*This letter is a template created by OSPI for school districts to meet the attendance communication requirement in* [*RCW 28A.225.005.*](https://app.leg.wa.gov/RCW/default.aspx?cite=28A.225.005) *Please edit to reflect your school’s information and resources, specifically the highlighted section. Consider sending this letter through multiple methods (email, district parent app, text, social media, etc.). Please delete the red text and the yellow highlights before sending.*

Subject: Important Attendance Information for [School or District Name] Families

Dear Parent/Guardian or [Actual Names],

This year, [School Name] is working hard to ensure every student can learn and grow by being at school regularly. Being at school is important for learning, building friendships, and participating in the school community. We want to support your student’s success through attendance and engagement in school.

**Why Attendance Matters:**

* Missing just 2 days a month (or 10% of school) can impact your student’s chances of reading at grade level by the third grade (elementary) or graduating on time (middle and high school).
* School is also essential for students to build friendships and learn how to be in community with their peers and adults.
* Absences can signal problems like disengagement, academic struggles, or bullying, and therefore is important for us to pay attention to.

**What We Need from You:**

* Follow health guidelines so that you know when to keep your child home due to illness and when to send them to school. [Insert your school district’s guidance on when students should stay home and come to school]
* If your student will be absent, contact [Attendance Secretary’s Name] at [Phone Number].
* Reach out to us if your student is struggling to come to school or if you are having challenges getting your child to school. We are here to help.
* Follow our school policies or expectations [link to school website where parents can find policies and other resources].

**What You Can Do:**

* Set a consistent bedtime and morning routine.
* Prepare for school the night before, ensuring homework is done and your child gets enough rest.
* Talk to your child about the importance of school and attendance.
* Keep track of the number of days your child has missed on a calendar in a visible location in the home. [Schools can opt to create a tracking calendar to send home]
  + Ask your child to assist with tracking the days.
  + Days can add up quickly. Aim to keep absences to [9 days or less] in a year.
* Schedule appointments before or after school, or at the very beginning or end of the day to minimize the amount of time your student will be out of school.
* Schedule your vacations during district scheduled holidays.
* Have backup plans for transportation. Consider using [My Family’s Help Bank](https://www.attendanceworks.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/Family-Help-Bank-1.pdf) resource to make a plan.
* Communicate with your child’s teacher, the front office or the school counselor, about any concerns.
* Encourage after school activities.

**Our Promise to You:**

* We understand challenges that affect attendance and are here to help.
* Use our resources, like the nurse or counselor for support. [Insert contact information of school staff]
* We will take attendance daily (as required by state law), communicate when your student has an unexcused absence, and help overcome barriers.

**What Families Need to Know about Washington State’s Compulsory Attendance Laws:**

Washington state requires parents and school districts to follow these steps when students are absent:

**Parents:**

* Parents of children ages 8 – 18 must ensure their children attend full-time public school, private school, or receive home-based instruction (district-approved).
* If parents enroll their 6- or 7-year-old, the student must attend school full-time.

**School Districts:**

* notify parents of the attendance rules and get a signature to show they received the notice
* notify parents every time a student is absent without notification
* meet with parents and students to find out why students are absent
* try different strategies to improve attendance, and in some cases
* refer a student and/or parent to a Community Engagement Board or to court

Please review our school attendance procedures here [link to Student Handbook or website] and our district’s attendance policies here [link to district policy] for more detailed information. You can also read more about the Washington State Compulsory Attendance Laws here ([Chapter 28A.225 RCW](https://app.leg.wa.gov/RCW/default.aspx?cite=28A.225)).

Sincerely,

[Principal's Name]

Your signature indicates you have read and understood our attendance policies.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_