

September 5, 2018



Dear Parent/Guardian,

Attendance is one of the most powerful predictors of academic achievement and having your student in their seat, ready to learn for the entire school day will benefit them, their classmates, and our whole school community. Let's work together to make sure your child has great attendance and can get the most out of their learning opportunities 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.

#### **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 building 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 identify barriers and supports available to overcome challenges you may face in helping your student attend school.

#### **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 the school in advance. If an absence was unplanned, please contact the school within two school days of your student's return.

#### **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 you have provided a doctor's note or pre-arranged the absence, 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, Washington's mandatory attendance law.

Our attendance procedure, which includes reasons why an absence may be excused, can be found at [seattleschools.org](http://seattleschools.org) under School Board » Policies and Procedures » Series 3000 – Students or at [seattleschools.org/attendance](http://seattleschools.org/attendance).

**HOW WE CAN WORK TOGETHER**

- 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 using the Source or another method.
- Set a regular bedtime and morning routine (including limiting how late your child can use any electronic devices) and finish homework and pack backpacks the night before.
- Have a back-up plan for getting to school in case something comes up (this could be alternative bus routes, roads, or a plan with family members, neighbors, or other parents).
- Communicate with the school about how we can work together to support your child's attendance.

Thank you and have a great school year!

Sincerely,

Attendance Department  
Seattle Public Schools

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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: \_\_\_\_\_