

Attendance Matters!

Include information about attendance in first newsletter of the year

School is just getting started. Parents are eager to know about bus schedules, room assignments and school supplies. As you share back-to-school information, be sure to remind parents about the importance of regular attendance. Here's an article (a Microsoft® Word version is available on the CD included in your binder) to use in your school newsletter or on your website:



Make Attendance a Priority

You want this year to be your child's best year in school—but how do you help? Make sure your child is in school—every day! Research shows a link between *being in school* and *doing well in school*. Missing even one lesson—and not getting caught up quickly—can cause children to fall behind.

Clearly, a child who wakes up with a fever should stay home. But many kids miss school when they're not sick. Here are some of the top reasons for school absences—and how you can help your child avoid them:

- **Medical appointments.** Schedule visits to the doctor and dentist after school or during school vacations.
- **Oversleeping.** If your child is having trouble waking up in the morning, make bedtime earlier. Sleep is important—but so is school.
- **Disorganization.** If looking for homework papers and preparing lunch in the morning causes your child to be late, prepare school items before going to bed.
- **School refusal.** If your child doesn't want to go to school, make an appointment for a parent-teacher conference. Working together, you can identify and resolve problems that make your child reluctant to go to school.

Source: "Causes/Contributing Factors of Truancy," Illinois State Board of Education, *Truant's Alternative and Optional Education Program*, <http://mcdonough.k12.il.us/optionaleducation/TAOEP/truancy.htm>.

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Boost attendance with regular routines

Whether your child is in kindergarten or high school, routines make life easier for everyone! Following routines will build good habits and help your child get to school every day—on time and ready to learn.

Morning

The better prepared you are in the morning, the less likely your child will be to run late, miss the bus or (worst-case scenario) miss school altogether. Keep mornings hassle-free and your child's attendance record spotless, by having your child:

- **Wake up at the same time each day.** Have your child use an alarm clock that plays soothing music. No one likes to be awakened by a loud annoying alarm!
- **Get dressed, brush teeth and make bed.**
- **Eat a healthy breakfast.**
- **Grab her backpack, lunch and head out the door.**

After School

If your child hasn't finished his homework, he may not want to go to school the next day. If he forgot to have you sign the permission slip in his backpack, he might be late and miss the bus. Avoid these pitfalls with an after-school routine. Have your child:

- **Empty his backpack** and show you all important papers.
- **Unwind and eat a healthy snack.**
- **Complete homework, if any.** Or read for a certain amount of time.

- **Relax with some free time.** Encourage outdoor play and exercise. Limit television viewing. Your child can also use this free time to catch up with friends and just chill out!

Bedtime

Fine-tuning your child's bedtime routine is one of the most effective ways to make sure your child is ready for school the next day. Have your child:

- **Place all items** that go to school in the morning in the same place each night.
- **Check the lunch menu.** Make lunch, if necessary, and put it in the refrigerator.
- **Pick out clothes** for the next day.
- **Get ready for bed.** Wash face, brush teeth and put on pj's. Consider bathing at night instead of in the morning.
- **Read in bed.** Kids need to unplug before lights-out. That means no TV, loud music or computer in the hour leading up to bedtime.
- **Get enough sleep.** Most elementary school kids need between nine and 11 hours each night. High schoolers need between nine and 10 hours.



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Survey Students About Attendance



The importance of regular school attendance cannot be overstated. So why do kids miss school? Survey your *students* to find out. Below is a sample survey. (You'll also find a separate survey to give to parents.) On the CD included with this kit, you can find a Microsoft® Word version of this survey which you can personalize and adapt to your needs.

Braddock School

Attendance Survey - Students



Below are some common reasons students are absent or tardy during the school year. Check all the reasons that apply to your absences or tardies. Please use the back of this sheet for explanations or additional comments. Thank you!

Please check all that apply	Reasons:
<input type="checkbox"/>	I don't feel safe going to and from school.
<input type="checkbox"/>	I don't feel safe at school.
<input type="checkbox"/>	I don't have good relationships with my teachers.
<input type="checkbox"/>	I don't have good relationships with other students.
<input type="checkbox"/>	I get bullied at school.
<input type="checkbox"/>	I didn't do my homework.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Family issues make regular attendance difficult.
<input type="checkbox"/>	I have changed schools
<input type="checkbox"/>	I sometimes need to take care of a family member.
<input type="checkbox"/>	School is too hard. I can't keep up.
<input type="checkbox"/>	School is not challenging. I'm bored at school.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Family trips and vacations.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Cultural and religious holidays.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Medical and dental appointments.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Language problems.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Racial issues.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Custody issues
<input type="checkbox"/>	I had no way of getting to school.
<input type="checkbox"/>	I had to work.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Family emergency.
<input type="checkbox"/>	I was sick.
<input type="checkbox"/>	I missed the bus.
<input type="checkbox"/>	I'd rather hang out with my friends.
<input type="checkbox"/>	My parents don't care if I skip school.
<input type="checkbox"/>	I've been suspended or expelled.
<input type="checkbox"/>	I overslept.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other. (Please explain.)