

Mount Vernon Schools Message on Regular Attendance and Truancy

In support of our 100% Graduation Goal, Mount Vernon Schools is continuing efforts to support students in being at school regularly. We know this effort requires strong partnerships with our families and community, including strengthening our efforts to keep you informed regarding the attendance record of your student and the benefits of regular school attendance.

What You Can Do

- Develop a regular bedtime and morning routine. Turn off electronics at bedtime. Lay out clothes the night before.
- Avoid missing school unless your child is truly sick and seek help if chronic illness is a challenge.
- Avoid scheduling vacations or well child medical appointments while school is in session.
- Develop a back-up plan for getting to school with a family member, neighbor, or another parent.
- If your child seems anxious about going to school, contact the school to work together to provide supports.

Our Promise to You

We know there are many reasons students are absent from school, from health concerns to transportation challenges. There are people at your school prepared to help if you or your student face challenges getting to school regularly and/or on time. We promise to notice if your student is absent, to communicate with you to understand why your student is absent, and to work together to try to remove barriers and identify resources to support your student in attending school regularly.

School Policies and State Law

State law for mandatory attendance requires children age 8 to 17 to attend a public school, private school, or a district-approved home school program. Children 6 or 7 years old are not required to enroll in school—if enrolled, they must attend.

All schools are required to take daily attendance and to notify you when your student has an unexcused absence. If your student has 3 unexcused absences in 1 month, state law requires that we schedule a conference with you and your student to remove barriers and identify resources to ensure regular attendance. In elementary school, after 5 excused absences in any month, or 10 or more excused absences in the school year, the school district is required to contact you to schedule a conference. A conference is not required if you have pre-arranged the absence in writing and there is a plan to prevent your student falling behind academically. If your student has an IEP or a 504, the team that created the plan must reconvene.

If your student has 7 unexcused absences in any month, or 15 unexcused absences within the school year, we are required to file a petition with the Juvenile Court, alleging a violation of RCW 26A.225.010, the mandatory attendance law. The petition will be automatically stayed, and your student and family may be referred to a Community Engagement Board or other coordinated means of intervention. If your student continues to be truant, you may need to go to court.

- Parents are asked to contact the school office the morning of an absence by phone, e-mail, or written note to excuse/document the absence—excused absences will only be accepted up to 2 days following the absence.
- If your child has a significant number of days out ill, the school will partner with your child's medical provider and/or the school nurse to implement a plan to improve attendance to support learning and school success.
- Beginning with 2019-20 only five Parent Approved Absences will be eligible to be excused during the school year.

We hope to partner with you to help your child succeed in school, and **ultimately earn his or her high school diploma**, by supporting good attendance and **consistent access to classroom learning now**. Please join us in sending the message that **Every Day Counts**, and let us know how we can best support you and your student in being at school all day, every day.

Acknowledgement of Information

I am the parent/guardian of the below child, and have received and read the Regular Attendance and Truancy information provided by Mount Vernon Schools regarding excused and unexcused absences and the truancy law.

Student Name_____

School_____ Grade_____

Parent Signature_____

Date_____