

## Tips for parents

School offers the opportunities your child will need to succeed in life. Make sure your child is in school all day, every day!

- Make it clear that education is important to you by showing interest in your child's schoolwork and activities
- Know school policies on absences and making up work and require your child to complete assignments
- Support the school's expectations and tell your children you expect them to follow the rules
- Keep an accurate calendar that shows school breaks. Plan family vacations when school is not in session. State law does not count family vacation as a legitimate reason for missing school
- Make sure your child arrives on time. Being late 10 minutes a day totals 30 hours of lost instruction for the school year.
- Schedule doctor's appointments after school hours, whenever possible and minimize the time away from school for appointments during the school day
- Call the school to report your child's absence. When possible, let the school know in advance.

Sometimes serious family or medical issues can affect school attendance. The school nurse, counselor, teacher or administrator can work with families to overcome obstacles to attendance.



## Our Mission

The mission of the Council Bluffs Community School District is to guarantee that every student graduates with the knowledge, skills and character to become a responsible citizen and to succeed in a changing world by creating a leading-edge, inclusive educational system, which provides challenging expectations diverse experiences, engaging curriculum and innovative teaching within a collaborative, caring community.

### Non Discrimination Statement

It is the policy of the Council Bluffs Community School District not to illegally discriminate on the basis of race, color, age, (for employment), national origin, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, marital status, (for programs), socioeconomic status (for programs), physical or mental disability, religion, creed, genetic information, ancestry, geographic location, citizenship, political party preference or belief, familial status or any other protected attribute, in its educational programs, activities or employment practices. There is a grievance procedure for processing complaints of discrimination. If you have questions or a grievance related to this policy, please contact the school district's Equity Coordinator, Tim Hamilton, 712-328-6423, thamilton2@cbcsd.org, 300 W. Broadway, Suite 1600, Council Bluffs, IA 51503.

## School Attendance Matters

For Elementary and Middle School Students



## Why School Attendance Matters

Regular attendance at school is extremely important. On a daily basis, 91% of our students are in school. However, the national standard is 95%. There's no practical reason for Council Bluffs students to miss more days of school than others in the nation. Students with poor attendance have lower academic achievement than students who attend school on a regular basis, and a smaller chance of graduating on time, if at all.

In addition, students who are not in school on a regular basis frequently end up in trouble with the police and the juvenile court system.

Educators are partnering with families and the entire community to address school attendance problems so that our students can be productive in and out of the classroom.

*"We expect students to attend school and class on time every day. We strive to have students attend school 95% of the time. This means that a student may have no more than 8 absences per year."*

—Dr. Vickie Murillo  
Superintendent of Schools

## What is Compulsory School Attendance?

Students must attend school if they have reached age six by September 15 and if they are under the age of 17. Students are required to be in school daily. Even students who are in kindergarten and not yet six, and preschoolers enrolled in statewide programs are expected to attend every day. The school principal will determine whether an absence is excused or unexcused. Excused reason for missing school may include illness or injury, funerals, medical appointments, required court appearances, absences related to religious services, or other reasons excused by the principal. Examples of unexcused absences are needing to babysit, missing the bus, oversleeping, or the car not working.

## What is the Legal Responsibility of a Parent of Guardian?

It is the responsibility of the parent or guardian to assure that the student is in school unless there is an acceptable reason for the absence. Under Iowa Law, it is the parent, not the child who is reported to the county attorney when the child is repeatedly absent without an approved excuse. The parent must notify the school of an absence and provide written documentation.

## What is the Role of the School When a Child is Absent?

School officials will inform parents/guardians to help ensure students are in school on a regular basis. Parents/guardians are notified via the automated School Messenger phone system, other phone calls, and absence notification letters upon a student's 3, 6, 9, and 12 days of absences.

Students and parents/guardians can expect support to occur at each level. This may include working with the school guidance counselor, completing a Student Support Plan, problem solving, referral to a Family Team Meeting, goal setting, attendance groups, completing attendance cooperation agreement, or obtaining doctor's notes.

If the child continues to miss school even after the interventions, court mediation may be required. The mediator's role is to determine further problem solving steps to improve the child's attendance.

