

Regular attendance at school has a definite impact on a student's academic success starting as early as preschool and kindergarten and carrying through right to high school graduation. Families can play a key role in getting students safely to school each day and helping students understand why consistent attendance is so important for success both in school and later in the workplace.

#### DID YOU KNOW?????

- 1) Students should miss no more than 9 days of school each year to stay engaged, successful and on track to graduation
- 2) Absences can be a sign that a student is losing interest in school, struggling with school work, dealing with a bully or facing some other potentially serious difficulty.
- 3) By 6<sup>th</sup> grade, absenteeism is one of three signs that a student may drop out of school.
- 4) By 9<sup>th</sup> grade, regular and high attendance is a better predictor of graduation rates than 8<sup>th</sup> grade test scores
- 5) Missing 10 percent or 18 days, of the school year can drastically affect a student's academic success.
- 6) Students can be chronically absent even if they only miss a day or two every few weeks.
- 7) Attendance is an important life skill that will help your child graduate college and hold a job.

#### WHAT CAN PARENTS DO???

- 1) Talk about the importance of showing up to school everyday and make it a priority
- 2) Help your child maintain daily routines such as finishing homework and a regular bedtime. Pack lunches and snacks the night before. Have a designated area for the backpack in the morning so students are not rushing to gather necessary assignments and belongings. Keep a quick non perishable snack like a granola bar in the backpack for days when your child is running late and missing breakfast.
- 3) Try not to schedule dental and medical appointments during the school day.
- 4) Don't allow your child to stay home unless he or she is truly sick. Complaints of headache and stomach aches may be signs of anxiety.
- 5) Do not support your child leaving school early during the day.
- 6) Provide excuse notes for your child's absences in a timely manner. If your child is to be hospitalized, communicate with the school.
- 7) Limit watching of TV or texting in the morning as this can cause them to be late for school.

#### KEEP YOUR TEEN ENGAGED

- 1) Talk to your student and find out if your child is engaged by his classes and feels safe from bullying and other threats. Make sure your student is not missing school

due to behavioral or discipline issues. Work with the school if you find these issues are present

- 2) Stay on top of academic progress and seek help from teachers as necessary. IPARENT will provide you these opportunities.
- 3) Monitor your child's peer group. Peer pressure can lead to skipping school, while students without many friends may avoid school because they feel isolated.
- 4) Encourage meaningful afterschool activities, including sports and clubs.

#### COMMUNICATE WITH THE SCHOOL

- 1) Know the attendance policy-incentives and penalties
- 2) Talk to teachers, guidance and the school nurse if you notice any changes in your child's behavior.
- 3) Check on your student's attendance to be sure absences are not accumulating.
- 4) Ask for help if you are experiencing difficulties getting your child to school.

#### References

[www.attendanceworks.org](http://www.attendanceworks.org)

National Dropout Prevention Center

"Fifteen Effective Strategies for Improving Student Attendance and Truancy," Jay Smink, D.Ed. and Mary S. Reimer, Ph.D May 2005

## Guidelines for when is a child too sick to attend school

Primarily there are three key reasons to keep a student home sick from school including fever greater than 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit , a contagious illness or rash that has not been identified and finally that the child is simply not well enough to be attentive in class.

The average school age child may have 6 to 12 episodes of illness per year, so illness is part of normal childhood. It can be difficult to choose between spreading illness to others and balancing a child's attendance. Fever is a symptom that the body is fighting infection. In and of itself, a fever is not necessarily a bad thing however a student with a fever greater than 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit is potentially infectious and the child should remain home ideally until fever free for twenty four hours in the absence of taking fever reducing medications.

Rashes that are itchy or scaly may be contagious and should be identified by the child's pediatrician or nurse fractioned to be sure it is not contagious before sending the student to school. The chicken pox rash is generally red with blister like itchy raised areas that will eventually open and scab over. A child should not be sent to school with this type of rash as the illness is highly contagious. Vaccination against the disease is not full proof and does not guarantee immunity.

A cough need not be reason to stay home unless the cough is interfering with sleep or the ability to take part in usual school activities. Coughs and runny noses may persist for up to two weeks following a cold. Children may return to school once they are fever free as noted previously.

A sore throat is not in and of itself a reason to remain home unless the sore throat is accompanied by other symptoms such as fever, vomiting or abdominal pain. If a child is complaining of a sore throat, and the glands of the neck are swollen with a low grade fever, strep throat should be ruled out. A child with a positive strep culture may return to school following a completed 24 hour antibiotic regime. Coughing is usually not a symptom that accompanies strep throat.

Children home vomiting should remain home until the vomiting stops and the child is able to resume a normal eating pattern. Similarly, children experiencing diarrhea also need to remain home until stools have been normal for a 24 hour period. Remaining hydrated during these episodes is crucial to a timely recovery as is frequent and diligent hand washing to prevent the spread of contagious diseases.

## Guidelines for common **childhood illnesses**

<b>Illness</b>	<b>Symptoms and Signs</b>	<b>What to do</b>
<b>Fever</b>	100.4°F or 38°C	Stay home, must be fever free for 24 hours before returning
<b>Headache</b>	If the child can't do normal activities	Stay home
<b>Vomiting</b>	More than twice in 24 hours or if diarrhea also	Stay home until 24 hours after last vomit
<b>Diarrhea</b>	More than 3 stools in 24 hours	Home until 24 hours after last bout
<b>Sore Throat</b>	If not eating or fever	Return as soon as well or 24 hours after starting antibiotic if prescribed
<b>Cold Symptoms</b>	Stuffed or runny nose, sneezing, mild cough	No need to stay home
<b>Cough</b>	If the cough disrupts normal activity	Return to school after the doctor has cleared child of serious illness e.g. whooping cough
<b>Asthma</b>	If the child can't do normal activities. If coughing a lot.	Needs to see the doctor or asthma nurse to review treatment.
<b>Conjunctivitis (Red Eyes)</b>	With yellow or green pus	May return 24 hours after treatment started
<b>Chicken Pox</b>	Some children have a fever, abdominal pain, sore throat, headache, or a vague sick feeling a day or two before the rash appears	Return when the blisters are all dry and crusted over
<b>Hand, foot and mouth disease</b>	Not infectious once rash appears	No need to stay home unless drooling
<b>Impetigo</b>	Patch of red, itchy skin. Blisters develop on this area, soon forming crusty, yellow-brown sores	May return 24 hours after starting antibiotic medicine, 48 hours after starting antibiotic cream. Sores must be covered with dressing.
<b>Ringworm</b>	Ring Shaped or oval patch of scaly red skin	Return once started on treatment. Keep area covered.
<b>Head Lice</b>	Spread directly from head to head so short and tidy hair may help	They are a nuisance, not a reason to stay home.
<b>Doctor or dentist visit</b>		Back to school afterward unless the dentist or doctor says stay at home.