

Sending the Right Message about Attendance to Parents and Students

WHAT TO SAY TO STUDENTS

Beyond the talking points for parents, you should add in some messages targeted to students of all ages. As they grow older, they need to hear this message from peers, as well as teachers and parents.

- School is your first and most important job. You're learning about more than math and reading. You're learning how show up for school on time every day, so that when you graduate and get a job, you'll know how to show up for work on time every day.
- When you're not here, we notice because we care and we want you to be successful. Students who attend school regularly are more likely to graduate and find good jobs. In fact, a high school graduate makes, on average, \$1 million more than a dropout over a lifetime.
- A student who misses 10 days or more during a school year is 20 percent less likely to graduate from high school and 25 percent less likely to ever enroll in college.
- If you think missing a day here or there won't matter, think again. By missing just one day every two weeks, you would be on track to miss 10 percent of the school year – and that can happen before you know it.
- School only gets harder when you stay home too much. Sometimes it's tempting to stay home because you've got too much work or you don't understand what's going on in class. But missing a day only makes that worse.
- We understand that you will get sick sometimes and need to stay home. The important thing is to get to school as often as possible to help stay on track with assignments.
- Chronic absence can affect your ability to earn a living. Dropouts are less likely to succeed in a career. And even those who do graduate won't do well at work without good attendance habits. Nearly 80 percent of people in prison lack a high school diploma.
- Skipping school may sound fun, but it can have serious consequences, including jail time, fines, or even the loss of your driver's license.
- If you're having trouble getting to school – issues with transportation, bullies, etc. – tell someone, such as a guidance counselor or your parents. Many schools offer services for the whole family to help, for example, with issues concerning access to health care and reliable transportation.