

Attendance Matters

The first step toward learning in school...is being in class! Prompt arrival and regular school attendance plays a crucial role in a student's overall academic achievement and is a habit that should begin in **preschool**. During the early elementary years, children are gaining basic social and academic skills critical to ongoing academic and social success. **Research shows that frequent absences in kindergarten through 3rd grade is clearly associated with poor achievement, truancy in middle school, and more serious consequences in high school (frustration, school suspension, credit loss, school dropout, legal trouble, substance abuse, fewer career choices and lower paying jobs).** There are only 171 instructional days each year for elementary students, and as you can see... **attendance does matter!**

Why Attendance Matters...according to WRE Staff

Classroom Teachers:

- Absent students miss invaluable teacher directed lessons and information presentation.
- Absent students miss teacher given directions and explanations.
- Absent students have "gaps" in their learning and skill acquisition.
- Absent students take away teacher contact time from the rest of the class.
- Absent students develop the attitude that school isn't that important.
- Absent students do not develop a sense of responsibility.
- Absent students miss peer discussion and cooperative learning activities that impact learning.
- Absent students have increased stress and anxiety to make up work.
- Absent students may miss other important parts of the day (other subjects, specials, recess, etc.) in order to get caught up on their missed assignments.
- Absent students miss hands-on experiments and inquiry lessons. They become behind in the inquiry process and struggle to build upon their missed learning.
- Group project presentations can also be an issue when students excessively miss school.

Support Services (SSN, SPED, Resource, Speech/Hearing, OT/PT):

- Absent students interfere with the continuity of a research based intervention done with fidelity.
- Absent students make scaffolding ideas and building on previous lessons difficult.
- Absent students are impacting their practice of skills that are needed for success.
- Absent students don't experience the peer modeling of proper language use.
- Absent students interfere with the collection of accurate and timely data that drives the educational decisions of our students.
- Absent students impact social relationships that they are building.
- Absent students struggle with feeling ownership and community that fosters positive attitudes about education.
- Absent students struggle with the learning process to obtain information, because they need continuous repetition.
- Absent students who miss one week of school tend to have 2-3 weeks of lost learning, therefore impacting the amount of learning time in a school year.

Exploratory Classes (for example, Art Class) :

- *Absent students miss instruction and demonstration of a new art project being presented. Many times this includes a PowerPoint, visuals and valuable classroom discussions.*
- *Absent students lack planning for projects through sketches, reflections, teacher guidance, etc.*
- *Absent students have incomplete artwork. Most projects can't be sent home for students to 'make-up' artwork because of the materials/supplies needed.*

- *Absent students lack understanding of art concepts and standards which were presented in the intro lesson.*

The bottom line -Consistent attendance is like a book: if you miss chapters 3, 8, and 12, how can you understand what's going on in the story? When students miss school, they are missing valuable instruction – in multiple content areas - that simply cannot be replaced, and complete understanding is difficult to achieve. And it's not just absences --- it's tardies as well. When students are tardy, it sets the tone for the day --- they are always trying to catch up. Students truly are often embarrassed as well, walking in the door as everyone else is already settled. They miss out on valuable socializing and camaraderie that occurs while students are getting settled and prepared for the day. In addition, for the student who struggles with organization and keeping up, being tardy severely impacts how their day is going to proceed. All of this creates stress for the child and they don't seem to perform as well when they are worried about having been absent or tardy.