

# HELP YOUR CHILD DEVELOP HEALTHY ATTENDANCE BEHAVIORS



Should I send my child to school today?

## BE THERE!

When students miss too many days of school, they fall behind and struggle to keep up with their classmates. Whether days missed from school are due to illness, truancy, or for any other reason, the end result for the student is the same...learning time is lost. Children and adolescents will get sick at times and may need to stay at home, but we want to work with you to help minimize the number of days your student misses school.

### Missed Days Add Up Quickly!

- Just a few missed school days a month adds up to several school weeks missed in a year.
- Both excused and unexcused absences can make it more difficult for your child to keep up with other students, especially in math and reading.
- Children who are chronically absent in kindergarten and 1<sup>st</sup> grade are much less likely to read on grade level by the end of 3<sup>rd</sup> grade. This can affect school performance in middle school, high school, and beyond.

### Work with Your Child and Your School

- As the parent/guardian, be strong with your child and don't let your child stay home when it is not necessary. This will help your child succeed.
- If your child has a chronic illness, make sure the school staff is aware of the illness so the staff can assist your child if he or she becomes ill. Information about your child's chronic illness should be noted on the Emergency Information Card or Student Health History Update.
- For students with asthma, the school needs an Asthma Action Plan completed by his or her doctor that includes permission to carry an inhaler at school. Make sure that all supplies (inhaler, spacer, etc.) needed to manage your child's asthma are at the school.
- For students with diabetes, the school needs a Diabetes Management Plan completed by his or her doctor. Make sure that all supplies (insulin, blood sugar meter, test strips) needed to manage your child's diabetes are at the school.
- Keep an open line of communication with school staff and teachers. The more the school knows about your child's health, the better prepared everyone will be to work together for your child.

### Helpful Ideas:

- Make appointments with the doctor or dentist in the late afternoon so your child misses as little school time as possible.
- If your child must miss school, make sure you get his or her homework assignments and follow up to see if the work is completed and turned in.
- Call the school as soon as you know your child will be absent and inform school staff why your child will be out and for how long.
- Be prepared to get a doctor's note to substantiate your child's absence when requested by school personnel.
- If you need medical advice after business hours, most doctors' offices have answering services 24 hours a day to assist you.

For additional information, contact your child's school nurse.



IF MY CHILD IS EXPERIENCING...	SHOULD I SEND MY CHILD TO SCHOOL?? <i>(Listed below are some helpful suggestions for children 5 to 18 years of age. Recommendations may be different for infants and younger children.)</i>
<b>Parent is Sick, Stressed, or Hospitalized</b>	<b>YES</b> - If you are sick, your child still needs to attend school. Your illness does not excuse your child from attending. We all are sick at times, so plan ahead for these days. Ask a neighbor, relative, or spouse to take your child to school/bus stop and pick him or her up.
<b>Chronic Disease (Asthma, Diabetes, Sickle Cell, Epilepsy, etc.)</b> A chronic disease is a long-lasting condition that can be controlled but not cured.	<b>YES</b> - Your child should attend school. School personnel are trained to assist your child with his or her chronic disease and associated needs.
<b>Child Doesn't Want to go to School</b> Frequent crying, fear, anger, not wanting to socialize, behavior change, stomachache, or nausea may be a sign of depression, anxiety, post-traumatic stress, or fear.	<b>YES</b> - You should keep your child in school, but try to determine what is causing the changes/concerns. Talk to school personnel and consult a health care provider. Your child may be experiencing bullying or trauma, may be behind in his or her school work, or not getting along with others. These and other issues may require attention from you or school personnel.
<b>Cold Symptoms</b> Stuffy nose/runny nose, sneezing, mild cough	<b>YES</b> - If your child is able to participate in school activities send him or her to school.
<b>Conjunctivitis (Pink Eye)</b> The white of the eye is pink and there is a thick yellow/green discharge.	<b>NO</b> - If you question whether or not your child has pink eye, you need to seek medical attention. Medication, if prescribed, should be given as directed. The child may return to school 24 hours after the first dose of medication has been administered. If no medication is prescribed, then your child will have to wait until all symptoms of pink eye are resolved before returning to school.
<b>Head Lice</b> Intense itching of the head/may feel like something is moving	<b>NO</b> - Children cannot come to school until an active lice infestation has been resolved.
<b>Strains, Sprains, and Pains</b>	<b>YES</b> - If there is no known injury and your child is able to function (walk, talk, eat) he or she should be in school. If pain is severe or doesn't stop, consult a health care provider.
<b>Menstrual Issues</b>	<b>YES</b> - Most of the time menstrual issues (periods) should not be a problem. If they are severe and interfering with your daughter attending school, consult with a health care provider.
<b>Fever</b> Fever usually means illness, especially if your child has a fever of 100°F or higher as well as other symptoms like behavior change, rash, sore throat, vomiting, etc.	<b>NO</b> - If your child has a fever of 100°F or higher, keep him/her at home until the fever is below 100°F for 24 hours without the use of fever reducing medication. If the fever does not go away after 2-3 days or is 101°F or higher, you should consult a health care provider.
<b>Diarrhea</b> Frequent, loose, or watery stool may mean illness, but can also be caused by food and medication.	<b>NO</b> - If, in addition to diarrhea, your child acts ill, has a fever, or is vomiting, keep him or her at home for 24 hours after last episode of diarrhea or loose stool. If stool is bloody or the child is experiencing abdominal pain, fever, or vomiting, you should consult a health care provider.
<b>Vomiting</b> Child has vomited 2 or more times in a 24 hour period	<b>NO</b> - Keep your child at home until the vomiting has stopped for 24 hours. If vomiting continues, contact a health care provider.
<b>Coughing</b> Severe, uncontrolled, rapid coughing, wheezing, or difficulty breathing	<b>NO</b> - Keep your child home and contact a health care provider. If symptoms are due to asthma, provide treatment according to your child's Asthma's Action Plan and when symptoms are controlled send your child to school.
<b>Rash With Fever</b>	<b>NO</b> - If a rash spreads quickly, is not healing, or has open weeping wounds you should keep your child at home and contact a health care provider.
<b>Strep Throat</b> Sore throat, fever, stomachache, and red, swollen tonsils	<b>NO</b> - Keep your child at home for the 24 hours after an antibiotic has begun.
<b>Vaccine Preventable Diseases:</b> <b>Chicken Pox</b> - fever, headache, stomachache or sore throat; then a red itchy skin rash develops on the stomach first and then on limbs and face <b>Measles &amp; Rubella (German Measles)</b> - swollen glands, rash that starts behind ears then the face and the rest of the body, sore joints, mild fever, cough, red eyes <b>Mumps</b> - fever, headache, muscle aches, loss of appetite, swollen tender salivary glands <b>Pertussis (Whooping Cough)</b> - many rapid coughs followed by a high-pitched "whoop," vomiting, very tired	<b>NO</b> - Keep your child at home until a health care provider has determined that your child is not contagious.  <b>NO</b> - Keep your child at home until a health care provider has determined that your child is not contagious.  <b>NO</b> - Keep your child at home until a health care provider has determined that your child is not contagious.  <b>NO</b> - Keep your child at home until a health care provider has determined that your child is not contagious.