

School Attendance



We all want our students to get a great education, and the building blocks for a great education begin with regular attendance. Regular attendance encourages good habits — habits that lead to success after school, whether in the workplace or college.

Missing school can have a big impact on students academically and socially. It can affect their test results, and, just as importantly, affect their relationships with other students, leading to social isolation. There is no safe number of days for missing school — each day missed puts them behind, and can affect their educational outcomes.

Getting in early...

It's never too late to improve attendance — going to school daily can lead to better outcomes. Every day counts.

Openly communicating with your child's school about all absences is a good way to prevent escalating attendance issues which lead to referrals to the Lake County Regional Superintendent of School's Attendance & Truancy Division (ATD). ATD has the authority to follow up on attendance issues. Ultimately, ATD can refer students to court for truancy, which can lead to fines and/or incarceration (SC 105.26). If you're having attendance issues with your child, please let your classroom teacher or counselor know so we can work together to get your child to school every day.

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Reasons for Absences:

Sickness — There are always times when students need to miss school, such as when they're ill. It's vital that they're only absent on the days they are genuinely sick. Setting good sleep patterns, eating well, and exercising regularly can help prevent sickness.

"Day off" — Think twice before letting your child have a day off as they could fall behind their peers.

Truancy — A "truant" is defined as a child subject to compulsory school attendance who is absent without valid cause. There can be many reasons for truancy; the best way to address this is for schools and parents to work together. While all absences are bad for academic performance, unexcused absences are a much stronger indicator of lower reading and math achievement.

What You Can Do:

If for any reason your child must miss school, there are things you can do to ensure they don't fall behind:

- ◆ Speak with your child's teacher or year school counselor and find out what work your child needs to do to keep up.
- ◆ Develop an attendance plan with your child's teacher and ensure your child completes the plan.



This pamphlet was duplicated from information presented by the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development in Victoria, Australia (<http://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/parents/behaviour/Pages/studentattendance.aspx>). Each school district has its own policies. For more information on Attendance Policies in your school district, please contact the school your child attends.

This pamphlet is being distributed by the Attendance & Truancy Division of the Lake County Regional Office of Education. ATD is a program that serves Lake County, and is funded by the Illinois State Board of Education's Truant's Alternative & Optional Education Program (TAOEP). For more information, call (847) 223-3400, x223 or go to our website www.lake.k12.il.us.

Parent's Guide

Every Day Counts! Secondary Education



Going to school every day is the single most important part of your child's education. Students learn new things at school every day — missing school puts them behind.



LakeCounty

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How can I get my teenager to school?



Many teenagers seek independence and think they know best. No matter how hard parents try, some students may be reluctant or refuse to go to school.

Addressing attendance issues promptly and setting up good patterns in adolescence can lead to future success.

Did you know?

- ◆ Patterns of late arrival at school or missing classes are early warning signs
- ◆ Missing one day of school each week adds up to 2 months missed over a year
- ◆ Each day absent in high school has an impact on skill development and social connections
- ◆ Poor attendance may be associated with future unemployment, criminal activity, substance abuse, and poorer health and life expectancy

Some causes of school problems

Some of the more common causes of school problems are underlying learning difficulties, learning disabilities and behavioral or emotional issues. But there are many other reasons why a young person might not be engaging fully in their education. School factors might include:

- ◆ Bullying
- ◆ Disliking or not feeling connected to the school culture/environment
- ◆ Disliking school subjects, not liking the choice of subjects, or not feeling challenged by the work
- ◆ Poor school or academic support, especially in relation to heavy workloads (homework)
- ◆ Not getting along with teachers or other students at school
- ◆ Completing demands on time, such as extracurricular activities

Personal factors might include:

- ◆ Chronic illness
- ◆ Intellectual or cognitive disability
- ◆ Behavioral or developmental difficulties or disorders
- ◆ Mental health issues such as depression or anxiety
- ◆ History of abuse and neglect
- ◆ Poor self-concept or self-esteem
- ◆ Poor communication and social skills
- ◆ Difficulty with listening, concentrating or sitting still

Family factors might include:

- ◆ Parents who aren't involved in their child's education
- ◆ A home environment that doesn't or can't adequately support a young person's learning
- ◆ Family problems such as relationship breakdowns
- ◆ Competing family or social responsibilities, such as caring for family members, or working outside school hours

What you can do

- ◆ Act early
- ◆ Talk about the importance of showing up to school every day, make that the expectation
- ◆ Help your teenager maintain daily routines such as finishing homework and getting a good night's sleep (teenagers need 8-9 hours sleep)
- ◆ Do not schedule appointments (i.e. medical, dental and ortho) during school hours
- ◆ Arrange family vacations during scheduled school holidays so they don't miss classes and fall behind
- ◆ Don't let your teenager stay home unless genuinely sick. Complaints of headaches or stomach aches may be signs of anxiety
- ◆ If your teenager wants to stay home to finish an assignment, rather than letting them stay home, make attendance the number one priority



- ◆ Check the school calendar or website to help your teenager plan their time, so that they avoid working late the night before an assignment is due
- ◆ Be sure to set a good example – how you meet your commitments impacts on how they will meet theirs
- ◆ Talk to your teenager
 - ◆ What are their feelings about school?
 - ◆ What interests them at school?
 - ◆ Are there any difficult situations?
 - ◆ Open these discussions in a relaxed way, demonstrating concern, not authority
- ◆ Try to be aware of your teenager's social contacts: Peer influence can lead to skipping school, while students without many friends can feel isolated
- ◆ Encourage meaningful extracurricular activities that your teenager enjoys such as sports and clubs to develop positive relationships and experience success outside of a classroom setting
- ◆ Set clear parameters around part-time work. Make sure that the hours your teenager works does not impact their education
- ◆ Familiarize yourself with the school's attendance policy. This can help when trying to reason with teenagers.
- ◆ Monitor your teenager's attendance and school performance. Check with teachers and/or counselor to find out how things are going.



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