

BRAIN GYM

The Quiet Slide in School Attendance

Key Takeways

- Daily absence has risen from 7% (2025), creating an urgent national issue.
- Two in five students miss about one day a fortnight.
- Each missed day harms achievement and increases pressure on teachers, classmates, and families.
- Illness and family reasons now drive most absences; suspensions remain low and stable.
- England's system-wide reforms improved attendance; similar coordinated action is needed to restore Australia's rate.

AITSL Standards: 1,3,6

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2026: a Pivotal Year for AI in Schools

Key Takeways

- The main challenge for Australian schools is no longer whether to use AI, but how to use it effectively.
- "AI awareness" – understanding *when, why, and how* to use AI responsibly.
- Need for clear, values-driven and community-informed policies.

AITSL Standards: 2,4,7

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This Week's Mini PD

Feed Your Mind for Success

The Mental Menu That Matters

The Tale of Two Mental Menus

Imagine your school as a restaurant where each of us chooses from two mental menus every day. Which one are we ordering from?

Just as our bodies rely on nutritious food, our professional wellbeing depends on the quality of our thought patterns. When we linger on frustrations, compare ourselves to colleagues, overthink without action, or engage in negative self-talk, we're consuming the mental equivalent of fast food - convenient in the moment but ultimately draining and unproductive. The "superfood" alternative includes practising gratitude, approaching challenges with curiosity, learning from missteps, and maintaining perspective when things get hectic. These habits sustain focus, clarity, and long-term resilience.

Coaching Ourselves and Each Other

As educators, we often model the habits we want to see in our students, including mental nutrition. We can support ourselves and one another by recognising unhelpful thinking patterns, reframing challenges positively, and celebrating incremental progress. Collective reflection - through quick check-ins, team gratitude moments, or sharing lessons learned - will help strengthen our professional mindset and school culture.

The Long Game

Like physical fitness, mental fitness builds through consistent effort and self-awareness. When we choose growth-oriented thoughts, we enhance not only our own wellbeing but also the emotional climate of our classrooms and teams.

If we choose wisely from the menu, we can cultivate a positive, creative and constructive mindset that not only shapes us individually but also as a community.

Our life is shaped by our mind; we become what we think.

Gautama Buddha

Student Spotlight

A key experience for a **student whose home life is chaotic or stressful** is often feeling responsible for managing emotions or problems that are not theirs, such as calming adults, caring for younger siblings, or hiding family issues at school. This can leave them emotionally exhausted and hyper-vigilant, as well as reluctant to ask for help, even when they are struggling.

Staffroom Chat

If your career were a relationship, would you still choose it?

Happy, Silly Thoughts

BRAIN AT 3AM:

I can see you're trying to sleep, so I would like to offer you a selection of every memory, unresolved issue, or things you should have said or done today as well is in the past 40 years!

Disclaimer: This information is not intended to replace the advice of appropriate relevant qualified practitioners.

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