



# EAST LYME PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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Dear Parent/Guardian,

As East Lyme Public Schools develops plans for addressing the academic and social impact from disrupted learning, engaging our student is critical. Attending school regularly and engaging with the school community will nurture a sense of belonging and lead to lifelong success.

### DID YOU KNOW?

- Starting in kindergarten, too many absences can cause children to fall behind in school.
- Missing 10 percent (or about 18 days) increases the chance that your child will not read or master math at the same level as their peers.
- By 6th grade, absenteeism is one of three signs that a student may drop out of high school.
- By being present at school, your child learns valuable social skills and has the opportunity to develop meaningful relationships with other students and school staff.
- Absences can be a sign that a student is losing interest in school, struggling with school work, dealing with a bully or facing some other potentially serious difficulty.
- By 9th grade, regular and high attendance is a better predictor of graduation rates than 8th grade test scores.

### WHAT WE NEED FROM YOU – Written Documentation of Every Absence

The Connecticut State Department of Education requires that parents track and document student absences. Written documentation is required for every absence. Please refer to the attached absence form for more information. Please note that hand-written notes with parent/guardian signatures containing the same information will also be acceptable documentation. This requirement is in addition to notifying the school daily when your child will not be attending school.

Please note, parents and guardians are required to submit to their school written documentation of an absence when their student returns to school. To help assist you with the required documentation, we have provided an absence form for you use. Please note that hand-written notes with parent/guardian signatures containing the same information will also be acceptable documentation. This requirement is in addition to notifying the school daily when your child will not be attending school.

### OUR PROMISE TO YOU

We know that there are a wide variety of reasons that students are absent from school. Whether it be health concerns or transportation challenges. There are many people in our building prepared to help you if you or your child face challenges in getting to school regularly or on time. We promise to track attendance daily, to notice when your child is missing from class, to communicate with you to understand why they were absent, and to identify barriers and supports available to overcome challenges you may face in helping your child attend school.

### SCHOOL POLICIES AND STATE LAWS

It is important that you understand our school policies and procedures, as well as Connecticut State Law, to ensure your child is successful in school. At East Lyme Public Schools, we have established policies and procedures around student attendance that will help you ensure your student is attending regularly. Please refer to Board of Education [Policy 5113](#) and [Regulation 5113](#) on Attendance/Excuses/Dismissal/Truancy/Tardiness and your child's school handbook.

Sincerely,

Jeffrey R. Newton  
Superintendent of Schools

Portions of this letter are attributable to Attendance Works <http://www.attendanceworks.org/>

*East Lyme Public Schools will inspire, engage and educate each student to become a contributing citizen and a responsible, independent, and critical thinker.*