In Years 7-10, students miss on average almost a week every term - that's four weeks of school per year.

Going to school every day is the single most important part of a child's education. Students learn new things at school every day – missing school puts them behind.

Why it's important
We all want our students to get a great education, and the building blocks for a great education begin with students coming to school each day and every day.

Students develop good habits by going to school every day – habits that are necessary to succeed after school, whether in the workplace or in further study.

Missing school can have a big impact on students academically and socially. It can affect their test results, including VCE, and, just as importantly, it can affect their relationships with other students, and lead to social isolation.

There is no safe number of days for missing school – each day a student misses puts them behind, and can affect their educational outcomes.

Each missed day is associated with progressively lower achievement in numeracy, writing and reading.

Department of Education and Early Childhood Development

Getting In early
It's never too late to improve attendance – going to school more often can lead to better outcomes. Even at Year 9, when attendance rates are lowest, going to school more often can make a big difference. Every day counts. Schools are there to help – if you're having attendance issues with your child, speak to your school about ways to address those issues.

What we can do
The main reasons for absence are:

- Sickness – There are always times when students need to miss school, such as when they're ill. It's vital that they're only away on the days they are genuinely sick, and getting good sleep patterns, eating well and exercising regularly can make a big difference.
- "Day off" – Think twice before letting your child have a "day off" as they could fall behind their classmates – every day counts.
- Truancy – When students choose not to go to school without their parent's permission. There can be many reasons for truancy, the best way to address this is for schools and parents to work together. While all absences are bad for academic performance, unexcused absences are a much stronger indicator of lower reading and maths achievement.

If for any reason your child must miss school, there are things you can do with your school to ensure they don't fall behind:

- Speak with your classroom teacher and find out what work your child needs to do to keep up.
- Develop an absence learning plan with your teacher and ensure your child completes the plan.

Remember, every day counts. If your child must miss school, speak with your classroom teacher as early as possible.

Openly communicating with your child's school about all absences is a good way to prevent attendance issues being escalated to a School Attendance Officer. Attendance issues that are escalated can lead to an infringement notice.

If you're having attendance issues with your child, please let your year level coordinator, principal or other relevant staff member know so you can work together to get your child to school every day.

For more information and resources to help address attendance issues, visit: www.education.vic.gov.au

Every day counts
Secondary school attendance

PRINCIPAL'S REPORT

Athletics Carnival
When: Tuesday 25th March 9:00am start to 2:30pm
Where: Wodonga Athletics Track, Pearce St Wodonga (Altered traffic conditions, please drop off at Pearce Street entrance to racetrack, as advised by Wodonga Council).
What: Track and Field events, Relays, Fashions on the Field, House Team Tag of War, plus a new mystery novelty event.
Who: This is a whole school event, roles will be marked.
Transport: Students are asked to meet at the track, however a shuttle bus will run from the school to the track at 8:45am and again at the end of the day.
Students will be dismissed from the athletics track to go directly home at the conclusion of the carnival, however the shuttle bus will run back to school at about 2:30pm where bus travellers and other students who cannot go directly home. They will be supervised in room 306 until the end of the day. Any alternative arrangements approved by parents should be outlined in a signed note.
Please Bring: Sun protection, water bottle, positive attitude and lunch or money for lunch (canteen will be open at the athletics complex).
Remember, it's not the winning that's important, but the taking part.
I'm looking forward to a great day of participation, encouragement and competition in a range of events that cater for everyone.

VET Hospitality China Study Tour
On Thursday 20 March our students leave for a tour of China. A highlight will be a Master Class program with students from a Vocational High school in Weihai. We know this will be a very successful tour and wish Steve Garro, Lyn Zhang and students a safe and enjoyable trip.

International Students
As part of our obligations under the International Student Program, Andrew Box and I are heading to Waihei in China to discuss how our international students are going with their parents on Saturday. We will be meeting up with our students in Weihai as we continue to build strong bonds between our two communities. I will also be travelling to Hanoi to launch the trial of our Year 10 on line LMS program with students in the Trung Vuong Secondary school.

Pam Oakes will be Acting Principal in my absence for the nine days I am away from school.

Social Media Responsibilities
The school community are to be reminded about the appropriate use of social media. Where there is a reasonable belief that illegal activity may have occurred, the Principal may report the suspected activity to the police. Disrespectful, harassing, threatening or bullying behaviour may be considered a criminal offence under State and/or Federal law. Where the behaviour does not constitute illegal activity but does constitute cyber bullying, the principal may consult with the relevant areas of the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development regarding appropriate action.

First Day Term 2 - Professional Learning Day
The first day of Term 2 will be a Professional Learning Day. Therefore students will start term two on Wednesday 23rd April, due to Monday 21st April being Easter Monday Public Holiday.

Vern Hilditch
Principal
Student leadership is a fundamental part of any school, as it allows for student voice, extra opportunities and plenty of good fun for all involved! This is exactly what was recognized and enjoyed at the recent overnight retreat in Kergunyah, undertaken by the current SLC. The aim of the camp was for team development and to create a strategic plan for the year. As the first major project for the year, members of the SLC organised all aspects of this camp, including dates, transport, location, food, equipment and lots of paperwork. All this planning came to be good learning experience for everyone involved, a debriefing at the camp indicating what was done well and what could have been improved. Anthony Nicholson, a youth services officer, completely organized our itinerary and activities for the camp, which was greatly appreciated by all.

Other activities at this camp included some interesting team-building activities involving everyone getting pretty close to each other. We also had built rafts and subsequently raced them in the river, which was definitely a lot of fun! We had Wodonga Councilor Eric Kerr come speak to us about his experiences, both in the SLC at Wodonga Senior and in the Wodonga Council. Overall this camp was definitely a success, leading to a more cohesive SLC team with plenty of ideas for the future. You very much thank to Sarah Kilner and Brooke Musgrave for accompanying us, to Anthony Nicholson for organizing the activities and School Council for letting it go ahead. This year should be an exciting year for the SLC indeed!