

Dear Parent/Guardian,

This year, Edmonds School District is making a special effort to ensure that all students fully benefit from their education by attending school regularly. We know that school may not look the same this year. We want to remind families that attendance is important. Please continue to encourage your students to stay focused and access school resources when needed.

DID YOU KNOW?

- Attending school regularly helps children feel better about school—and themselves. Your student can start building this habit in preschool, so they learn right away that going to school on time, every day is important.
- Starting in kindergarten, too many absences (excused & unexcused) can cause children to fall behind.
- Missing 10 percent (or about 18 days) increases the chance that your student will not read or master math at the same level as their peers.
- Students can still fall behind if they miss just a day or two days every few weeks
- Absences can affect the whole classroom if the teacher has to slow down learning to help children catch up.
- 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.

WHAT WE NEED FROM YOU

We miss your student when they are gone and we value their contributions to our school. We would like you to help ensure that your student attends regularly and is successful in school. If your student is going to be absent, please contact your student's school in advance or, if it is unplanned, within two school days.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

- Set a regular bedtime and morning routine.
- Prepare for school the night before, finishing homework and getting a good night's sleep.
- Consider signs and symptoms when making a decision to excuse your student for being ill. Keep in mind complaints of a stomachache or headache can be a sign of anxiety.
- Avoid appointments and extended trips when school is in session.
- Develop back-up plans for getting to school if something comes up. Call on a family member, a neighbor, or another parent.
- Keep track of your student's attendance and talk to your student about the importance of attendance.
- Talk to your student's teachers if you notice sudden changes in behavior. These could be tied to something going on at school.
- If you have questions regarding online tools, please contact your students' school.

SCHOOL POLICIES AND STATE LAWS

Due to the impact COVID-19 has had on schools we will be adjusting our attendance policy and protocols to align with the new expectations. We will update the district website should the state and district policy be updated.

<https://www.edmonds.wednet.edu/families/attendance>

It is important that you understand our district policies and procedures, as well as Washington State Law, to ensure your child is successful in school. Attendance will continue to be taken on a daily basis. Students need to participate in class, daily homework, or have daily communication with their teachers. If a student does not engage or demonstrate participation in any way, the student would be marked as absent. We will continue to notify families when this happens.

The Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) has also added reasons that a students' absence may be excused. See the emergency rule **Chapter 392-401A WAC** for the complete list of excused reasons. Please ensure to notify your students school if your student is absent for any reason.

State law requires children from age 8 to 17 to attend a public school, private school, or a district-approved home school program. Children that are 6- or 7-years-old are not required to be enrolled in school. However, if parents enroll their 6- or 7-year-old, the student must attend full-time. Youth who are 16 or older may be excused from attending public school if they meet certain requirements. <http://apps.leg.wa.gov/rcw/default.aspx?cite=28A.225>

For more information on policies and state laws see the back

Your students' school is required to take the following steps per state law (RCW 28A.225.020)

1. Take attendance and notify you when your student has an unexcused absence.
2. If your student has two unexcused absences, state law requires that we notify you of the absences.
3. When your student reaches five unexcused absences you will be contacted to discuss the absences and barriers to school attendance. The district is obligated to develop a plan to determine how to best meet the needs of your student and reduce absenteeism.
4. If your student has seven unexcused absences in any month or ten unexcused absences within the school year, we are required to file a petition with the Juvenile court, alleging a violation of RCW 28A.225.010, the mandatory attendance laws. The petition may be stayed and your student and family may be referred to a Community Truancy Board, or you and your student may need to appear in Juvenile Court. If your student continues to be truant, you may need to go to court.

In elementary school after five excused absences in any month, or ten or more excused absences in the school year, the school district is required to contact you to schedule a conference at a mutually agreeable, reasonable time to identify the barriers and supports available to you and your student. A conference is not required if your student has provided a doctor's note, or pre-arranged the absence in writing, and the parent, student and school have made plans so your student does not fall behind academically. If your student has an Individualized Education Plan or a 504 Plan the team that created the plan needs to reconvene.

OUR PROMISE TO YOU

We know that there are a wide variety of reasons that students are absent from school. There are many people in our building prepared to help you if you or your student face challenges with school attendance. We promise to track attendance daily, to notice when your student is missing from class, communicate with you to understand why they were absent, and to identify barriers and supports available to overcome challenges you may face in helping your student attend school.

We look forward to partnering with you in the best interest of your student. If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact the school office.

Sincerely,



Dr. Gustavo Balderas
Superintendent
Edmonds School District

Your signature below indicates that you have read and understand the attendance policies and procedures in Edmonds School District.

Student Name: _____ DOB: _____

Parent Signature: _____ Date _____

(If you are signing electronically you do not need to submit a paper copy to your school)