



Pay Attention to Attendance: Keep Your Child On Track in Middle and High School

Showing up for school has a huge impact on a student's academic success starting in pre-kindergarten and continuing through high school. Even as children grow older and more independent, families play a key role in making sure students get to school safely every day. Families also help students understand why attendance is so important for success in school and in life.

DID YOU KNOW?

- Students should miss no more than nine days of school each year to stay engaged, successful and on track to graduation.
- 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 6th grade, absenteeism is one of three signs that a student may drop out of high school.
- By 9th grade, regular attendance is a better predictor of graduation rates than 8th grade test scores.
- Missing 10 percent, or about 18 days, of the school year can drastically affect a student's academic success.
- Students can be chronically absent even if they only miss a day or two every few weeks.
- Attendance is an important life skill that will help your child graduate from college and keep a job.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

Make school attendance a priority

- Students who attend consistently are more likely to graduate on time. Talk about the importance of showing up to school everyday and make that the expectation.
- Help your child maintain daily routines, such as finishing homework and getting a good night's sleep.
- Try not to schedule dental and medical appointments during the school day.
- Don't let your child stay home unless truly sick. Complaints of headaches or stomach aches may be signs of anxiety.

Help your teen stay engaged

- Find out if your child feels engaged in class and feels safe from bullies and other threats. Make sure he/she is not missing class because of behavioral issues and school discipline policies. If any of these are problems, work with your school.
- Stay on top of academic progress and seek help from teachers or tutors if necessary. Make sure teachers know how to contact you.
- Stay on top of your child's social contacts. Peer pressure can lead to skipping school, while students without many friends can feel isolated.
- Encourage meaningful afterschool activities, including sports and clubs.

Communicate with the school

- Talk to teachers if you notice sudden changes in your child's behavior. These could be tied to something going on at school.
- Check on your child's attendance to be sure absences are not piling up.



On time. Every day. Every class.

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Dear Parent/Guardian:

Showing up for school has a huge impact on a student's academic success. Even as children grow older and more independent, families play a key role in making sure students get to school safely every day. Families also help students understand why attendance is so important for success in school and in life.

When students miss too much school, regardless of the reason - it can cause them to fall behind academically. Absences add up quickly and your child is less likely to succeed in school and at work if he or she is chronically absent - which means missing as little as two days every month or 18 days over the course of the entire school year. We realize some absences are unavoidable due to health problems or other circumstances. Research shows:

- Children who attend school consistently without either excused or unexcused absences are much more likely to be reading at grade level by the end of 3rd grade and have higher reading and math scores in middle school and high school.
- By 6th grade, students who attend school consistently are more likely to graduate on time.
- By 9th grade, good attendance can predict graduation rates even better than 8th grade test scores.

Clearly attendance matters!

We don't want your child to fall behind in school and get discouraged. Please ensure that your child goes to school every day, attends every class and is on time. Here are a few practical tips to help support regular attendance:

- Make sure your children keep a regular bedtime and establish a morning routine.
- Ensure your children go to school every day unless they are truly sick.
- Encourage involvement in school activities including after-school opportunities. Involved students are more likely to want to attend school regularly.
- Avoid scheduling vacations or doctor's appointments when school is in session.
- Talk to teachers and counselors for advice if your children feel anxious about going to school, do not have the right school clothes or supplies or if you need additional support.
- Develop back-up plans for getting to school if something comes up. Call on a family member, neighbor, or another parent to take your child to school.

If you have questions or need support to get your child to school, call your child's school or 651-503-2585.

Sincerely,

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