

School LOGO

(Parent/Guardian Name)
(Address)

(Date)

Dear Parent/Guardian of (Student Name),

We hope this letter finds you well. We understand that there are various reasons why students may be absent from school, and we are committed to working together with families to support regular attendance and create a positive school experience. We have noticed that your student, (Name), was absent on the following dates: [Insert dates here].

When an Elementary school student has 5 excused absences in a 30-day period, or 10 days accumulated within the current school year, we are required to have a conference to support student success. We strongly believe that students and families are our greatest partners in understanding the barriers to attendance and finding ways to increase engagement. Therefore, we kindly request your presence at the scheduled conference **on (_____) at (____) am/pm. If you are unable to attend at the designated time, please contact (_____) to reschedule.** We also offer virtual options if attending in person is not feasible.

During this conference, we aim to discuss the following important topics:

- Identifying any challenges or obstacles that may be impacting your student's attendance.
- Exploring the support and resources that our school and community can offer.
- Establishing lines of communication between teachers, school staff, and parents.
- Setting up an Academic Plan to ensure students success.

It is important that you familiarize yourself with our school policies and procedures, as well as Washington State Law, regarding attendance. Please see the back of this page which outlines more about RCWs, and/or our Student Handbook located on our website: (school/district website)

We have attached a copy of your students' attendance record up to this point. We understand that errors may have occurred. If you believe there are errors, please don't hesitate to contact us. Please be aware that staff/parents can't excuse absences in our system after 5 school days without principals' permission or a doctor's note. For your convenience, your student's attendance is: (_____)unexcused/(_____)excused = (_____)% of the school year.

Should you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to reach out to us. Our ultimate goal is to ensure that you and your student have equitable access to the necessary resources and support. We sincerely appreciate your time, and we eagerly look forward to meeting with you.

Sincerely,

(Principal Name)
(Principal Signature)

Why is attendance important? Research shows:

- By being present at school, your child learns valuable social skills and has the opportunity to develop meaningful relationships with other students and school staff.
- Absences can be a sign that a student is losing interest in school, struggling with schoolwork, dealing with a bully or facing some other potentially serious difficulty.
- Missing 10 percent (just two days a month or about 18 days in a year) increases the chance that your student will not read or master math at the same level as their peers.
- By 6th grade, absenteeism is one of three signs that a student may drop out of high school.
- By 9th grade, regular and high attendance is a better predictor of graduation rates than 8th grade test scores.

RCW 28.A.225.010

The state law for mandatory attendance, called the Becca Bill, requires children from age 8-17 to attend a public school, private school, or a district approved home school program. Children who are under 7 years old are not required to be enrolled in school, *however*, once a child is enrolled after the age of 5, the student must attend full-time. To learn more, visit: (school website or OSPI)

- After five excused absences within a 30-day period or ten excused absences within a school year, the school must schedule a conference with the guardian of an **elementary** student identifying barriers to attendance and offering supports and resources to assist. RCW 28A.225.018
- After fifteen excused absences within a school year, District Policy requires a conference to be held with the guardian/student to establish an academic plan and attendance requirements. Each absence after fifteen absences will be considered unexcused without principal approval.

Elementary school is a critical time to develop healthy habits and a positive foundation for learning. What are things that can help?

- Setting a regular bedtime and morning routine can reduce anxiety.
<https://www.seattlechildrens.org/health-safety/keeping-kids-healthy/development/good-night-sleep-routine/>
- Help your child prepare for school the night before by finishing homework, setting out things needed for the next day, and getting enough sleep. Ask your doctor about how many hours your child needs or check out: <https://kidshealth.org/en/parents/sleep.html>
- Follow our district and state health guidelines on when to keep your child home due to illness.
- Avoid appointments and extended trips when school is in session.
- Develop back-up plans for getting to school if something comes up. Call on a family member, a neighbor, or another parent.
- Talk to your students' teachers if you notice sudden changes in behavior. These could be tied to something going on at school.
- Encourage meaningful afterschool activities, including sports and clubs.