

## What is school refusal?

A certain degree of anxiety and fear about school is normal for children. However, some children experience excessive anxiety which can result in refusal to attend school (hence the term 'school refusal' or 'school phobia').

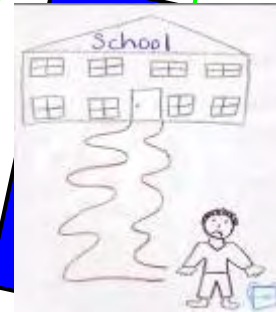
Such children often complain of headache, stomachache or other physical illness. School refusal occurs in about 1% to 2% of school children.

## Seriousness of school refusal

School refusal causes much distress to the child and also interferes with the child's social and educational development. The more time the child is away from school, the more difficult it is for the child to resume normal school life. As it is a difficult problem to manage, school refusal creates stress for parents and school teachers.

## School Refusal Clinic Program

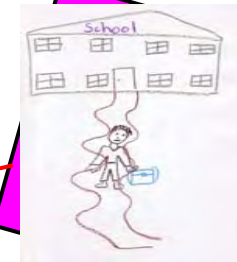
The goal of the program is to help children aged between 11 - 15½ years resume school attendance as soon as possible. The program consists of a number of phases;



**1. Assessment:** Children are screened regarding their suitability for the program. Information is collected from the family and school in order to specify the problems and clarify the situation.



**2. Treatment:** Parents and teachers are advised on practical behaviour management strategies. Various procedures are used to help the child cope with his or her anxieties about school. In addition to this, some children will be administered anti-anxiety/depressant medication.



**3. Follow-up:** Children are assessed at various follow-up periods after treatment. This involves interviews/assessment of school attendance and general well-being.

### Directors

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### Liaison with school

In addition to working with children and parents, liaison with the school can be instrumental during the program.

### Referrals

Children may be referred to the clinic by schools or other agencies. Also, families can seek assistance from the clinic without a formal referral.

### Contacting the program

To discuss the program, families or school personnel should contact the School Refusal Program by telephoning (03) 9501 2490.

**Address:** Building 1/270 Ferntree Gully Road, Notting Hill 3168

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School

Refusal

Program



### Program Staff

Clinicians working on the program are registered psychologists & probationary psychologists.

A joint initiative between beyondblue and Monash University.

Monash University  
Centre for Developmental Psychiatry  
and Psychology