



September 6, 2017

Dear Parent/Guardian,

Seattle Public Schools believes that attendance is one of the most powerful predictors of academic achievement and that having your student in their seats, ready to learn for the entire school day will benefit them, their classmates, and the whole school community. Please help us in ensuring that your student has great attendance this school year.

DID YOU KNOW?

- Starting in kindergarten, too many absences (excused and unexcused) can cause children to fall behind in school.
- By 6th grade, absenteeism is one of three signs that a student may drop out of high school.
- By 9th grade, regular and high attendance is a better predictor of graduation rates than 8th grade test scores.
- 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.

WHAT WE NEED FROM YOU

We miss your student when they are gone and we value their contributions to their school. We would like you to help ensure that your student attends regularly and is successful in school. If your student is going to be absent, please contact your student's school in advance. If an absence was unplanned, please contact the school within two school days of your student's return.

OUR PROMISE TO YOU

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

OUR DUTIES UPON A STUDENT'S ABSENCES

- If your child has three unexcused absences in one month, state law (RCW 28A.225.020) requires we schedule a conference with you and your child.
- If your child is in elementary school and has five excused absences in any month, or ten or more excused absences in the school year, we are required to contact you to schedule a conference. A conference is not required if your child has provided a doctor's note or pre-arranged the absence in writing, and a plan is in place so your child does not fall behind academically.

- If your child has seven unexcused absences in any month or ten unexcused absences within the school year and our supports and interventions haven't helped get your student to school consistently, we are required to file a Petition with the Juvenile court, alleging a violation of RCW 28A.225.010, the mandatory attendance laws. You and your child may need to appear in Juvenile Court.

Our attendance procedure, which includes reasons why an absence may be excused, can be found at seattleschools.org under School Board » Policies and Procedures » Series 3000 – Students or at <http://goo.gl/R6a1cx>.

WHAT YOU CAN DO TO HELP

- Don't let your child stay home unless they are truly sick, such as fever, vomiting, diarrhea, or a contagious rash.
- Avoid appointments and travel when school is in session.
- Keep track of your child's attendance. Missing school, excused or unexcused, could put your child at risk of falling behind.
- Set a regular bedtime and morning routine. Finish homework and pack backpacks the night before.
- Have a back-up plan in place with family members, neighbors, or other parents for getting your child to school in case something comes up.

Thank you and have a great school year!

Sincerely,

Brad Fulkerson
Program Manager, Attendance
Seattle Public Schools

Your signature below indicates that you have read (or someone read it to you) and understand this letter.

_____ Date _____

Print Name: _____

Student Name: _____ Student ID: _____