**Attendance Guide for Families**

**Did You Know...**

* Missing **just 10%** of the school year in early grades can leave many students struggling throughout elementary school.
* Attending every day in Pre-K and Kindergarten helps students **learn to read** by 3rd grade.
* By sixth grade, missing **18 days a year** is strongly linked to dropping out of high school.
* Attending every day in 9th grade helps students graduate on time, **learn more and earn more!**
* Missing **just two days a month** can put students at risk of academic failure.

**HOW CAN I SUPPORT MY CHILD AND THEIR ON-TIME, DAILY ATTENDANCE?**

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| *Before School** Set a regular routine for waking up and eating breakfast at home or at school.
* Try to leave the house at the same time every day.

*After School** Set a regular routine for completing homework.
* Ask questions about school and friends.
* Provide incentives for good attendance and talk about consequences for missing school.

*The Night Before** Set a regular bedtime schedule.
* Prepare your child’s school bag, lunch, and outfit for the next day.
* Set an alarm on your phone or alarm clock.
 | *Throughout the year** Set consistent expectations about attendance, reinforce why attendance matters, and refuse to write a note for unacceptable reasons.
* Stay informed about school policies regarding start times and excused/unexcused absences.
* Provide a note for excused absences within five school days.
* Avoid planning vacations and appointments when school is in session.
* Only keep your child at home if they are truly sick – be mindful of minor symptoms that may signal anxiety.
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**WHEN SHOULD I KEEP MY CHILD AT HOME?**

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| **Send me to school**  | **Keep me at home\*** | **Call the doctor\*** |
| * My nose is running or I have a little cough, but I don’t have other symptoms.
* I have **not** had a fever or taken fever-reducing medicine like Tylenol in the last 24 hours.
* In the last 24 hours, I have **not** had diarrhea or thrown up.
 | * I have a cough that keeps me awake.
* My temperature is higher than 99.6 F.
* I’ve thrown up or had diarrhea in the last 24 hours.
* My eyes are crusty and pink.
* My throat is sore.

**\*Don’t forget to send a note when I return to school!** | * I’ve had a runny/stuffy nose for over a week, and it’s not getting better.
* I’ve had a fever above 99.6 F for more than 2 days.
* I’ve had diarrhea or vomiting for more than 2 days.
* My asthma symptoms continue even after using my regular asthma medicine (**call 911** if I’m having trouble breathing after using an inhaler).
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**IMPORTANT DATES**

* Family-Teacher Conference days are important times to communicate with your child’s school.
* Make sure your child does not miss school due to vacations or travel.

**When is It Time for Vacation?**

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Labor Day Columbus Day Veterans Day (Observed)Thanksgiving Professional Development DaysWinter Break | Sept 3, 2018Oct 8, 2018Nov 12, 2018Nov 22, 2018Varies by schoolVaries by school | Martin Luther King Jr. DayPresidents’ Day Spring Break Emancipation DayMemorial Day Summer Vacation | Jan 21, 2019Feb 18, 2019Varies by schoolApt 16, 2019May 28, 2019Varies by school |

*What is an* ***excused*** *absence?*

There are some differences by school, but all schools are required to excuse the following categories:

* Illness or other bona fide (legitimate) medical illness experienced by the student
* Exclusion, by direction of DC authorities, due to quarantine, contagious disease, infection, infestation, or other condition requiring separation from other students for medical or health reasons
* Death in the student’s family
* Necessity for a student to attend judiciary or administrative proceedings as a party to the action or under subpoena
* Observance of a religious holiday
* Lawful suspension or exclusion from school by school authorities
* Temporary closing of facilities or suspension of classes due to severe weather, official activities, holidays, malfunctioning equipment, unsafe or unsanitary conditions, or other condition(s) or emergency requiring a school closing or suspension of classes
* Failure of DC to provide transportation in cases where there is a legal responsibility for the transportation of the student
* Medical or dental appointments for the student
* Absences to allow students to visit their parent or a legal guardian, who is in the military, immediately before, during, or after deployment
* An emergency or other circumstances approved by an educational institution

*What is an* ***unexcused*** *absence?*

* **Any** absence that does not fall into one of the excused categories listed above or any absence where the parent of guardian does not **provide a valid excuse within five school days**.

*Resources*

* *For DCPS Parents:* DC Public Schools Office of Youth Engagement at (202) 727-0488.
* DC Office of the Student Advocate, (202) 741-4692 or student.advocate@dc.gov
* DC Office of the Ombudsman for Public Education, (202) 741-0886 or ombudsman@dc.gov
* Find more at: **attendance.dc.gov**