

ATTENDANCE: A Key To Your Student's Success

Schools are responsible for teaching your child, but schools *can't* do their job if your student is absent. According to the Parent Institute, research shows that attendance is the *single most Important factor* in school success. Learning builds day by day. A student who misses a day of school misses a day of learning; being late for school hurts a child's learning, too. Children can copy notes or make up an assignment, but they can never get back what's most important, like the discussions, the questions, the explanations by the teacher and the thinking that makes learning come alive. Your student's success in school depends on having a solid educational background--one that can only be gained through **regular school attendance**.

Frequently Asked Questions About Attendance in Eaton County Schools

What do I do if my child will be absent from school?

You need to promptly call the school office to let the attendance secretary know the reason why your child is absent. This is also a matter of safety, since it confirms that both you and the school are aware of your child's whereabouts when he/she is absent. This should be done as soon as possible in the morning. If you do not notify the school, this absence will be listed as unexcused on the student's record. Whenever students arrive or leave the building during class hours, a parent/guardian or student **must sign in and out at the office**. If a student does not arrive on time for school, the parent should call the office or come *into the building* to sign in the student at the office.

Parents/Guardians and students have a responsibility to connect with teachers to make up any work missed by an absence. This is critical in keeping students from getting behind in their assignments and feeling overwhelmed. If a parent/guardian knows ahead of time that his/her child will be missing school for any reason, teachers should be notified so these arrangements can be made in advance.

What if my child has a chronic medical condition?

If your child has a medical condition that may keep him/her out of school on a regular basis for any reason including frequent doctor appointments, it is very helpful to provide documentation of that condition so that school personnel can work with your family and provide any necessary support. If it is helpful/necessary for your child to have medication available at school, please contact the office to complete the required paperwork. Communication with teachers and staff is so important, especially if your child is absent for more than a day. In this way we can **all** work effectively together as a team to keep your child on track.

What if my child is just "sick" a lot?

If your child has an illness that includes a high fever, vomiting, diarrhea, or if he/she has something contagious or is in severe pain, it may be appropriate for him/her to stay home. If your child is just "sick" a lot with coughs, runny nose, frequent tummy aches or headaches, please check with your family physician and keep the school informed about any suggestions he/she may have. Sometimes children who have a record of frequent absences may need to come to school anyway even if they don't feel perfectly well. If your child continues a pattern of having frequent minor illnesses, please contact their school administrator or counselor to discuss this matter and what may be helpful to decrease these absences.

What about doctor and dentist appointments?

It is helpful to let the school know if your child has regular appointments that *cannot be* scheduled outside of school hours. It is important, however, that your child be in school both before *and* after the appointment, if possible, especially if he/she has frequent absences. It is not appropriate to have a student miss an entire day of school for an hour and a half appointment.

What about taking my child out of school for vacation or sports?

Children should not be absent from school for vacation or sports. If your child rarely misses school and the absence

is unavoidable, and you and your child are working with teachers to make-up any missed work, it may not have a great negative consequence. However, this should not be done regularly, and keeping in contact about these absences is always helpful to staff.

What if my child arrives late in the morning?

Students will not be counted as being late if their bus arrives late. If a child gets a ride to school, they must be at their school on a daily basis with enough time to get to their locker and to their first hour on time. Frequently arriving late, even a few minutes, takes away educational time from your child, also disrupting the teacher and the entire class. A late arrival is considered a tardy, even if you call in to excuse your child. Multiple morning tardies are likely to result in a truancy referral.

What if my child doesn't like school or wants to avoid school?

Sometimes frequent absences occur because a child is trying to avoid coming to school. A child may feel like he/she is being picked on, isolated, having problems with friends or is anxious about coming to school. He/she may be struggling in a class or is feeling overwhelmed. If this seems to be the case with your child, please contact the school administrator or counselor and voice your concerns. They would be happy to meet with you and/or your child to resolve any issues.

What happens if the school is concerned about my child's absences?

School staff may become concerned if your child chronically misses partial or full days, arrives late, or has numerous outside appointments, especially if they also have low grades in one or more classes. If that is the case, your child's school will contact you outlining the concerns and inviting you to meet and discuss the absences. If there is not a successful resolution to the attendance issue, this may result in a referral to the Eaton County Truancy Intervention Program, administered through Eaton Intermediate School District and Eaton County Juvenile Court.

What is TIP (Truancy Intervention Program)?

TIP is an Eaton County program designed to provide positive support to parents and students while at the same time enforcing the mandatory school attendance law. Districts can refer truant students to TIP for assistance when a student is chronically truant. In most cases, the referral generates a truancy hearing at Juvenile Court. The Court requires the parent/guardian and child to participate in the age appropriate TIP program until the attendance problem is resolved or risk facing more formal court involvement.

If you have any questions about your child's attendance, please contact Harriett Dean, TIP Coordinator, Eaton ISD, at 517/541-8920 or hdean@eatonisd.org.