

Mental Fitness News and Tips

Support Attendance In the Winter Months

February 2016

Families are crucial to ensuring that students attend school every day, whether their role is to transport a young child to school, get them on the bus, or monitor whether their teenager is showing up to class.



What families say and do has a big influence on their child's attendance. Regular attendance for all students is important, as a child can fall behind due to too many absences. Here are some talking points for parents to think about:

1. 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.

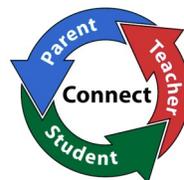


2. Absences, even if they are excused, can add up to academic trouble. This is as true in kindergarten as it is in high school.

3. 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.

4. 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.

5. 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.



6. 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.

Adapted from the Attendance Works site: www.attendanceworks.org

How Can You Help?

- Do what you can to keep your children healthy.
- Dress them warmly for the cold weather.
- Make sure they have warm hats and gloves.
- Encourage them to wash their hands regularly.
- Send them to school with a bottle of hand sanitizer and tissues.
- If your children are sick, talk to your doctor, nurse, or school nurse to see whether they are too sick for school.
- **If your children are sick, don't forget to call/notify the school *before* school starts for the day!**

This newsletter is provided by the School Community Partnership for Mental Health, of which MPS is an integral part.