

The Importance of School Attendance

The beginning of each new school year your child begins another part of their amazing journey from the first day of kindergarten to high school graduation. One of the most essential elements for a student's success is good attendance. Attendance is important and must be taken seriously for kindergarten students, elementary, middle and high school students. Students need to be at school each day in order to be properly prepared for the important next steps in learning. Teachers work very hard to provide instruction that builds on the previous day's instruction so that your child's learning experience is developmentally appropriate. Even one day absent in kindergarten can create a gap in learning that is sometimes difficult to overcome and will potentially create gaps in skills into the first grade and beyond.

Parents need to be aware of the importance of consistent kindergarten attendance. Kindergarten is not just playtime and optional for a child, it is the time when children are developing the fundamental skills they will need for literacy. Attendance for all students is important; but, kindergarten attendance has become increasingly important because students are expected to leave kindergarten reading books, solving addition and subtraction story problems, and writing stories. The kindergarten curriculum has become more rigorous with higher demands and educational expectations.

Good school attendance is important because it helps your child develop habits that will help them be successful the rest of their lives. Attendance habits are developed early in life and children who have good attendance habits early in their school careers are more likely to continue them. Children who miss school are likely to fall behind academically and are more likely to drop out of school when they are older. Children who miss school miss out on a carefully planned sequence of instruction, they miss active learning experiences, they miss the opportunity for class participation, they miss the opportunity to ask questions to increase their understanding of the material, and they miss the opportunity to learn cooperation and other important social skills.

As a parent you can let your child know that you expect them to attend school everyday. Explain to your child that it is their job to go to school and learn just like it is your job to go to work everyday. Set a time each afternoon for discussing what your child learned each day at school. Also set a time for your child to work on their homework. Be sure your child has a comfortable well lit place with few distractions to read and do homework. Create a regular bedtime and morning routine for your child. Set a bedtime that will allow your child enough rest every night so they wake up refreshed and eager to come to school the next day. Plan what your child will wear to school, whether they are having breakfast at home or at school prior to the morning rush will help limit problems and frustrations.

Take the opportunity to get involved in your child's school. This will let your child know that you believe school and school attendance is important. Making sure your child is at school everyday is one of the most powerful ways you can ensure your child's success in school. Make school a priority by making medical and other appointments during non-school hours when possible. Schedule family vacations during holidays or during summer break so your child does not miss any instruction. Whether you are able to be actively involved at your child's school or not, you will want to go to your child's school and register for Parent Portal. This will allow you to review your child's attendance, grades and discipline using the internet.

Parents should notify their child's school on the day their child is absent. A written explanation of the absence or tardy is required when your child returns to school. A parent has a maximum of six (6) parent excuse notes that total up to six days absent for the year. After six absences the school may require a physician's statement or other proof of subsequent absences. In support of

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regular school attendance unexcused absences will result in phone calls home, letters, home visits, parent conferences, a referral to the director of pupil personnel and ultimately a court referral.

Any absence due to medical reasons in excess of ten (10) will require completion of the Medical Excuse Form before the absence will be excused. Medical Excuse Forms help school personnel determine if a child needs a medical plan at school, additional services, or other interventions. Medical Excuse Forms will be available at the school, the Board Office and the District Website.

If your child does miss school they will have the number of days absent, plus one, to make up work missed, unless additional time is allowed by the teacher. It is the responsibility of a child in middle or high school to request the work or assignments missed. Teachers will provide make-up work to elementary school students. Your child's grades will not be adversely impacted for lack of attendance or class participation due to excused absences. Your child will be able to make-up work after unexcused absences; but, they may not receive full credit for the work.

Your child is looking forward to the start of a new school year and to seeing friends they have missed over the summer. It is an exciting time of new opportunities and new challenges for your child. As a parent you want your child to start the school year with a positive attitude. If you have questions or concerns regarding your child's attendance, classes or other issues please contact your child's school.

Pat Smith-Darnell
Director of Pupil Personnel
Bullitt County Public Schools



**Please remember you must
always provide the school a note
when your child is absent or
tardy.**