

Attendance Guide for Families

Together, We Help Every Student Thrive

Why Showing Up Matters

One daily habit can set your child up for success for years to come: showing up at school in person as often as possible. When students attend regularly, they build confidence, strengthen friendships, and stay connected to caring adults who support their growth. They develop their whole selves – socially, academically, emotionally, and creatively.

Every day offers new chances to solve problems, think critically, collaborate, and participate in hands-on learning.

Showing up matters, and Every Day Counts!

Building Strong Daily Attendance Habits

Before School

- Establish a morning routine with time for waking up, getting ready, and eating breakfast, either at home or school.
- Leave home at the same time each day to create predictability and calm.

After School

- Create a regular homework or reading routine.
- Check in about your child's day – friends, classes, highlights, or challenges.
- Celebrate positive attendance and problem-solve challenges together.

The Night Before

- Set a consistent bedtime so your child feels rested and ready to learn.
- Prepare backpacks, lunches, clothes, or supplies in advance.
- Set an alarm to help the next morning go smoothly.

Throughout the year

- Set consistent expectations about attendance and reinforce how attendance helps your child learn and grow.
- Stay up-to-date on school start times and absence policies.
- Send a note for excused absences within five school days so we can support accurate records.
- Whenever possible, avoid scheduling vacations or appointments on school days.
- If your child shows minor symptoms or worries that make attending difficult, reach out to your child's school.

We're here to support you.

When Should I Keep My Child at Home?

Families can face uncertainty about whether a child is well enough for school. Use this guide and contact your child's school or health provider if you're unsure. We'll work together to make the best decision for your child.

Send me to school

- I have a runny nose or mild cough but feel okay.
- I have not had a fever or taken fever-reducing medicine in the past 24 hours.
- I have not thrown up or had diarrhea in the past 24 hours.

Keep me at home*

- 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.

Call the doctor*

- 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

Vacations and appointments are easiest to manage when planned around the school calendar. Here are common dates when school is closed and are perfect opportunities for family time without missing learning days.

Labor Day	Sept 7, 2026	Martin Luther King Jr. Day	Jan 18, 2027
Indigenous Peoples Day	Oct 12, 2026	Presidents' Day	Feb 15, 2027
Veterans Day (Observed)	Nov 11, 2026	Spring Break	Varies by school
Thanksgiving	Nov 26, 2026	Emancipation Day	Apr 16, 2027
Professional Development Days	Varies by school	Memorial Day	May 31, 2027
Winter Break	Varies by school	Summer Vacation	Varies by school

Understanding Absences

We know life happens. When it does, we're here to support you.

Excused Absences May Include:

- Illness or medical appointments
- Quarantine or contagious conditions
- Family bereavement
- Legal appointments
- Religious holidays
- School closures
- Transportation challenges when required services are unavailable
- Visiting a parent or guardian in the military before or after deployment
- Emergencies or circumstances approved by the school

Unexcused Absences

If an absence doesn't meet excused criteria or we don't receive information from you within five school days, it is marked unexcused, **but we still want to help**. If you ever have questions or need assistance sending documentation, please reach out to your child's school. We're here to support your family.

Resources

- 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
- The 211 Warmline, the District of Columbia's centralized hub for social service resources and referrals. Call 211 or email 211Warmline@DC.gov
- Find more at: **attendance.dc.gov**

Together, We Can Help Every Student Succeed

Your partnership makes all the difference.

By building strong routines, planning ahead, and reaching out when challenges arise, **we create a community where every student feels supported, connected, and ready to learn.**

Every day counts, and we're here with you, every step of the way.