

Attend Today, Achieve Tomorrow

Dear Parent/Guardian:

Our goal this year is to ensure that every student attends school regularly.

Showing up for school has a huge impact on a student's academic success starting in 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 and understand why attendance is so important for success in school and in life.

We realize some absences are unavoidable due to health problems or other circumstances. But, we also know that when students miss too much school— regardless of the reason – it can cause them to fall behind academically. Your child is less likely to succeed if he or she is chronically absent—which means missing 18 or more days over the course of an entire school year. Research shows:

- Children chronically absent in kindergarten and 1st grade are much less likely to read at grade level by the end of 3rd grade.
- By 6th grade, chronic absence is a proven early warning sign for students at risk for dropping out of school.
- By 9th grade good attendance can predict graduation rates even better than 8th grade test scores.

Absences can add up quickly. A child is chronically absent if they miss just two days every month!

We are required to take daily attendance and notify you when your student has an unexcused absence.

If your student has **three** unexcused absences in one month, state law (RCW 28A.225.020) requires we schedule a conference with you and your student to identify the barriers and supports available to ensure regular attendance.

In elementary school after **five** excused absences in any month, or **ten or more** excused absences in the school year, the school district is required (RCW 28A.225.018) to contact you to schedule a conference at a mutually agreeable, reasonable time with at least one district employee, to identify the barriers and supports available to you and your student. A conference is not required if your student has provided a doctor's note, or pre-arranged the absence in writing, and the parent, student and school have made a plan so your student does not fall behind academically. If your student has an Individualized Education Plan or a 504 Plan the team that created the plan needs to reconvene.

At the secondary level, if your student has **seven** unexcused absences in any month or **ten** unexcused absences within the school year, we are required to file a petition with the Juvenile court, alleging a violation of (RCW 28A.225.030) the mandatory attendance laws. The petition may be automatically stayed and your student and family may be referred to a Community Engagement Board, or you and your student may need to appear in Juvenile Court.

Clearly going to school regularly matters!

We don't want your child to fall behind in school and get discouraged. Please ensure that your child attends school every day and arrives 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.
- Lay out clothes and pack backpacks the night before.
- Ensure your children go to school every day unless they are truly sick
- 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.
- 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.

Let us know how we can best support you and your children so that they can show up for school on time every day. We want your child to be successful in school! If you have any questions or need more information please contact your child's school.

Additional Resources:

Excused and Unexcused Absences District Policy: 3122

<https://www.rainier.wednet.edu/cms/lib/WA01001947/Centricity/Domain/18/Policy%203122.pdf>

Procedure Excused and Unexcused Absences Policy: 3122P

<https://www.rainier.wednet.edu/cms/lib/WA01001947/Centricity/Domain/18/Procedure%203122P.pdf>

OSPI Attendance and Chronic Absenteeism Website

<https://ospi.k12.wa.us/student-success/support-programs/attendance-chronic-absenteeism-and-truancy>

Rainier Elementary Student-Parent Handbook

<https://www.rainier.wednet.edu/domain/60>

Click on Cougar Handbook on left side menu

Sincerely,

Rita Meldrum, RES Principal
Ben Sheaffer, RES Student Support
John Beckman, MS/HS Principal
Kristin Robinson, MS/HS Assistant Principal

Please sign and return the portion below to the office to indicate that you have received this attendance information.

_____ Date _____
Parent Signature

Student's Name