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Dear Parents and Guardians,

As we begin the second semester, it is essential to address the issue of chronic absenteeism and truancy to ensure the success and well-being of all students. School attendance has a significant impact on overall student success. Addressing chronic absenteeism and developing good attendance habits are solvable problems for which all stakeholders share the responsibility. Parents are encouraged to prevent chronic absenteeism and actively support their child's education. Please take a moment to read the following information and its impact on your child's education.

Chronic Absenteeism: Chronic absenteeism refers to students repeatedly absent during the school year, including excused and unexcused absences. Unlike truancy, which focuses only on unexcused absences, chronic absenteeism considers the accumulation of **total** absences.

Definition and Measurement: Chronic absence is missing 18 or more days in a school year. Alabama's calculations for chronic absenteeism are reported as a school quality indicator on the local and State Report Card.

Impact on Students and Learning Environment:

- Chronic absenteeism is associated with negative consequences, including lower achievement, disengagement from school, course failure, and an increased risk of dropping out.
- It affects not only the absent students but also slows down instruction for others, making it harder for everyone to learn.

Importance of Reducing Chronic Absence:

- Reducing chronic absence is crucial for closing achievement gaps and ensuring all students have an equal opportunity to succeed.
- It is critical to realize the long-term benefits of investments in improved instruction and curriculum by reducing chronic absences.

A free public education is one of the most tremendous benefits available to our state's children. Please ensure your child achieves their full potential by attending school regularly. Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

Eric Andrews

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

If your child misses...	That equals...	Which is...	And over 13 years of schooling that's...
1 day every 2 weeks	20 days per year	4 weeks per year	Nearly 1 ½ years
1 day per week	40 days per year	8 weeks per year	Over 2 ½ years of school
2 days per week	80 days per year	16 weeks per year	Over 5 years
3 days per week	120 days per year	24 weeks per year	Nearly 8 years

How about 10 minutes late a day? Surely that won't affect my child?

He/she is only missing just...	That equals...	Which is...	And over 13 years of schooling that's...
10 mins per day	50 mins per week	Nearly 1 ½ weeks per year	Nearly ½ year
20 mins per day	1 hr. 40 mins per week	Over 2 ½ weeks per year	Nearly 1 year
30 mins per day	Half a day per week	4 weeks per year	Nearly 1 ½ years
1 hour per day	1 day per week	8 weeks per year	Over 2 ½ years

EVERY DAY COUNTS

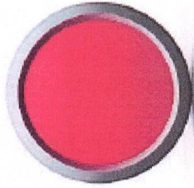
If you want your child to be successful at school then, YES, attendance does matter!

ATTENDANCE MATTERS EVERY DAY!

Students who attend school regularly have been shown to achieve at higher levels than students who do not have regular attendance. When students are present at Newton

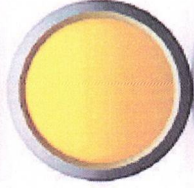
Elementary they are:

- Engaging in relevant instruction and learning!
- Creating meaningful relationships with caring adults and friends!
- Participating in a GREAT school culture!



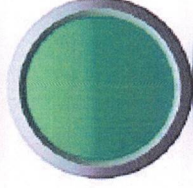
CHRONIC ABSENCES 18 OR MORE DAYS

- Excused and unexcused absences represent lost time in the classroom and lost opportunities to learn.
- Missing just one day every two weeks can add up to 18 days in a year. Absences add up before you even know it.



WARNING 10 - 17 DAYS

- Students who are absent an average of 15 days a year miss a year's worth of school before their senior year.
- When students miss a day of school it actually puts them two days behind their classmates.

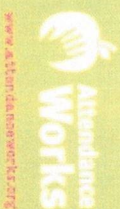


GOOD ATTENDANCE 9 OR FEWER ABSENCES

- Students with good attendance generally achieve higher grades and enjoy school more.
- Children benefit and make the most of their educational opportunities if they attend school regularly and on time.

Attendance in the early grades

Many of our youngest students miss 10 percent of the school year—about 18 days a year or just two days every month. Chronic absenteeism in kindergarten and even pre-K can predict lower test scores, poor attendance and retention in later grades, especially if the problem persists for more than a year. Do you know how many young children are chronically absent in your school or community?



Who is affected

Kindergarten and 1st grade classes often have absenteeism rates as high as those in high school. Many of these absences are excused, but they still add up to lost time in the classroom.

1 in 10 kids

In kindergarten and 1st grade are chronically absent in some schools, it's as high as 1 in 4!



2 in 10 Low-income kids

miss too much school. They're also more likely to suffer academically.



2.5 in 10 homeless kids

are chronically absent.



4 in 10 transient kids

miss too much school when families move.



Why it matters

If children don't show up for school regularly, they miss out on fundamental reading and math skills and the chance to build a habit of good attendance that will carry them into college and careers.

Preliminary data from a California study found that children who were chronically absent in kindergarten and 1st grade were 50% likely to read proficiently at the end of 3rd grade.

Who Can Read on Grade Level After 3rd Grade?



64% of kids with good attendance in K and 1st (missed 8 or fewer days both years)



43% of kids with at-risk attendance (missed more than 9 days both years)



41% of kids chronically absent in K or 1st (missed 18 or more days one year)



17% of kids chronically absent in K and 1st (missed 18 or more days both years)

What families can do



Find out what day school starts and make sure your child has the required dress.

Build regular routines for bed time and the morning.



Talk about the importance of regular attendance and about how your child feels about school.

Don't permit missing school unless your child is truly sick. Use a thermometer to check for a fever. Remember that stomach aches and headaches may be signs of anxiety.



Avoid medical appointments and extended trips when school is in session.

Keep a chart recording your child's attendance at home. At the end of the week, talk with your child about what you see.

Develop back-up plans for getting to school if something comes up. Ask a family member, neighbor or another parent for help.

Seek support from school staff or community groups to help with transportation, health problems, or no safe path to school.

