

# Help Your Young Child Succeed in School: Build the Habit of Good Attendance Early

School success goes hand in hand with good attendance!

## DID YOU KNOW?

Attending school regularly helps children feel better about school—and themselves. Start building this habit in preschool so they learn right away that going to school on time, every day is important. Good attendance will help children do well in high school, college, and at work.

- Missing 10 percent (or about 18 days) can make it harder to learn to read.
- Students can still fall behind if they miss just a day or two days every few weeks.
- Being late to school may lead to poor attendance.
- Absences can affect the whole classroom if the teacher has to slow down learning to help children catch up.

## WHAT YOU CAN DO

- Don't let your child stay home unless she is truly sick. Keep in mind complaints of a stomach ache or headache can be a sign of anxiety and are not a reason to stay home.
- Set a regular bed time, create morning routines and lay out clothes and pack backpacks the night before.
- If your child seems anxious about going to school, talk to teachers, school counselors, or other parents for advice on how to make her feel comfortable and excited about learning.
- Develop back-up plans for getting to school if your child misses the bus, oversleeps or something else comes up. Call on a family member, a neighbor, or another parent.
- Avoid medical appointments and extended trips when school is in session.

## WHEN DO ABSENCES BECOME A PROBLEM?

### Chronic Absence

**18** or  
more days

### Warning Signs

**10** to **17**  
days

### Good Attendance

**9** or  
fewer absences

If you need support to get your child to school, call your child's school or call 651 266-4266.



# *On time. Every day. Every class.*

## **Dear Parent/Guardian:**

Showing up for school has a huge impact on a student's academic success. Even as children grow older and more independent, families play a key role in making sure students get to school safely every day. Families also help students understand why attendance is so important for success in school and in life.

When students miss too much school, regardless of the reason - it can cause them to fall behind academically. Absences add up quickly and your child is less likely to succeed in school and at work if he or she is chronically absent - which means missing as little as two days every month or 18 days over the course of the entire school year. We realize some absences are unavoidable due to health problems or other circumstances. Research shows:

- Children who attend school consistently without either excused or unexcused absences are much more likely to be reading at grade level by the end of 3rd grade and have higher reading and math scores in middle school and high school.
- By 6th grade, students who attend school consistently are more likely to graduate on time.
- By 9th grade, good attendance can predict graduation rates even better than 8th grade test scores.

## **Clearly attendance matters!**

We don't want your child to fall behind in school and get discouraged. Please ensure that your child goes to school every day, attends every class and is on time. Here are a few practical tips to help support regular attendance:

- Make sure your children keep a regular bedtime and establish a morning routine.
- Ensure your children go to school every day unless they are truly sick.
- Encourage involvement in school activities including after-school opportunities. Involved students are more likely to want to attend school regularly.
- Avoid scheduling vacations or doctor's appointments when school is in session.
- Talk to teachers and counselors for advice if your children feel anxious about going to school, do not have the right school clothes or supplies or if you need additional support.
- Develop back-up plans for getting to school if something comes up. Call on a family member, neighbor, or another parent to take your child to school.

If you have questions or need support to get your child to school, call your child's school or 612 266-4266.

Sincerely,

John Choi  
Ramsey County Attorney

Christopher B. Coleman  
Mayor of Saint Paul

Valeria Silva  
Superintendent, Saint Paul Public Schools