



ATTENDANCE FOR LIFE

A health guide for parents/guardians



When students miss too many days of school, they fall behind and struggle to keep up with their classmates. Whether the days missed are due to illness, truancy or for any other reason, the end result for the student is the same — learning time is lost. Children and adolescents will get sick at times and may need to stay at home, but we want to work with you to help minimize the number of days your student misses school.

MISSED DAYS ADD UP QUICKLY

- Just a few missed days a month add up to several school weeks missed in a year.
- Both excused and unexcused absences can make it more difficult for your child to keep up with other students.
- Kindergarten and first grade are critical for your child. Missing school during these early years makes it more difficult for children to learn in later years, and they often have trouble reading by the end of third grade.

WORK WITH YOUR CHILD AND YOUR SCHOOL

- As the parent/guardian, be strong with your child and don't let your child stay home when it is not necessary. This will help your child succeed.
- If your child has a chronic disease, make sure the school staff is aware of the disease so the staff can assist your child if he or she becomes ill. Information about your child's chronic disease should be noted on the school emergency or health information card.
- If your child has asthma, the school needs an Asthma Action Plan completed by his or her doctor that includes permission to carry an inhaler at school. Make sure that all supplies (inhaler, spacer, etc.) needed to manage your child's asthma are at the school.
- If your child has diabetes, the school needs a Diabetes Management Plan completed by his or her doctor. Make sure all supplies (insulin, blood sugar meter, test strips etc.) needed to manage your child's diabetes are at the school.
- Keep an open line of communication with school staff and teachers. The more the school knows about your child's health, the better prepared everyone will be to work together for your child.

HELPFUL IDEAS

- Make appointments with the doctor or dentist in the late afternoon so your child misses as little school as possible.
- If your child must miss school, make sure you get his/her homework assignments and follow up to see if the work is completed and turned in.
- Call the school as soon as you know your child will be absent and tell school staff why your child will be out and for how long.
- Be prepared to get a doctor's note when requested by school personnel.
- If you need medical advice after business hours, most doctors' offices have answering services 24 hours a day to assist you.
- If your child has an emergency, call 911.

WHEN SHOULD I SEND MY CHILD TO SCHOOL?

The following are concerns frequently asked by parents/guardians along with our recommendations. State law requires that parents/guardians send their children to school unless excused by the school. Please use the following guidelines to help you understand how concerns are addressed by the school and to help you in your decision-making.

Note: The suggestions below are for children 5-18 years of age. Recommendations may be different for infants and younger children.

CONCERNS	SYMPTOMS/DETAILS	SEND TO SCHOOL?	RECOMMENDED ACTION
Parent ailment	Parent is stressed, sick or hospitalized	YES	If your child is healthy, they are required to attend school. Please plan ahead and ask a relative, neighbor or spouse to take your child to school and pick him/her up after school.
Chronic diseases	Long-lasting condition that can be controlled but not cured (i.e. Asthma, diabetes, sickle cell, epilepsy, etc.)	YES	School personnel are trained to assist children with chronic diseases and related needs. If your child requires support, please make the school aware and they will work with you to create a plan.
Child doesn't want to go to school	Crying, fear, anger, behavior changes, stomach ache, nausea	YES	Try to determine the cause of your child's concern. Consult with your health care provider. Contact the school counselor to help rule out problems at school. Parents are legally required to send their child to school.
Cold symptoms	Stuffy/runny nose, sneezing, mild cough	YES	If your child is able to participate in school activities, they should attend school. Over-the-counter medications may be considered by parents/guardians. All medications must remain at home unless approved properly through the school.
Strains, sprains and pains	Injuries or symptoms that cause discomfort but do not prevent your child from walking (even with crutches or other assistive device), talking or eating	YES	If you feel your child may need support, please contact the main office to speak with staff about your concerns. If pain persists with no improvement for your child, please contact your health care provider.
Menstrual issues		YES	Typically not an issue, but if there are concerns that would prevent your daughter from attending school, please contact your health care provider.
Conjunctivitis (pink eye)	White of the eye is pink with yellow/green discharge	NO	Please consult with your health care provider. Child may return to school 24 hours after antibiotic has been applied.
Head lice	Intense itching of the head; may feel like something is moving	NO	School personnel can assist in determining if your child has head lice. Treatments are available at the pharmacy. Prior to returning to school, child must be checked by trained staff and cleared as having no nits or live lice.
Fever	100 degrees or higher	NO	Must stay home until fever remains below 100 degrees for 24 hours without the use of medication. After 2-3 days of fever, please contact your health care provider.
Diarrhea	High frequency or is accompanied by other symptoms listed in this chart	NO	Diarrhea can be caused by food and/or medication, so evaluate carefully. If accompanied by abdominal pain, fever or vomiting, please contact your health care provider.
Vomiting	Two or more times within 24 hours	NO	Child may attend school ONLY after vomiting has stopped for 24 hours. If vomiting continues, please contact your health care provider.
Coughing	Severe, uncontrolled, rapid, wheezing or difficulty breathing	NO	Please contact your health care provider. If symptoms are due to asthma, please follow your child's action plan. Child may return to school as soon as symptoms are controlled.
Rash	Rash is spreading or discharging fluid	NO	Please contact your health care provider.
Strep throat	Sore throat, fever, stomach ache and red/swollen tonsils	NO	Please contact your health care provider. Once antibiotics have been given, wait 24 hours and then child may return to school. If no antibiotic has been given, child must be symptom-free.
Chicken pox (vaccine available)	Fever, headache, stomach ache or sore throat, itchy skin rash develops on the stomach first then limbs and face	NO	Please contact your health care provider.
Measles/rubella (German measles) (vaccine available)	Swollen glands, rash starts behind the ears then the face and the rest of the body, sore joints, mild fever and cough, red eyes	NO	Please contact your health care provider.
Mumps (vaccine available)	Fever, headache, muscle aches, loss of appetite, swollen tender salivary glands	NO	Please contact your health care provider.
Pertussis (whooping cough) (vaccine available)	Many rapid coughs followed by a high-pitched "whoop," vomiting, very tired	NO	Please contact your health care provider.