELF CONFIDENCE

TENDENCY TO WITHDRAW

TRANSITION AGES AND STAGES

HYGIENE/UNIFORM CONCERNS

PHYSICAL ILLNESS

SEXUAL/GENDER IDENTITY ISSUES

WORRIES ABOUT FAMILY MEMBERS' WELLBEING

EXPERIENCING TRAUMATIC EVENTS

CULTURAL
ATTITUDES TO
EDUCATION

PARENT/GUARDIAN
EXPERIENCE OF SCHOOL

SOCIAL
DISADVANTAGE

HOUSING
ISSUES/
HOMELESSNESS

TRANSIENT
FAMILIES

SOCIAL

AVAILABILITY OF HEALTH
& SUPPORT SERVICES

DISCRIMINATION

NOT FEELING SAFE

1st things 1st- plan ahead!

"Always plan ahead. It wasn't raining when Noah built the ark"- Richard Cushing

When it comes to dental and doctor appointments, wherever possible, you need to plan ahead.

- ★ Try to book these appointments for when you're not in school
- ★ Use your half day on a Wednesday to schedule these appointments
- ★ Do not take the entire day off school for a 1 hour appointment
- ★ If you are absent, please make sure that an attendance note is added on compass (i.e not unexplained)

Illness

Of course you are not expected to come to school if you are very ill, but as a general guide, you do not have to stay at home if;

- ★ You have mild cold symptoms with no fever
- ★ Minor injuries (sprains etc)
- ★ Menstrual issues

Anxiety or school related stress

A certain amount of stress or feeling anxious is a normal part of life. You might feel a little uneasy about going to school;

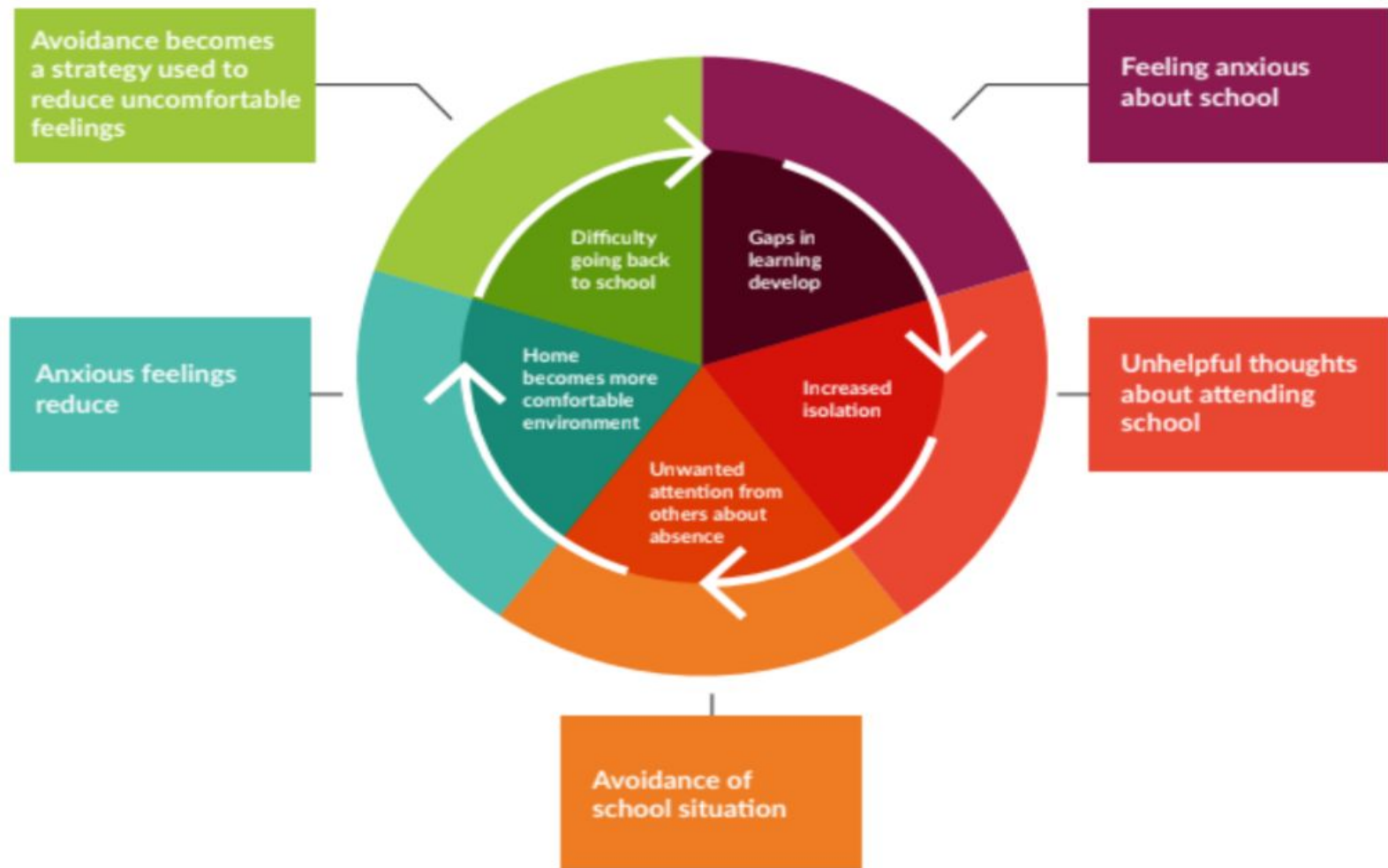
- ★ After a weekend, midterm or summer holidays
- ★ If you don't have homework completed
- ★ If you have not studied for a test
- ★ If you don't enjoy a particular class

This is all very normal, and these feelings exist at every stage of life. Even adults experience this!

Cont.

- ★ These feelings are important to talk about and acknowledge.
- ★ We have many programmes in school to help us to deal and cope with these feelings in SPHE, form class, and various workshops.
- ★ There are also many people in school that you can discuss this with; form teacher, class teachers, senior prefect, chaplains etc
- ★ Building resilience to these feelings and learning coping strategies is the best way to deal with them
- ★ Not coming to school may bring short term relief from these feelings, but will only increase our Anxiety and stress in the long term.





I want to improve my attendance, where do I start?



Did you know?

**You spend a total of
166 days in school
each year .**

Let us break down the year a bit!

- 3 months of summer holidays
- 2 weeks of midterms in October and February
- 2 weeks holiday at Christmas
- 2 weeks holiday at Easter
- 3 bank/ public holidays (February, March and May)

Which leaves less than 8 months of the year for you to attend school.

So how many of these remaining days should you miss?



Satisfactory attendance- Missing 0-9 days

This means that you have been in school for 95% of the year by the end of May. While this may not seem like many days to miss, and is considered as satisfactory attendance 9 days of school could equate to;

9 hours of any given subject, which could look like;

- 2/ 5 Irish poems/ prose
- Indices & logarithms for maths
- An entire poet for English

Remember, this is only missing 1-2 days per term!

“At Risk”- missing 10-17 days

This equates to being present for 90%-95% of school by the end of May. Missing 15 days of school is 3 full weeks. This means missing everything mentioned on the previous slide for all of your subjects, as well as;

- Extra curricular activities
- School trips
- Matches
- Valuable time spent with friends

Remember, you are at risk of chronic absenteeism if you miss only 2-3 days per term.

Chronic absenteeism- missing 18+ days of school

While this may seem like a lot, missed days can add up very quickly! This can equate to missing a month of school out of the less than 8 we spoke about earlier.

You are considered to have chronic absenteeism if you miss more than 18 days of school. And yes, that includes days missed to go on holidays!



Fail to prepare and prepare to fail!

An easy way to improve your attendance and mainly punctuality is by getting organised, and this starts from the night before school! This also helps to reduce anxiety about going into school

- ★ Have your uniform ready
- ★ Have your lunch made
- ★ Have your bag packed with all needed books, equipment etc
- ★ Set your alarm! (or your 10 alarms that will go off 5 minutes apart)

- ★ Get up when your alarm goes off
- ★ Eat a good breakfast
- ★ Know how you're getting to school
- ★ Leave with plenty of time

While our families play a role in providing us support, it is also your responsibility to get yourself into school.



Time to track- school journal

In order to help students to play a bigger role in tracking their attendance, and to take more responsibility, we have added a page into your school journal so that you can track your progress!

Please take a few minutes at least once per month to fill this in.

This appears in your journal on page

Attendance- Time to track!

Below is a blank template of what appears on compass in order to track your school attendance. Take the time at the end of every month to colour in each day;

Green- Present

Red- Absent

Remember! Our aim is to have great attendance: 0-9 days missed

August 2025						
Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

September 2025						
Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30				

October 2025						
Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

November 2025						
Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30						

December 2025						
Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

January 2026						
Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
				4	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

February 2026						
Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28

March 2026						
Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

April 2026						
Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
			4	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30		

May 2026						
Su	Mo	Tu	We	Th	Fr	Sa
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

Compass events

- ★ When attending an event, it is very important to attend class until the arranged time
- ★ Make sure you are marked as present at the beginning of the class
- ★ If you arrive back in during a class, please ask your teacher to update the roll
- ★ If you think a mistake has been made regarding a roll call, you need to contact the class teacher, not the office.

Compass events

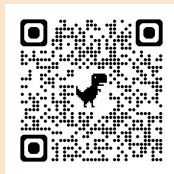


When feeling stressed

Use your journey to school to unwind and prepare yourself for the day. Below are some useful apps for mindfulness and relaxation!



Calm



Apple



Android



Headspace

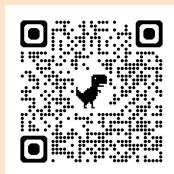
Apple



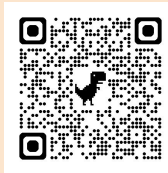
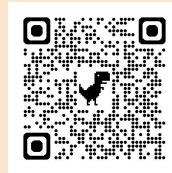
Android



Dreamykid



Smiling mind



These apps are also all free to download! Youtube is also a great resource.

What you've all been waiting for- prizes!

Because attendance is so vital to our success in school, we have decided to introduce a rewards programme to acknowledge excellent attendance!

🏆 Attendance is recognised at our end of year prize-giving ceremony

🏆 Attendance affirmations will now be sent home at the end of each term

🏆 prizes will be won at different stages of the year to acknowledge great attendance

Thanks for listening everyone, and remember!



And finally, a little motivation for us all!

