September 16, 2021

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 us to track and document student absences. Written documentation is essential in determining if a student’s absence can be classified as excused or unexcused. Please note, effective Monday, September 27, 2021, we will be sending out automated calls to parents/guardians when your child is absent from school if you have not already notified the school of the absence.

**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/](http://www.attendanceworks.org/)