



Lago Vista ISD

Parent Guide to Promoting Student Attendance



Did You Know?

- Each year, Central Texas students are absent 2.4 million days of school. Many of these absences are potentially preventable, including routine medical or dental checkups, traveling, or just skipping.
- Chronic absences in Kindergarten are associated with lower academic performance in 1st grade among all children and are a contributor to the lowest levels of educational achievement at the end of fifth grade.
- Parents are best positioned to ensure children attend school and to build the expectation around attendance and helping kids understand why it is so important.

What can parents do?

Getting your child to school on time, every day, unless they are sick, is something that you can do to ensure your child has a chance to succeed in school. While others can help, you are the bottom line. You can promote good attendance for your child when you:

#1: Set up good routines.

Establish and stick to the basic routines (going to bed early, waking up on time, etc.) that will help your child develop the habit of on-time attendance.

#2: Teach kids that attendance matters.

Teach your child that attending school is nonnegotiable unless they are truly sick. If your child seems reluctant to go to school, find out why and work with the teacher, administrator or afterschool provider to get them excited about going to school.

#3: Don't miss out if you don't have to.

If you take your child out of school to travel, or you let your child stay home when you know he/she's not really sick, your child misses important learning time. When your child misses school, he/she is missing opportunities to learn, socialize, gain confidence, and be inspired.

#4: Remember that appointment times matter.

Schedule medical appointments when they are least disruptive to school: on Saturday, late afternoon, or first thing in the morning. In LVISD, official attendance is taken every day at 10:00am (9:50am at elementary). Students not present at the official attendance time are counted absent for the day. If your child must miss school for a medical appointment, ALWAYS get a note from your doctor and take it to your school so the absence is excused.

#5: Have a back-up plan.

Come up with back up plans for who to turn to (another family member, a neighbor or fellow parents) to help you get your child to school if something comes up (e.g. another child gets sick, your car breaks down, etc.).

#6: Reach out for help.

Reach out for help if you are experiencing tough times (e.g. transportation, unstable housing, loss of a job, health problems) that make it difficult to get your child to school. Other parents, your child's teacher, principal, school nurse, or community agencies can help you problem solve or connect you to additional resources.

#7: Help make sure your child is engaged at school.

Identify non-academic activities (drama, art, music, etc.) that can help motivate your child's interest in school and learning and seek out those experiences.

#8: Listen to the nurse.

School nurses are trained in how to understand symptoms. In most schools, students are not allowed to call or text parents directly. If your child contacts you from school, call the school nurse FIRST before deciding what to do.

#9: Don't make others sick.

In Texas, all students must be up-to-date on immunizations before starting school. Some grades require additional vaccines. See the full list at <http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/immunize/school/>

Your child should stay home for at least 24 hours if he/she:

- Is running a fever of 100 degrees or more; or
- Has vomited more than once or has diarrhea; or
- Has flu-like symptoms, including fever, cough, sore throat, chills, or aches and pains.

Make sure your child is free of symptoms without medicine for a full day before sending him/her back. If you have questions about when your child should stay home, just ask your school nurse.

#10: If an absence is unavoidable, make sure your student stays caught up.

If your child is absent, work with the teacher to make sure your child has an opportunity to learn and make up for the academics missed.

Remember: Showing up for school EVERY DAY has a huge impact on a student's academic success starting in kindergarten and continuing through high school. Even as children grow older and more independent, families play a key role in making sure students get to school safely every day and understand why attendance is so important for success in school and on the job.

MISSING SCHOOL MATTERS!

Find other tips and tools to help at www.MissingSchoolMatters.org.