



Talking Points for Families

Support Attendance In the Winter Months



**Attendance
Works**

Advancing Student Success By Reducing Chronic Absence

Families are crucial to ensuring students attend school every day whether their role is to transport a young child to school or monitor whether their teenager is showing up to class. What families say and do has a big influence on their child's attendance.

As a member of the school community, you can engage and inform parents and guardians about why regular attendance is so important and how quickly a child can fall behind due to too many absences. Share these talking points with parents during one-on-one conversations, community events or even school newspapers or blogs.

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- a) This is the time of year when winter weather and children's illnesses can take a toll on school attendance. But it's important to get your children to school every day possible.
 - b) Absences, even if they are excused, can add up to academic trouble. This is as true in kindergarten as it is in high school.
 - c) Children who miss too much school in kindergarten are less likely to read well by third grade. By middle school, absenteeism can predict who will graduate from high school.
 - d) A study of weather-related absences in Massachusetts found that each missed day affected a student's test scores and grades. This was especially true on snowy days when school stayed open but some students missed class.
 - e) There's not much we can do about the weather, but there are two key steps every parent can take to help avoid absences this year: Make back-up plans for bad weather and keep your children healthy.
 - f) It's important to find a way to get your child to school even when the weather is bad. If you're having trouble getting to school, reach out to other families, or call the school. We can connect you with families or staff members who can help.
 - g) If your children are sick, talk to your doctor or the school nurse to see whether they are too sick for school. This [handout](#) offers some tips about when children are too sick for school.
 - h) Do what you can to keep your children healthy. Dress them warmly for the cold weather and make sure they've got hats and gloves. Encourage them to wash their hands regularly, and send them to school with a bottle of hand sanitizer.
 - i) Help your child learn to persevere. Today, he learns to overcome a snowdrift. In the future, he will have the grit to triumph over even greater obstacles to his dreams.