

School Refusal Support cool2b@school

What are the next steps?

We offer early intervention, counselling, consultancy and training.

Early intervention for school refusal is important, so we encourage families and schools to contact us as soon as they notice a problem.

“Keeping young people at school keeps their social, emotional and academic development on track. It also improves their longer term mental health and wellbeing.”
(Counsellor)

“I am so grateful CatholicCare has taken on this problem. Schools have not had anywhere to send their children to get the help they need in the past. Keep up the good work.”
(Teacher)

About Us

Relationships are at the heart of why CatholicCare exists. We help people to build positive relationships, and repair connections when needed.

CatholicCare is the social service agency of the Archdiocese of Melbourne and the Diocese of Sale. We provide a range of counselling, education, community and pastoral services.

We support all people regardless of their religious belief or background.

Our vision is for a stronger, more resilient and inclusive society - where everyone can reach their potential and enjoy 'life to the full'.

Contact Us

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CatholicCare acknowledges the traditional custodians of the lands and waters of Victoria, and pays respect to Elders past and present.

- Greater Melbourne
- Geelong
- Gippsland

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School Refusal

There are times when families and schools need support to understand why a child or young person is not attending or refusing to attend school.

Non-attendance can coincide with a stressful life situation, such as moving from primary to secondary school, family breakdown, or moving house or school. Children and young people can also develop a fear of school attendance, or become disengaged as a result of trauma at school or at home, such as bullying, parental conflict, or family violence.

What are the signs?

The signs of school refusal can vary, and may include:

- physical complaints
- crying spells and upsets before school
- fear of some teachers and/or other students
- refusing to return to school after the weekend, holidays or illness

What help is available?

Our School Refusal Support program offers early intervention for children and young people who have anxiety and difficulty attending school.

All our counsellors are qualified professionals trained in a range of disciplines including psychology, family therapy and social work. They specialise in working with children and young people and work holistically with parents/carers and the school community.

School Refusal Support is for everyone

Our School Refusal Support program is available to all students in Catholic, State and Independent schools.

We can re-engage children and young people with their education and provide families and schools with support to give every young person a chance.

How does the program work?

We help children and young people with their reasons for non-attendance and school refusal.

The program takes an integrated approach including:

- early intervention for children and young people showing anxiety or the first signs of school refusal
- counselling for children and young people and their families
- family therapy
- consultancy support for schools
- training for school administrators and teachers
- confidentiality for young people, parents and schools
- referral to specialist services

We work closely with appropriate members of young people's and family's networks, including child and youth mental health service providers, school counsellors, GPs and other professionals.

How do I access the service?

If you are a teacher or parent who has noticed a change in a child or young person's attitude, you can phone us to discuss a referral.

Referrals can be made in the following ways:

- families can self-refer
- schools can refer students
- community agencies and child and youth mental health service providers can refer students and families

Fees

There is a schedule of fees based upon clients' income and their ability to pay.

