

# Counselor Connection



Parenting Tips  
for Today

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## Good Attendance - How Important is It?

**Attendance Works**, an organization whose mission is to “*advance student success and help close equity gaps by reducing chronic absence*” cites the following:

- Absenteeism in the first month of school can predict poor attendance throughout the school year. Half the students who miss 2-4 days in September go on to miss nearly a month (20 days) of school.
- Poor attendance can influence whether children read proficiently by the end of third grade or are held back.
- Research shows that missing 10 percent of a student’s school days, which is considered “chronically absent” (18 days in our district) negatively affects a student’s academic performance.
- When students improve their attendance rates, they improve their academic prospects and chances for graduating.
- By 6th grade, chronic absence becomes a leading indicator that a student will drop out of high school.



**Important to Note:** Many school districts including PCSD, adhere to a 180 day school calendar. Consider that *PCSD students, for example, are in school only 165 full school days* when we account for early release days. Each and every one of those days is critically important!

### **It Starts Early:**

A 2008 study conducted by the Rodel Community Scholars at Arizona State University that tracked students from kindergarten through high school found that dropout patterns were linked with poor attendance, *beginning in kindergarten*. Gregory Hickman, director of the Rodel Community Scholars program and former director of the Arizona Dropout Initiative, notes they discovered that as early as kindergarten, behavioral differences are apparent between those who go on to graduate and those who drop out, with dropouts missing an average of 124 days by eighth grade.

### **A message from Attendance Works:**

*Parents and families are essential partners in promoting good attendance because they have the bottom-line responsibility for making sure their children get to school every day. Just as parents should focus on how their children are performing academically, they have a responsibility to set expectations for good attendance and to monitor their children's absences, so that missed days don't add up to academic trouble.*

**The PCSD's official policy states that "a student must have consistent, punctual, daily attendance. Regular attendance and participation in class is essential for students to be successful."**

Of course, there are many reasons a child may be home from school. Absences can be a sign that a student is losing interest in school, struggling with school work, dealing with peer conflicts or facing some other potentially serious difficulty. But remember, help is available! Parents are encouraged to reach out to counselors, teachers and administrators with attendance concerns.

**In case of illness, when is it "ok" to keep my child home?**

# WHEN IS SICK TOO SICK FOR SCHOOL?



## Send me to school if...

I have a runny nose or just a little cough, but no other symptoms.

I haven't taken any fever reducing medicine for 24 hours, and I haven't had a fever during that time.

I haven't thrown up or had any diarrhea for 24 hours.



## Keep me at home if...

I have a temperature higher than 100 degrees even after taking medicine.

I'm throwing up or have diarrhea.

My eyes are pink and crusty.



## Call the doctor if...

I have a temperature higher than 100 degrees for more than two days.

I've been throwing up or have diarrhea for more than two days.

I've had the sniffles for more than a week, and they aren't getting better.

I still have asthma symptoms after using my asthma medicine (and call 911 if I'm having trouble breathing after using an inhaler).



Adapted with permission from Baltimore City Public Schools.

Similarly, **KidsHealth.org** suggests:

Elementary students should stay home if they have a fever, are nauseated, vomiting, or have diarrhea. Students who lose their appetite, are clingy or lethargic, complain of pain, or who just don't seem to be acting "themselves" also might benefit from a sick day. *[But be strong and don't let your child stay home when it is not necessary.]*

High School and Middle schoolers should also take a sick day if they have a fever, are nauseated, vomiting, or have diarrhea. Otherwise, it's important that they arrive at school on time every day, because having to catch up with class work, projects, tests, and homework can be stressful and interfere with learning.

## Here's what parents can do:

- Take attendance seriously. Establish clear expectations for regular on-time attendance.
- Identify the reasons your child is absent from school and help them overcome these challenges. Seek help from your child's school, especially with ongoing School Refusal.

- Make appointments with the doctor or dentist in the late afternoon so your child misses as little school as possible.
- If your child must miss school, make sure you (or they) get homework assignments and follow up to see if the work is completed and turned in.
- Call the school as soon as you know your child will be absent and tell school staff why your child will be absent, the specific symptoms your child is having, and how long your child will be out of school.
- Help your child develop a healthy diet and sleep schedule, including a nutritious breakfast, and promote a routine that enables regular school attendance.
- Celebrate your child’s academic progress and good attendance record!

We hope you enjoy this issue of *Counselor Connection*. We want to share what counselors and social workers in our schools are doing related to each *Connection* topic to promote our academic, social, emotional, and behavioral wellness.



### Important Reads This Month

- [The Link Between School Attendance and Good Health - from The American Academy of Pediatrics](#)
- [School Refusal - Tips for Parents from The Conversation](#)
- [What Parents Need to Know - HealthyChildren.org](#)



### School News

What are our schools doing on this topic?

Our district has recently reviewed attendance data, streamlined attendance coding, convened an Attendance Committee to make recommendations, and increased efforts to connect students directly with teachers, social workers, and mentors. In addition, our Swift K-12 automatic call notification alerts parents to absences immediately. Throughout the district, social workers, outreach coordinators, teachers, counselors and administrators work to discover specific barriers to regular attendance and collaborate with families to find a solution.

- Elementary: Social workers work in conjunction with parents via phone calls, meetings, and home visits to improve attendance.

- Middle: Parents, student, counselors and administrators meet to develop an attendance contract; letters describing attendance policy are sent home.
- Junior High: Parents receive regular live phone calls with up-to-the minute attendance information and reminders.
- High School and Park City Learning: Check & Connect is a comprehensive student engagement intervention that uses trained mentors. Phone calls home are made for each missed period and student attendance is monitored during weekly student support meetings.

#### **More Resources**

- [Kids Health - 10 Ways to Help Your Child Succeed](#)
- [Attendance Works - Resources](#)