

# Student Attendance Matters

*A Guide for Parents - Middle, Junior & High School*



We want our students to reach their full potential. To reach that potential, it's important that they come to school regularly and on time.

Regular attendance is one of the best ways to help ensure students are successful in school and later in life. It can lead to better grades, developing important social skills and friendships, and a greater opportunity of graduating from high school.

When attending school regularly, students are present for class discussions, demonstrations, group work, hands on activities, etc. These are among the most effective ways for students to learn.

## Absenteeism Facts

- 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.
- For high school students, missing 20% of class time puts them at risk for losing credit in a course.
- Students can be chronically absent even if they only miss a day or two every few weeks.

## Every Day Counts

Missing 1 or 2 days a week doesn't seem like much but...

If your child misses...	That equals about...	Which is about...	Equaling...
1 day/week	40 days/year	5.5 weeks/year	22% of the school year
2 days/week	80 days/year	11 weeks/year or 3 months	43% of the school year
3 days/week	120 days/year	30 weeks/year or 6 months	65% of the school year



**South Shore**

Regional Centre for Education

## What Parents and Guardian Can Do



- Make school attendance a priority - discuss with your child the importance of having good attendance.
- Help your child maintain daily routines, such as finishing homework and getting a good night's sleep.
- Limit technology time - many children stay up late playing games and this is a hindrance to a good night's sleep.
- Encourage your child to lay out clothes and pack backpacks the night before.
- Don't let your child stay home unless they are 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.
- 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.
- Have good communication with the school; you can always ask a teacher how things are going with respect to your child.
- 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 your child to participate in after school extra curricular activities. This is a great way for your child to feel connected with the school and staff.
- 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.

