



IRVINE UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

# "WHAT DID I MISS?"

## OVERCOMING THE CHALLENGES OF SCHOOL AVOIDANCE

*Quick Guide*

**School Avoidance:** A term used to describe the signs of anxiety that school aged children have or a refusal to go to school.

### Why Talk about it?

Underlying challenges could be identified  
There is a rise in school avoidance nationwide  
The Pandemic brought specific challenges with school attendance  
School avoidance impacts future success

### Contributing Factors

Anxiety, Depression, ODD, Learning Differences, Loneliness, Sleep Hygiene

### When to look out for school avoidance

After a break, long weekend, or after an emergency distance learning situation (ex: Covid)

### Harms

Missing class material  
Poor peer relationships  
Academic underachievement  
Increased family stress

Anxiety / Depression	Mental Health Support Students Educational Team
Learning Difficulties	Pediatrician / Primary Care Physician Students Educational Team
Avoidance of External Factors	Communication with your student and school to target the stressor/stressors and create a plan
Seeking "Reward"	Creating boundaries at home. Incorporate the rewards into the students routine in healthier ways.
Seeking Attention	Look for opportunities to give positive attention to your child. Re-energize old routines.
Loneliness	Encourage our student to get involved with socially supportive activities. Communicate to the school about involvement opportunities.
Sleep Hygiene	Sleep education as well as "calm but firm" accountability measures on your student's technology usage and sleep routine.

### Signs and Signals

- Absences from school
- Leaves class frequently
- Fighting to be absent from school
- Experiencing unusual amounts of distress about going to school
  - Social Isolation
- Physical symptoms presenting as illness

### Next Steps

Monday morning plan  
Share it, Shelve it, Shout it  
Talk to one another  
Communicate with the school  
Intervene early  
Seek support