

# GREECE CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

## Attendance Resources Parents~Students~Families



Good School Attendance **it**Matters



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**GREECE CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT**

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**KATHLEEN GRAUPMAN**

*Superintendent of Schools*

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Dear Greece Families,

You may think missing school once a month is harmless, but studies have shown an undeniable link between good attendance and academic success. Kids who miss 10 or more school days a year are far less likely to read at grade level and are much more likely to drop out.

Improving student attendance is one of the focuses of our Envision 2022 Strategic Plan. Our goal is for the majority of students to be in school 95% of the time. Last year, only 57% of our student population met the mark. By 2022, district leaders would like to see 80% or more of students there.

As a district, we are promoting the importance of good attendance with our “It Matters” campaign. Posters are displayed in all district schools and each building is customizing the campaign to suite their student population. Greece Central’s updated Attendance Manual can also be found on our district website. It’s filled with practical tools and ideas for parents and employees.

Each school takes a unique approach to boosting attendance. Some schools offer homework passes or hold assemblies to reward good attendance, others work directly with families to address the issues.

Parents can help break down some of the common barriers to good attendance by recognizing and emphasizing the importance regularly being in school; working to manage chronic health conditions that keep kids home, and building relationships with school staff so you feel more comfortable with your kids being at school.

We can improve student attendance with your support!

Looking forward to seeing you in school!

Sincerely,

Kathleen Graupman  
Superintendent of Schools



As the concept of chronic absenteeism gains traction across the country, some people are under the mistaken impression that it's just a politically correct way of saying truancy. Educators, policymakers and journalists often use the words interchangeably, describing the same, old problem with the same, old solution.

In fact, the two terms describe different aspects of our absenteeism problem and require different approaches to bringing students back to school every day.

First, let's take truancy, a term that generally refers to unexcused absences. In the past, federal law required states to track truancy but left it to states to come up with the definition. California schools have tracked the number of students who are truant which is defined as missing three days without a valid excuse or are late three times to class by 30 minutes. In contrast, in Maryland, schools have monitored habitual truancy, defined as missing 20% of the school year (which is 38 days in a 180 day school year).

With its focus on unexcused absences, truancy naturally leads to a focus on compliance with the rules. Students are missing school without an excuse, skipping school and violating mandatory attendance requirements. Fixing the problem becomes a question of ensuring compliance, often left to front-office administrators, and in the most severe cases, to the legal system. Policymakers often recommend punitive consequences for truancy – such as suspensions, jail time and fines – for children and parents. Some communities and courts have devised effective approaches to reducing truancy, but in other places, punitive efforts are pushing students out of school.

Chronic absenteeism, on the other hand, incorporates all absences: excused, unexcused and suspensions. The focus is on the academic consequences of this lost instructional time and on preventing absences before students miss so much school that they fall behind. It recognizes that students miss school for many understandable issues such as asthma or homelessness or unreliable transportation, for which a punitive response is not appropriate. But what helps is working with families to share the importance of attendance and to fix the underlying problems that lead to absenteeism.

Given this broader focus, addressing chronic absenteeism becomes an issue for the entire community. Medical providers can help address health challenges; transit and housing agencies can resolve other barriers to attendance; volunteers from businesses and faith communities can mentor students and support families. These approaches can also reduce truancy.

Like truancy, chronic absence has no common definition, though many researchers and schools monitor how many students are missing 10 percent or more of the school year. That's about two days a month, or 18 days in most school districts. The U.S. Education Department's Office of Civil Rights this spring will release data showing how many students miss 15 or more days.

This data represents the first time that many schools and districts will know how many students are missing so much school that they are falling behind academically. What's the right response to this new information? Rather than launching a punitive crackdown, educators and community partners should use the opportunity to dig deep into their numbers to determine who is missing too much school and why. Taking a data informed, non-punitive approach that draws upon insights from students, families, teachers and community partners is what leads to strategies that can improve attendance and achievement.

## Truancy Vs. Chronic Absence

### TRUANCY

- Counts only unexcused absences
- Emphasizes compliance with school rules
- Relies on legal & administrative solutions

VS.

### CHRONIC ABSENCE

- Counts all absences: excused, unexcused & suspensions
- Emphasizes academic impact of missed days
- Uses community-based, positive strategies



HOW TO TALK TO  
YOUR CHILDREN  
ABOUT  
ATTENDANCE



# 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 to 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.

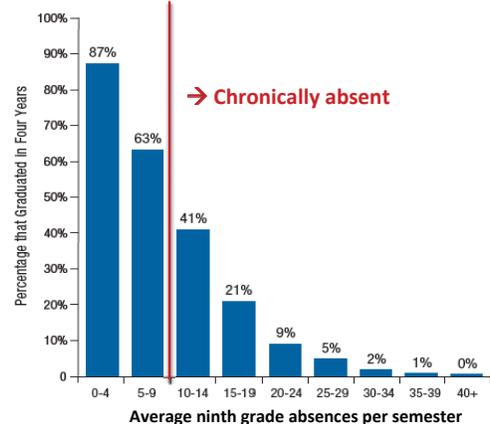
Let families know that you care about their child and believe they can do well in school, but you are concerned that their child has begun to fall behind in his studies because he or she has missed so many days of school so far this year. Tell them how many days the student has missed.

## What to Say to Families of Teens

- **Almost all parents have hopes and dreams for their children.** Consider asking them to share their dreams for their child. Let them know that being in school every day will enable their child to do well in school, graduate ready for the work force or go on to college.
- **Ask them if they know that students who miss as little as two days a month are at risk** of not graduating from high school.
- **Tell them that even strong students with good grades in elementary school can quickly fall off course** in middle and high school if they miss a few classes. Lessons build on one another and move more quickly in the upper grades. They risk failing their classes!
- **Let them know that while it may not seem like it, students can't make up for too many absences** with take-home assignments.
- **Suggest that the parents talk to their teen about being in school every day.** Many teens don't think it matters to skip a class during the day, but it does.
- **Help caregivers to identify what the barriers might be that keep their child from getting to school.** Is the student staying home during the day to watch a younger sibling? Is she concerned about bullying? Ask them what approaches might help them address these challenges.
- **Be sensitive when talking about tough challenges families may be facing,** such as a lack of access to health care or food, as well as unstable housing or poor transportation. Parents may feel embarrassed or ashamed about not being able to provide for their children. If your school has this information, offer to put the family in touch with resources that offer help for the whole family.

### Absence is very predictive of dropout / graduation

Each week of absence per semester in 9<sup>th</sup> grade lowers the likelihood of graduating by 25 percentage points



Beyond the talking points for families, you should add in some messages targeted to students. You can utilize these messages when you are talking about attendance at schoolwide events involving students or meeting with a student one-on-one to talk with them about their success in school. Remember to approach the conversation with concern and with clear information. A national survey of youth shows that teens are motivated to go to school after hearing messages that connect absences with consequences—such as not graduating from high school.

*Remember to express care and concern about why students are missing so many days.*

## What to Say to Students

- **Showing up every day is a skill that you are developing that will help you** do well in class and with getting and keeping a job later on.
- **School only gets harder when you skip a class.** Sometimes it's tempting to skip or stay home because you are tired or don't understand what's going on in class. But missing a day only makes that worse because you aren't learning something that will help you understand a lesson later on.
- **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 two full weeks in a semester or nearly a month of school for the year!
- **Did you know that a student who misses 10 days or more during a school year** is less likely to graduate from high school and or ever enroll in college?
- **Chronic absence can affect your ability to earn a living.** Dropouts are less likely to succeed in a career. In fact, a high school graduate makes, on average, \$1 million more than a dropout over a lifetime.
- **While short- and long-term consequences of absenteeism are most motivating to teens,** it's important to remember that many teens trust their teachers and are motivated by the positive relationship. You can express concern but make sure you are genuine. Teens are quick to spot when adults are just saying the right things and not backing them up with actions. You can say:  
*"When you're not here, teachers and administrators notice because we care about you and we want you to be successful."*
- **If you're having trouble getting to school—** and have challenges such as transportation, bullies, etc.—tell someone, such as a teacher, guidance counselor or your family. Many schools offer services to help the whole family.



# HOW TO SUPPORT YOUR CHILD'S ATTENDANCE





## Help Your Child Succeed in Preschool: Build the Habit of Good Attendance

Early School Success goes hand in hand with good attendance!

### DID YOU KNOW?

**Showing up on time every day is important to your child's success and learning from preschool forward.**

Missing 10 percent of preschool (one or two days every few weeks) can

- Make it harder to develop early reading skills.
- Make it harder to get ready for kindergarten and first grade.
- Develop a poor attendance pattern that's hard to break.

**High quality preschool programs have many benefits for your child. The routines your child develops in preschool will continue throughout school. You can make the most of preschool by encouraging your child to attend every day!**

### WHAT YOU CAN DO

**Work with your child and his/her teacher to help your child develop strong attendance. Your enthusiasm is a big boost to success.**

**Talk about it – sing about it – make it an adventure!**

- Set a regular bed time and morning routine
- Lay out clothes and pack backpacks the night before
- Share ideas with other parents for getting out the door on time

**Before the school year starts:**

- Find out what day preschool starts and start the exciting count down!
- Make sure your child has the required shots.
- Attend orientation with your child to meet the teachers and classmates.

**Ready – Set GO!**

- Develop back-up plans for getting to preschool if something comes up
- Ask family members, neighbors or other parents to lend a hand if you need help dropping off or picking up your child
- Schedule medical appointments and extended trips when preschool is not in session
- If your child seems anxious about going to preschool, talk to the program director, teacher, your doctor or other parents for advice. If the problem persists, make sure the program is a good fit for your child.





## Ayude a su Hijo Triunfar en el Preescolar: Crea el Hábito de la Buena Asistencia

¡La buena asistencia preescolar ayudar llevar a su hijo al éxito!

### ¿SABÍAS QUE?

**Llegar a tiempo cada día es importante para el triunfo y aprendizaje de su hijo desde el preescolar y más.**

Faltar el 10 por ciento del preescolar (la acumulación de días entre dos o tres semanas) puede

- Hacer más difícil desarrollar las habilidades necesarias para aprender a leer a una temprana edad.
- Hacer más difícil la preparación para el kínder y el primer grado.
- Desarrollar un hábito de pobre asistencia que se hace difícil romper.

**Programas preescolares de alta calidad tienen muchos beneficios para su hijo. Las rutinas que su niño desarrolla en la edad preescolar los seguirán durante la escuela. ¡Motivar a su hijo asistir todos los días le dará el mayor beneficio preescolar!**

### ¿QUE PUEDE HACER USTED?

**Trabaje con su hijo y su maestro/a para ayudar a su hijo desarrollar una buena asistencia. El impulso para el éxito es su gran entusiasmo.**

**¡Háblale –cántale –haz una aventura de la buena asistencia!**

- Establezca una hora para acostarse y una rutina por la mañana.
- Prepare la ropa y las mochilas la noche anterior.
- Comparte ideas con otros padres de cómo salir de la casa a tiempo.

**Antes de que empiece el año escolar:**

- ¡Averigüé el día en que empieza la escuela y cuenta los días hasta que empiece!
- Asegúrese que su hijo tenga las vacunas requeridas.
- Asiste a la orientación con su hijo para conocer los maestros y compañeros de clase.

**¡A las Una – A las Dos – Y a las Tres - Marcha!**

- Si algo inesperado sucede, prepare opciones para llegar a la escuela.
- Pídale a los miembros de familia, vecinos u otros padres que le ayuden a dejar o recoger a su hijo.
- Evite citas médicas y viajes prolongadas durante el tiempo de escuela.
- Si su hijo parece estar nervioso de ir a la escuela, hable con los maestros, consejeros u otros padres para que le aconsejen. Si el problema sigue, asegúrese que el programa sea adecuado para su hijo.





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

School success goes hand in hand with good attendance!

### DID YOU KNOW?

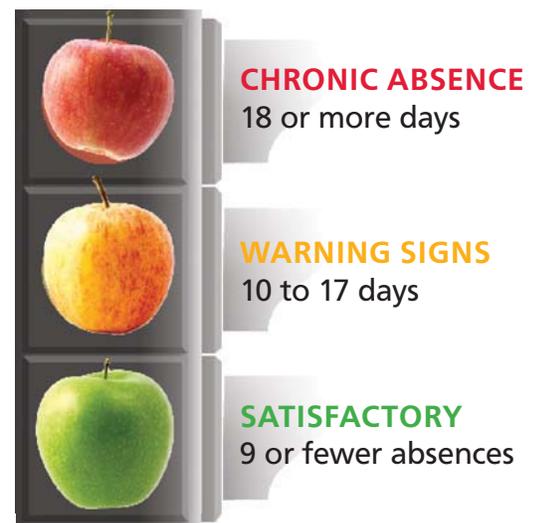
- Starting in kindergarten, too many absences can cause children to fall behind in school.
- Missing 10 percent (or about 18 days) can make it harder to learn to read.
- Students can still fall behind if they miss just a day or two days every few weeks.
- Being late to school may lead to poor attendance.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

**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.**

### WHAT YOU CAN DO

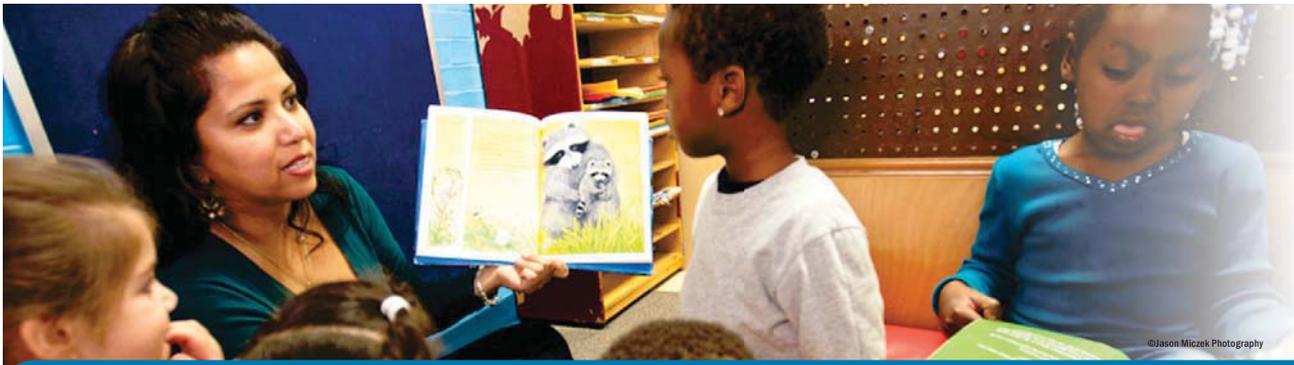
- Set a regular bed time and morning routine.
- Lay out clothes and pack backpacks the night before.
- Find out what day school starts and make sure your child has the required shots.
- Introduce your child to her teachers and classmates before school starts to help her transition.
- Don't let your child stay home unless she is truly sick. Keep in mind complaints of a stomach ache or headache can be a sign of anxiety and not a reason to stay home.
- 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 something 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?



Note: These numbers assume a 180-day school year.

For more on school readiness, visit [attendanceworks.org](http://attendanceworks.org) and [reachoutandread.org](http://reachoutandread.org)



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# Ayude a su hijo a tener éxito en la escuela: Creando el hábito de buena asistencia a temprana edad ¡El éxito escolar va de mano a mano con una buena asistencia escolar!

## ¿SABÍA QUE...?

- Empezando en el kínder, muchas ausencias pueden causar que los niños se atrasen en la escuela.
- Faltar el 10% (más o menos faltar 18 días en el kínder) puede bajar el rendimiento en el primer grado y hacer que cueste más aprender a leer.
- Los estudiantes se pueden seguir atrasando aunque sólo falten uno o dos días durante varias semanas.
- Las llegadas tarde en los primeros grados pueden predecir que el estudiante tendrá mala asistencia en los años siguientes.
- La falta de asistencia a la escuela puede afectar a todos en la clase, ya que el maestro tiene que disminuir el aprendizaje para ayudar a los niños a ponerse al día.
- Las escuelas pueden perder dinero para programas educacionales porque frecuentemente la asistencia es la base para la asignación de los fondos.

**Asistir regularmente a la escuela, ayuda a los niños a sentirse mejor en la escuela—y consigo mismos. Empezar a crear este hábito en la edad preescolar, los hará aprender rápidamente la importancia de ir a la escuela a la hora indicada y todos los días. La buena asistencia ayudará a los niños a tener éxito en la preparatoria, la universidad y en el trabajo.**

## COMO AYUDAR A SU HIJO

- Establezca una hora consistente para acostarse y la rutina de cada mañana.
- Prepare la ropa y las mochilas la noche anterior.
- Averigüe el día en que empieza la escuela y asegúrese que su hijo tenga las vacunas requeridas.
- Presente a su hijo a sus maestros y compañeros de clase antes que la escuela empiece, para ayudarlo con la transición a la escuela.
- Sólo deje que su niño se quede en casa si está realmente enfermo. Tenga en mente que las quejas de un dolor de estómago o de cabeza pueden ser seña de ansiedad y no una razón para quedarse en casa.
- Si su hijo parece ansioso por ir a la escuela, hable con los maestros, consejeros u otros padres para que le aconsejen sobre cómo hacerlo sentir cómodo y motivado a asistir a la escuela.
- Prepare opciones para llegar a la escuela si algo inesperado sucede. Contacte con anterioridad un familiar, un vecino u otro padre para que le ayude en esos días.
- Evite citas médicas y viajes prolongados durante el tiempo de escuela.
- Contacte al personal de la escuela u oficiales de la comunidad para encontrar ayuda sobre transportación, vivienda, empleo o problemas de salud.

## ¿Cuándo las ausencias se vuelven en problema?



Nota: Números asumen un año escolar de 180 días

**Para más información sobre cómo preparar a su hijo para la escuela, visite [attendanceworks.org](http://attendanceworks.org) y [reachoutandread.org/esp](http://reachoutandread.org/esp)**



## Pay Attention to Attendance: Keep Your Child On Track in Middle and High School

*Showing up for school has a huge impact on a student's academic success starting in kindergarten and continuing through high school. Even as children grow older and more independent, families play a key role in making sure students get to school safely every day and understand why attendance is so important for success in school and on the job.*

### DID YOU KNOW?

- Students should miss no more than 9 days of school each year to stay engaged, successful and on track to graduation.
- 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.
- By 6th grade, absenteeism is one of three signs that a student may drop out of high school.
- By 9th grade, regular and high attendance is a better predictor of graduation rates than 8th grade test scores.
- Missing 10 percent, or about 18 days, of the school year can drastically affect a student's academic success.
- Students can be chronically absent even if they only miss a day or two every few weeks.
- Attendance is an important life skill that will help your child graduate from college and keep a job.

### WHAT YOU CAN DO

#### Make school attendance a priority

- Talk about the importance of showing up to school everyday, make that the expectation.
- Help your child maintain daily routines, such as finishing homework and getting a good night's sleep.
- Try not to schedule dental and medical appointments during the school day.
- Don't let your child stay home unless truly sick. Complaints of headaches or stomach aches may be signs of anxiety.

#### Help your teen stay engaged

- Find out if your child feels engaged by his classes and feels safe from bullies and other threats. Make sure he/she is not missing class because of behavioral issues and school discipline policies. If any of these are problems, work with your school.
- Stay on top of academic progress and seek help from teachers or tutors if necessary. Make sure teachers know how to contact you.
- Stay on top of your child's social contacts. Peer pressure can lead to skipping school, while students without many friends can feel isolated.
- Encourage meaningful afterschool activities, including sports and clubs.

#### Communicate with the school

- Know the school's attendance policy – incentives and penalties
- Talk to teachers if you notice sudden changes in behavior. These could be tied to something going on at school.
- Check on your child's attendance to be sure absences are not piling up.
- Ask for help from school officials, afterschool programs, other parents or community agencies if you're having trouble getting your child to school.





Advancing Student Success By Reducing Chronic Absence

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

## Ponga atención a la Asistencia Escolar: Mantenga a su hijo por el buen camino en la Secundaria y la Preparatoria

*La asistencia escolar tiene un gran impacto en el éxito académico de un estudiante. Aún cuando los niños crecen y se vuelven más independientes, las familias siguen jugando un rol clave en asegurarse que asistan diariamente a la escuela, porque la asistencia es importante para el éxito escolar y en el trabajo.*

### ¿Sabía usted que...?

- Los estudiantes no deberían faltar más de 9 días a la escuela durante el año escolar, para permanecer motivados y exitosos.
- Las ausencias pueden indicar que el estudiante pierde interés en la escuela, tiene problemas con el trabajo escolar, está siendo acosado por otro estudiante o enfrenta algún otro problema.
- En el sexto grado, el ausentismo es un indicio de que el estudiante pudiera abandonar la secundaria.
- En el noveno grado, la buena asistencia escolar es mejor pronóstico para los índices de graduación, que los resultados de los exámenes del octavo grado.
- Faltar a la escuela un 10% o alrededor de 18 días durante el año escolar, puede afectar el éxito académico.
- Se considera ausencia crónica si el estudiante falta uno o dos días en varias semanas.
- La asistencia escolar es un hábito de vida importante que ayudará a su hijo a graduarse de la Universidad y a mantener un empleo.

### ¿Qué puede hacer usted?

#### **Hacer que la asistencia escolar sea una prioridad**

- Hable sobre la importancia de ir a la escuela todos los días, haga que se convierta en una expectativa.
- Ayude a sus hijos a mantener rutinas diarias, como terminar la tarea y dormir bien por la noche.
- Trate de no programar citas con el dentista y el médico durante el día escolar.
- No deje a su hijo en casa a menos que realmente esté enfermo. Las quejas de dolores de cabeza o de estómago pueden ser signos de ansiedad.

#### **Ayude a su adolescente a estar involucrado.**

- Averigüe si su hijo se siente motivado por sus clases y profesores y si se siente a salvo del acoso de estudiantes y de otras amenazas. Asegúrese que no está perdiendo clases debido a una mala conducta. Si tiene cualquiera de estos problemas, trabaje con personal de la escuela.
- Manténgase al tanto de su progreso académico y busque la ayuda de maestros o tutores si es necesario.
- Manténgase al tanto de los contactos sociales de su hijo. La presión de grupo puede llevarlo a faltar a la escuela.
- Fomente actividades relevantes después de la escuela, incluyendo deportes y clubes.

#### **Comuníquese con la escuela**

- Conozca las reglas de asistencia de la escuela - incentivos y sanciones.
- Hable con los maestros si nota algún cambio repentino en el comportamiento de su hijo.
- Verifique la asistencia de su hijo para asegurarse que las ausencias no se están acumulando.
- Pida ayuda a las autoridades escolares, recurra a programas después de clases, otros padres o agencias de la comunidad, si está teniendo problemas para conseguir que su hijo vaya a la escuela.

# Breaking Barriers to Attendance

Barrier to Attendance	Potential Actions
<p><b>Parents do not understand that attendance in the early years matters for academic success.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Promote a culture of attendance that educates parents about the value of the learning/skill development that begins with school entry.</li> <li>✓ Work with child care and pre-K providers to emphasize the importance of attendance.</li> <li>✓ Offer orientation/education for parents new to the school that emphasizes regular attendance.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Students are not encouraged to attend school.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Provide incentives/rewards/recognition for good attendance.</li> <li>✓ Remind students through personal calls.</li> <li>✓ Train trusted adult mentors and afterschool leaders to reinforce the importance of attendance.</li> <li>✓ Ensure that the curriculum includes engaging, team-based activities that students do not want to miss.</li> <li>✓ Provide academic support to students who are struggling so school becomes a place of success rather than a negative experience.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Students have chronic health or mental health issues that keep them out of school regularly.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Promote access to free and low-cost health insurance.</li> <li>✓ Create school-based health clinics.</li> <li>✓ Address environmental issues within the community (e.g., air quality, lead exposure).</li> <li>✓ Establish wellness policies that encourage healthy eating and more physical activity to reduce the negative health effects of obesity.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Students do not feel safe traveling to school.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Add sidewalks or initiate walking school buses to help children reach school safely.</li> <li>✓ Establish community watch programs and ask community police officers to increase their presence during the hour before and after school.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Parents do not trust or feel comfortable with schools.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Conduct home visits to meet parents.</li> <li>✓ Provide a school liaison to support parents and address their concerns.</li> <li>✓ Personally invite parents to engage in the school as volunteers and offer a range of options.</li> <li>✓ Offer family services or activities in the school.</li> </ul>

# Reasons Matched With Solutions

## **Illness**

- Ask for details on illness (pervasive and significant? 504 plan?)
- Documentation: Require doctor's notes to excuse absences and/or ask for release from doctor
- Define when student should be out (vomiting, diarrhea, fever, etc.)
- Encourage parents to bring student to school when not sure to get checked at clinic

## **Misses Bus**

- Create checklist for morning routing
- Shower and/or set out clothes night before
- Pack backpack and lunch the night before
- Have a plan for who will drive child to school if/when the child misses the bus
- Decide on consequence at home for child

## **Student Reports they are Being Bullied**

- Investigate and problem solve
- Identify safe person student can talk to for support
- Build positive relationships within building

## **Student is Having Academic Issues**

- Refer to tutoring
- Set realistic goals
- Involve teachers
- Prioritize make-up work/missed assignments
- Student does make-up work during lunch/recess time

## **Parent Issue: Ill (physically or mentally) or not Awake in the Morning**

- Strongly recommend riding bus
- Provide alarm clock for child
- Check-in/Check out
- Ask about natural supports in family/community to help parent/child
- Make referral to home health nurses/mental health agency

## **Family Taking Vacation**

- Family submits for approval before trip
- Inform of work make-up policy
- Students are given make-up work beforehand if possible

## **Student Stays Up Late/Difficult to Wake Up**

- Agree to a set bedtime
- Discuss importance of sleep
- All electronics out of room at specified time (or turn over cords/remotes)
- Provide alarm clock
- Put alarm across the room so they have to get out of bed

## **Student Reports he/she is Bored**

- Identify reasons - Is the student lost or is the work not challenging? Is the work too hard or too easy?
- Place in more challenging classes or evaluate for gifted/talented services
- Provide resources for tutoring
- Problem solve

## **Student is Experiencing Anxiety or Possible Depression, or other Mental Health Issue(s)**

- Help student identify person in building, at home, and/or in community that they can talk to
- Include student in counseling group at school or mentor program
- Set up check-in/check-out or a mentor
- Refer student to counselor outside of school
- In anxiety situations, investigate and problem solve

## **Student is not Feeling Connected at School**

- Check-in/check-out or a mentor
- Include in a counseling group
- Encourage involvement in after-school activities
- Assign helping job in school

## **Student is Providing Day Care for Sibling or own Child**

- Identify alternative family members or friends to help
- Link family with local daycare providers that provide sliding scale or government assistance

## **Multiple factors. Family's life is chaotic. High mobility. Attendance becomes low priority.**

- Fix what you can—support the whole family
- Connect family with mental health worker or social worker

## **It is suspected the family does not live in school's district.**

- Request residency check

# EXERCISE: CREATING A FAMILY PLAN FOR STUDENT SUCCESS

**Time: 20-25 minutes**

## **Part I: Review Student Attendance Success Plan**

Hand out the Student Attendance Success Plan worksheets and Academic Calendars to participants and walk through the different parts of it so that they know what you'll be discussing:

- » My child's attendance goal
- » Strategies to reach the attendance goal
- » Your family's help bank
- » Discuss the value of creating a Student Attendance Success Plan.

Say: What we do every day in our family matters. As parents and caregivers, we can have a powerful impact on our child's attendance and success in school.

Let's acknowledge that sometimes families face particularly challenging circumstances that require formal services, but right now, we are focusing on what families can influence.

I am going to guide you through to creating your family's Student Attendance Success Plan. At the end of this process, you will have clear goals for your child's attendance, strategies you will use to support your child's attendance, a backup plan for when you need help getting your child to and from school and a way to know whether your child is on track to meeting his attendance goal.

## **Part II: Setting Attendance Goals**

Helping families develop a Student Attendance Success Plan begins with examining students' current attendance rate and absences and formulating goals for improvement. To go through this step, you can either provide school attendance data to families (if you have access to it and the family has signed a consent form), or have families self-report.

- » Direct families to the Student Attendance Success Plan. Ask them to fill out the first part of the first section of the worksheet, titled My Child's Attendance Goal. The questions included in this section are:
  - My child was present \_\_\_\_\_ days. My child was absent \_\_\_\_\_ days.
  - The number of school days that have passed is: \_\_\_\_\_

To be ready for the next grade, my goal is to ensure my child misses no more than \_\_\_\_\_days for the rest of the year.

- » Stress that 9 or fewer absences a year equals satisfactory attendance.
- » Go around the room to see if anyone needs help picking a goal for improvement.

### Part III: Identify Concrete Strategies Each Parent Can Take

Review with the group some of the possible strategies suggested on the Student Attendance Success Plan worksheet:

#### Possible Strategies To Reach Your Child's Attendance Goal

- » I will keep an attendance chart at home. At the end of the week, I will reward my child for attending school every day with \_\_\_\_\_ (i.e. a visit to the park, a new book, a break from chores, a special treat).
- » I will make sure my child is in bed by \_\_\_\_ p.m. and the alarm clock is set for \_\_\_\_ a.m.
- » If my child consistently complains of a stomach or head ache, I will send him/her to school anyway and call \_\_\_\_\_ to check in with my child during the school day.
- » If my child has a cold but no fever (lower than 100 degrees), I will send him/her to school anyway. If I don't have a thermometer, I will purchase or borrow one.
- » I will find a relative, friend, or neighbor who I can call on take my child to school if I can't or if he/she misses the bus.
- » If my child is absent, I will contact his/her teacher to find out how he/she can make up missed schoolwork.
- » I will set medical and dental appointments for weekdays after school.

Ask participants if they can think of additional strategies not included on the worksheet that they would imagine could be helpful (to them, or to their peers) in reaching their attendance goal. Chart their ideas on a flipchart or white board.

Ask families to take time to think about 1 or 2 action steps they will commit to taking to support their child getting to school on every day on time. Have them write it down on their Student Attendance Success Plan.

Ask for 3-4 volunteers to share what actions steps they are committing to with the group. Chart them on the flipchart or white board. Alternatively, ask them to go around in a circle at their tables and share their commitments within their small groups.

# MY CHILD'S ATTENDANCE GOALS

To improve my child's attendance, I can commit to the following:

- My child was present \_\_\_\_ days.
- My child was absent \_\_\_\_ days.
- My child's current attendance rate is \_\_\_\_ %.
- My goal for next year is to improve my child's attendance by \_\_\_\_ %.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

*We will review progress to meet this goal at the next Parent-Teacher Conference.*

## POSSIBLE STRATEGIES TO REACH YOUR CHILD'S ATTENDANCE GOALS

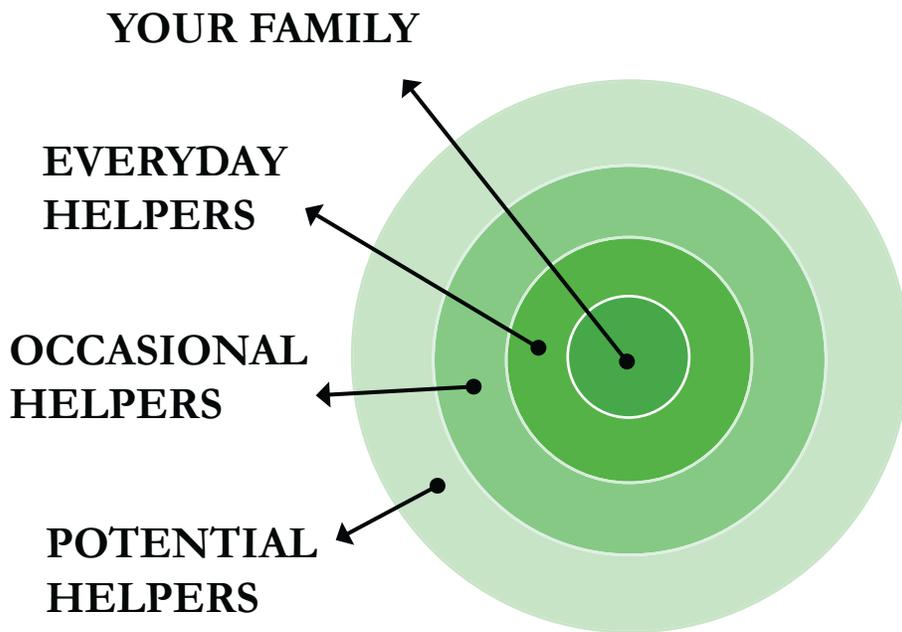
- I will keep an attendance chart at home. At the end of the week, I will reward my child for attending school every day with \_\_\_\_\_.  
(i.e. a visit to the park, a new book, a break from doing chores, a special treat)
- I will make sure my child is in bed by \_\_\_\_ p.m. and the alarm clock is set for \_\_\_\_ a.m.
- If my child consistently complains of a stomachache or headache and medical concerns have been ruled out, I will send him/her to school anyway and call Counselor \_\_\_\_\_ so that he/she can check in with him/her during the school day.
- If my child has a cold but no fever (less than 100 degrees), I will send him/her to school anyway. If I don't have a thermometer, I will purchase or borrow one.
- I will find a relative, friend or neighbor who can take my child to school if I can't make it or if he/she missed the bus.
- If my child is absent, I will contact his/her teacher to find out how he/she can make up missed schoolwork.
- I will set up medical and dental appointments for weekdays after 3:30 p.m.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_



To learn more, please visit [www.attendanceworks.org](http://www.attendanceworks.org)

# YOUR FAMILY'S HELP BANK



1. **Your Family:** List who lives in your house.
2. **Everyday Helpers:** Identify who you can call on to help drop your child off or who can pick him or her up when you cannot. These are people like friends, neighbors and relatives who can help regularly.
3. **Occasional Helpers:** Identify people who probably cannot help everyday, but can help in a pinch. Maybe it's a godparent, a relative or a friend who lives outside your neighborhood but can be there for short stints.
4. **Potential Helpers:** Identify people who are part of your school community, church or neighborhood who are able to help—if you ask.

1. **Your Family:**
2. **Everyday Helpers:**
3. **Occasional Helpers:**
4. **Potential Helpers:**

If I need help getting my child to and from school, I will ask the following people to be our back-up:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Best Contact Number

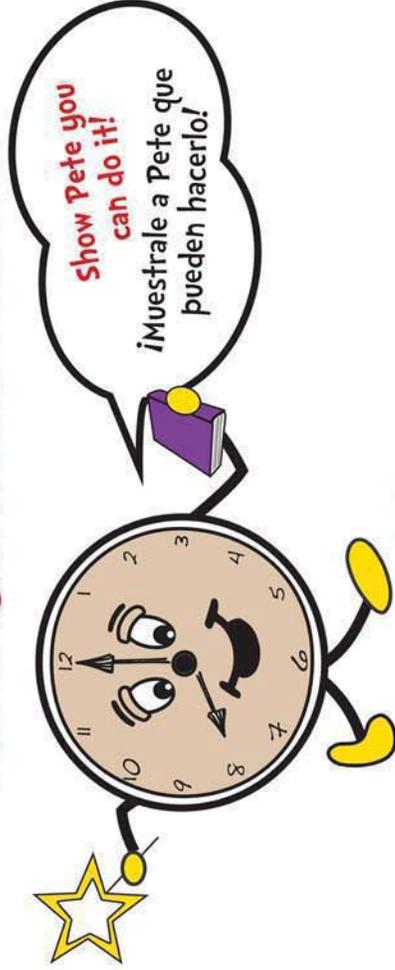
\_\_\_\_\_  
Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Best Contact Number

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Best Contact Number

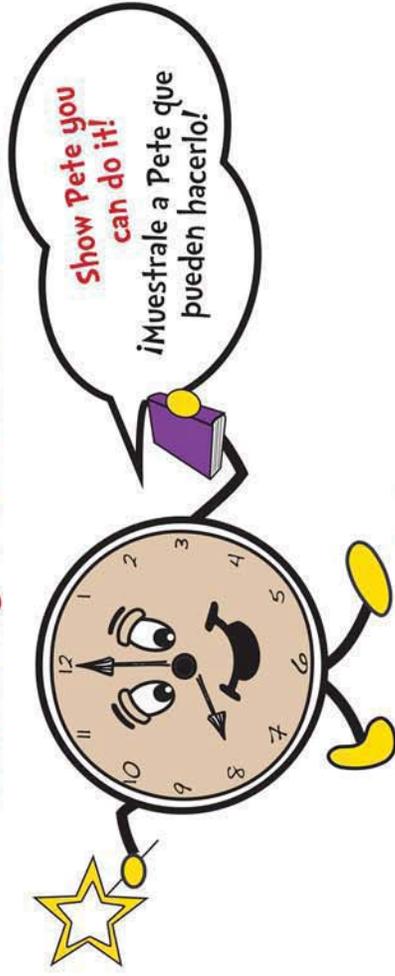
# Perfectly Punctual Scorecard



Week of / Semana de

	On Time A tiempo	Ran Late Tarde	We Missed You! ¡Te echamos de menos!
Monday Lunes			
Tuesday Martes			
Wednesday Miércoles			
Thursday Jueves			
Friday Viernes			

# Perfectly Punctual Scorecard



Week of / Semana de

	On Time A tiempo	Ran Late Tarde	We Missed You! ¡Te echamos de menos!
Monday Lunes			
Tuesday Martes			
Wednesday Miércoles			
Thursday Jueves			
Friday Viernes			



# MY ATTENDANCE SUCCESS PLAN

## POSSIBLE STRATEGIES TO REACH MY ATTENDANCE GOALS

- I will make attending school every day a priority.
- I will keep track of my attendance and absences.
- I will set my alarm clock for \_\_\_\_\_ a.m.
- I will attend school every day unless I'm truly sick with a temperature of 100 degrees or more.
- I will find a relative, friend or neighbor who can take me to school if I miss my bus.
- If I am absent, I will contact my teachers to find out what I missed.
- I will set up medical and dental appointments for weekdays after school. If I must make a medical appointment during the school day, I will try to attend school for the majority of the day.
- When I am struggling with a challenge that is keeping me from school I will confide in an adult at school and seek help.

To improve my attendance, I commit to the following:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

*We will review progress to meet this goal in one month.*

Student Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

School Staff Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

- I have been present \_\_\_\_\_ days.
- I have been absent \_\_\_\_\_ days.
- My goal is to improve my attendance. I will ensure that I miss no more than \_\_\_\_ days for the rest of the year. (*9 or fewer absences = satisfactory attendance*)



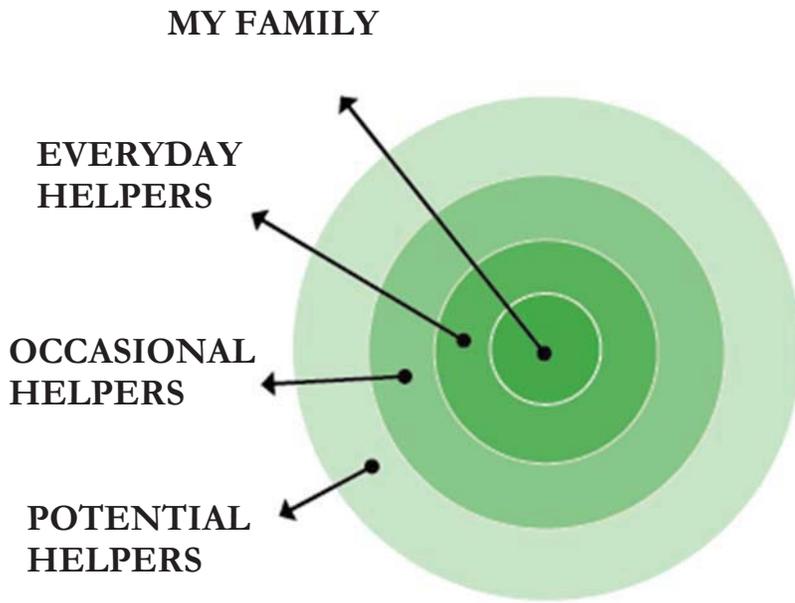
**CHRONIC ABSENCE** = 18 absences  
(10% of school year)

**Warning Signs** = 10 to 17 absences

**Satisfactory Attendance** = 9 or fewer absences

- I was present \_\_\_\_\_ days.
- I was absent \_\_\_\_\_ days.
- My goal is to improve my attendance. I will ensure that I miss no more than \_\_\_\_ days for the rest of the year.

# MY HELP BANK



1. **My Family:** List who lives in your house.
2. **Everyday Helpers:** Identify who you can call on to help you get to school or resolve a problem. These are people like friends, neighbors, school staff, and relatives who can help regularly.
3. **Occasional Helpers:** Identify people who probably cannot help every day, but can help in a pinch. Maybe it's a godparent, a relative or a friend who lives outside your neighborhood but can be there for short stints.
4. **Potential Helpers:** Identify people who are part of your school community, church or neighborhood who are able to help if you ask.

1. **My Family:**

2. **Everyday Helpers:**

3. **Occasional Helpers:**

4. **Potential Helpers:**

If I need help getting to and from school or with a barrier to attendance, I will ask the following people help me out:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Best Contact Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Best Contact Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Best Contact Number: \_\_\_\_\_

WHAT IF MY  
CHILD IS SICK?





# H.E.A.L.

HEALTH, EDUCATION &  
ATTENDANCE FOR LIFE

## A HEALTH FLYER FOR PARENTS

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 adds 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, especially in math and reading.
- 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, 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 that 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.
- For students with asthma: 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.
- For students with diabetes: if your child has diabetes, the school needs a Diabetes Management Plan completed by his or her doctor. Make sure that all supplies (insulin, blood sugar meter, test strips) 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 or her home work 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.

### • For additional information contact:

Affix Contact Information Sticker

Produced by:



The Office of the  
District Attorney,  
Alameda County



INTERAGENCY CHILDREN'S  
POLICY COUNCIL  
ALAMEDA COUNTY



ALAMEDA COUNTY  
PUBLIC HEALTH  
DEPARTMENT



Alameda County Health Care Services Agency

Center for Healthy Schools and Communities

Linking Health and Education to Change Lives and Achieve Equity

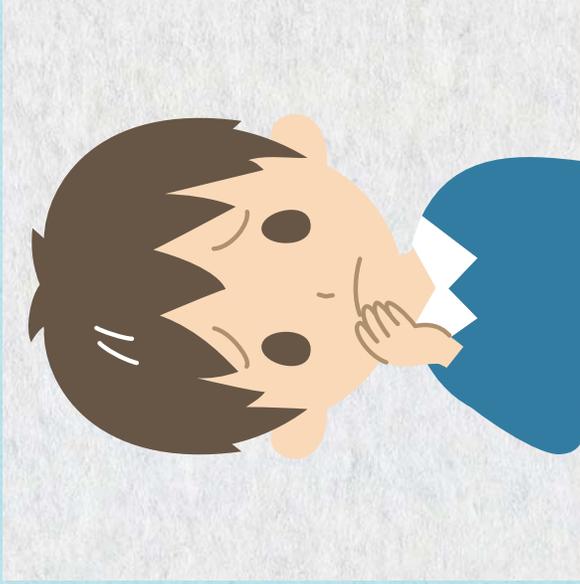
## WHEN SHOULD I SEND MY CHILD TO SCHOOL?

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

Symptoms and Illnesses	Should My Child Go To School?
<b>Parent is Sick, Stressed, Hospitalized</b>	<b>YES</b> - If you are sick, your child still needs to attend school. Your illness does not excuse your child from attending. We all are sick at times so plan ahead for these days. Get a neighbor, relative or spouse to take your child to school and pick him or her up.
<b>Chronic Diseases (Asthma, Diabetes, Sickle Cell, Epilepsy etc.)</b> Chronic disease is a long-lasting condition that can be controlled but not cured.	<b>YES</b> – Your child should attend school. School personnel are trained to assist your child with his or her chronic disease and associated needs.
<b>Child Doesn't Want to go to School</b> Frequent crying, fear, anger, not wanting to socialize, behavior change, stomach ache, nausea (These can be signs of depression, anxiety, post-traumatic stress, or fear)	<b>YES</b> – You should keep your child in school, but try to determine what is causing the changes. Talk to school personnel and consult a health care provider. Your child may be experiencing bullying or trauma, may be behind in his or her school work or not getting along with others. These and other issues may require your or school personnel's attention.
<b>Cold Symptoms</b> Stuffy nose/runny nose, sneezing, mild cough	<b>YES</b> - If your child is able to participate in school activities send him or her to school.
<b>Conjunctivitis (Pink Eye)</b> The white of the eye is pink and there is a thick yellow/green discharge.	<b>YES</b> – Your child can attend school, but call a health care provider to prescribe medication/treatment.
<b>Head Lice</b> Intense itching of the head; may feel like something is moving	<b>YES</b> – Your child can be in school if he or she has had an initial treatment of shampooing of hair with a product for lice.
<b>Strains, Sprains and Pains</b>	<b>YES</b> – If there is no known injury and your child is able to function (walk, talk, eat) he or she should be in school. If pain is severe or doesn't stop, consult a health care provider.
<b>Menstrual Issues</b>	<b>YES</b> – Most of the time menstrual (periods) issues should not be a problem. If they are severe and interfering with your daughter attending school, consult with a health care provider.
<b>Fever</b> Fever usually means illness, especially if your child has a fever of 101 or higher as well as other symptoms like behavior change, rash, sore throat, vomiting etc.	<b>NO</b> – If your child has a fever of 101 or higher, keep them at home until his or her fever is below 101 for 24 hours without the use of fever reducing medication. If the fever does not go away after 2-3 days or is 102.0 or higher, you should consult a health care provider.
<b>Diarrhea</b> Frequent, loose or watery stool may mean illness but can also be caused by food and medication	<b>NO</b> – If, in addition to diarrhea, your child acts ill, has a fever or is vomiting, keep him or her at home. If stool is bloody, if the child has abdominal pain, fever or vomiting, you should consult a health care provider.
<b>Vomiting</b> Child has vomited 2 or more times in a 24 hour period	<b>NO</b> – Keep your child at home until the vomiting has stopped for 24 hours. If vomiting continues, contact a health care provider.
<b>Coughing</b> Severe, uncontrolled, rapid coughing, wheezing, or difficulty breathing	<b>NO</b> – Keep your child home and contact a health care provider. Asthma - if symptoms are due to asthma, provide treatment according to your child's Asthma Action Plan and when symptoms are controlled send your child to school.
<b>Rash With Fever</b>	<b>NO</b> – If a rash spreads quickly, is not healing, or has open weeping wounds, you should keep your child at home and have him or her seen by a health care provider.
<b>Strep Throat</b> Sore throat, fever, stomach ache, and red, swollen tonsils	<b>NO</b> – Keep your child at home for the first 24 hours after an antibiotic is begun.
<b>Vaccine Preventable Diseases</b> <b>Chicken Pox</b> - fever, headache, stomach ache or sore throat, then a red itchy skin rash develops on the stomach first and then limbs and face. <b>Measles &amp; Rubella (German Measles)</b> – swollen glands, rash that starts behind ears then the face and the rest of the body, sore joints, mild fever and cough, red eyes <b>Mumps</b> – fever, headache, muscle aches, loss of appetite, swollen tender salivary glands <b>Pertussis (Whooping Cough)</b> – many rapid coughs followed by a high-pitched “whoop”, vomiting, very tired	<b>NO</b> – Keep your child at home until a health care provider has determined that your child is not contagious.   <a href="http://atschool.alcoda.org">http://atschool.alcoda.org</a>

*This information is based upon recommended guidelines from reliable sources to include the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), American Academy of Pediatrics, Public Health Association and has been reviewed by Alameda County Public Health Department.*

# WHEN IS SICK TOO SICK FOR SCHOOL?

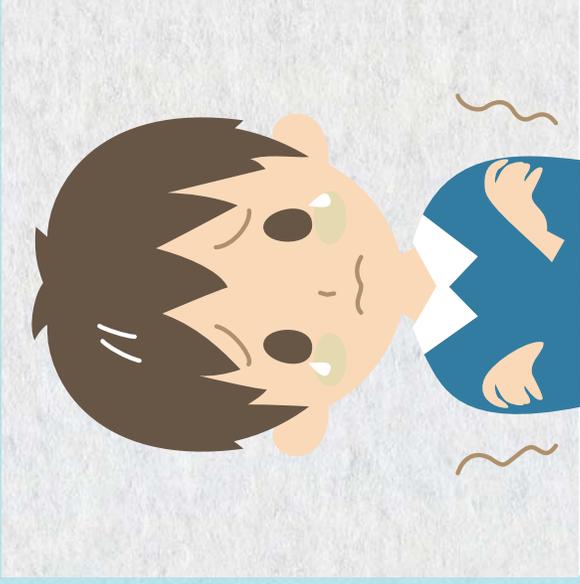


## Send me to school if...

I have a runny nose or just a little cough, but no other symptoms.

I haven't taken any fever reducing medicine for 24 hours, and I haven't had a fever during that time.

I haven't thrown up or had any diarrhea for 24 hours.

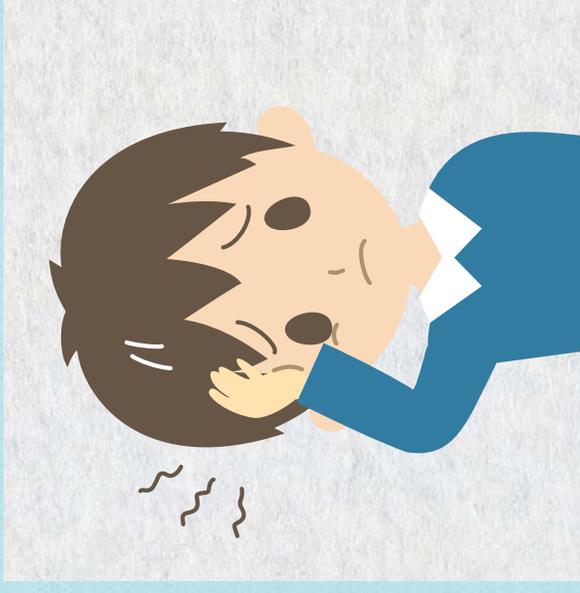


## Keep me at home if...

I have a temperature higher than 100 degrees even after taking medicine.

I'm throwing up or have diarrhea.

My eyes are pink and crusty.



## Call the doctor if...

I have a temperature higher than 100 degrees for more than two days.

I've been throwing up or have diarrhea for more than two days.

I've had the sniffles for more than a week, and they aren't getting better.

I still have asthma symptoms after using my asthma medicine (and call 911 if I'm having trouble breathing after using an inhaler).



Adapted with permission from Baltimore City Public Schools.



## *Tips from the School Health Office*

### WHEN TO KEEP A CHILD HOME WITH ILLNESS DURING COLD AND FLU SEASON

Sometimes it can be difficult for a parent to decide whether to send children to school when they wake up with early symptoms of an illness or complaints that they do not feel well. However, there are some situations in which it is best to plan on keeping your child home. For instance:

- Persistent fever greater than 100.4° orally (without fever medication such as Tylenol)
- A vomiting illness especially if accompanied by poor appetite, diarrhea, or fever
- Diarrhea or loose stools that cannot be controlled or child is too sleepy or ill to stay in class all day or profit from program activities
- Significant cough that makes a child feel uncomfortable or disrupts the class
- Difficulty breathing or persistent crying
- Sore throat accompanied by fever and/or feeling ill, that lasts longer than 48 hours
- Honey-crusted sores around the nose or mouth; any wet or weeping sores
- Rash on other body parts accompanied by other symptoms of illness such as fever
- Red, runny eyes that are itchy or distract a child from learning
- Large amount of discolored nasal discharge especially if the child is feeling ill or has a fever
- Severe ear pain or drainage from the ear
- Severe headache, especially if accompanied by fever
- Any condition that you think may be serious or contagious to others or that would prevent your child from staying in class or interfere with learning.

If you have any questions regarding the above, please feel free to contact your child's Health Office.