

# Report to Parents

## School Attendance

(Excerpts taken from the National Association of Elementary School Principals)

Students need to be in school every day to stay on track. Teachers' lesson plans are carefully constructed to introduce new concepts, reinforce them with learning activities, and then move on to new skills and ideas. When children aren't in school, they fall behind. And the more days they miss, the harder it is to catch up. That's where you come in.

**Report in.** Schools are required to track attendance of every child in every classroom every day. It is essential that you always contact the school if your child is going to be late for class, will need an early dismissal, or will be absent.

**Get the work.** If your child is out unexpectedly, due to illness or other reasons, in addition to contacting the school office, make arrangements with your child's teachers to pick up a packet of work/readings from the school. If the absence will be lengthy (e.g., for surgery), alert the teachers as soon as you know and get updated assignments and work packets as the days go on.

**Religious Absences.** It is inevitable that some families' important religious observances will fall on school days. Let your children's teachers know early in the year precisely which days your children will not be attending or will need to leave early.

**How Sick is Too Sick?** Sometimes it is very difficult to decide if your child is too ill to come to school first thing in the morning. First and foremost you know your child better than anyone else. With that said, if your child cannot successfully function/learn/participate in class then s/he may need a day of recuperation.

Below are a list of symptoms and guidelines as prescribed by the Department of Infectious Disease:

- Fever – fever is defined as having a temperature of 100.0 or higher (taken orally).
- Diarrhea- watery, foul smelling, runny and/or bloody stools.
- Vomiting – one or more times in the last 24-hour period.
- Nasal discharge – runny, yellow-greenish mucous accompanied by fever, vomiting or diarrhea.
- Sore throat, vomiting, earache or irritability accompanied by a fever.
- Pinkeye - drainage from the eye or inflammation of the conjunctiva/mucous membranes of the eye. Children may return to school after receiving medication for 24 full hours.
- Rash – an unexplained rash with fever or behavioral change. A child may return to school if a physician has determined the illness is not communicable and fever is gone.
- Strep Throat/Impetigo and other bacterial infections requiring antibiotics - keep your child home until s/he has been on antibiotics for a full 24 hours.

Children with these symptoms cannot comfortably participate in classroom activities and unnecessarily expose others to their illnesses; they should stay home for at least 24 hours before returning to school.

**Vacation Plans.** It's tempting to pull your kids from school for a family trip, but it's a bad idea. Why? First, it gives your children the impression that their schooling is not your top priority. And when they miss classwork, they can fall behind because they're missing many hours of instructional time each day. Instead of thinking of how you can miss the crowds by taking trips during the school year, think about what it could be costing your child in the long run.

**Check Those Appointments.** Schedule your kids' doctor and dental appointments for after-school or weekend hours unless there's an emergency. Schedule your children's twice-yearly dental appointment during winter and summer breaks, and schedule school physicals, immunizations, and other routine care for school holidays or summer

break.

Finally, remember to show and tell your children that attendance is important-whether it's as a child in school or as an adult on the job. You'll be helping them succeed, both in school and in life.