



Monday, March 12, 2018

Greetings Parents, Guardians, and Families,

Attendance Matters. We strive to ensure that every student is valued, respected, supported, and engaged. We also have a talented staff that works with each student to develop academic, social, and behavioral skills. However, we are unable to do this important work when students are not in class. We need your help and support. *We are experiencing a significant challenge: 27% of our students are chronically absent (missing 10% or more of the year for **any** reason).* This means that many of our students are missing the critical building blocks of their learning that they need to be successful.

Research shows that students who are chronically absent:

- Are more likely to struggle academically
- Are more likely to receive grading or retention consequences
- Are more likely to (eventually) drop out
- Are more likely to get in trouble with the law

We are working hard to improve student attendance by creating attendance competitions and celebrating students with improved and excellent attendance. Our attendance team members will be working individually with students who are experiencing challenges with attendance. Please know that you may be hearing from us as we attempt to identify and assist in providing support to overcome any barriers that may be impacting your child's attendance.

Of course, we fully understand that sickness and urgent situations occur. In light of this, we want to provide a few very important reminders/updates to you regarding DCPS policies.

- **For absences to be excused, ALL excuse notes must be provided to the main office/attendance counselor within 5 days after a student returns from an absence. This includes doctor's notes and documentation from courts or other documentation.**
- If schools are open, absences will be unexcused. Absences due to cold, rainy, snowy, or other inclement weather will not be excused unless you hear otherwise in advance from DCPS.
- Vacation/travel is not a legally approved excuse for an absence from school.
- Students who missed more than 20% of his/her scheduled periods for the day are considered absent due to DC's "80/20 rule".

Please do not hesitate to contact the school if you have any questions, and thank you for your continued support of our partnership to ensure your student's educational success!

Respectfully,

Andrea E. Allen, J.D.
Director of Student Attendance and Support Services