



School Attendance

Why is school attendance so important?

Parents play an important role in a child's education. Research shows that children are more successful when families and schools work together.

You can begin a positive relationship with your child's school by *encouraging good attendance*. When your child is late or absent from school, you need to send in a note with the date, your signature, and the reason why your child was late or absent. This allows the school to keep track of *excused and unexcused absences*.

The New York State Parental Information and Resource Centers (PIRC) can give you information and ideas to become more involved in your child's education and work together with the school. For more specific ideas, visit us on the web at www.nyspirc.org.

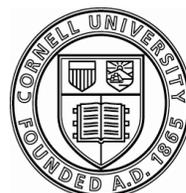
Students who attend school regularly learn more and are more successful than students who do not. Being in school gives students more time to interact with teachers and classmates. They have more time to ask questions and practice important skills. The course work in school is very challenging and students who are absent may fall behind, resulting in serious academic problems. Students must take a series of important state tests that measure their abilities in English language arts, math, science, and social studies. Students who come to school every day and work hard, do better on these tests. Good attendance helps students develop responsible work and study habits and prepare for the working world after school.

What does New York State say about attendance?

New York State education law requires that all children, ages six through 16, attend school regularly. The education law is designed to require school attendance and ensure that no child is denied the opportunity to get an education.

How will we know the school's attendance policy?

Your child's school district needs to have a written attendance policy for parents to review. If you do not know your child's school attendance policy, ask the school for a copy.



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What is an excused absence? What is an unexcused absence?

The following is a list of reasons that are considered excused absences: illness, death in the family, doctor/dental appointments, required court appearances, approved college visits, and religious observances.

The following are examples of unexcused absences: senior skip day, family vacation, traveling, shopping, hunting or fishing, babysitting, missing the bus, and working.

Students should attend classes every day in order to be successful. School districts require that students attend classes a certain percentage of time in order to receive credit. In other words, your child cannot pass his classes if he does not attend them. Students with excused absences will be given a chance to make up the work in order to get credit. Students with unexcused absences do not have to be given a chance to make up work.

What can parents do to encourage good attendance?

New York State education law states that making sure children are present in school each day is the parents' responsibility. Parents who insist their children attend school on a regular basis are helping to teach their children responsibility.

How can parents help?

- Make school a priority. As soon as your child starts school, let her know that you expect her to attend school every day and do her best while there. Explain that it is her job to go to school and learn. Talk about the consequences of missing school in terms that mean something to her (having to stay after school to make up missed work, attending remedial classes, missing out on time with friends, going to summer school).
- Give your child a specific time for being in bed. Getting enough sleep is important for children of all ages to be able to get up and be ready for school in the morning.
- Try to make appointments during non-school hours.
- Take family trips and vacations during school breaks or in the summer.
- Get involved with your child's school. This will send the message that school is important.

Making sure your child is at school every day is one of the most powerful ways you can help your child be successful—in elementary, middle, high school and beyond!

Parental Information and Resource Center (PIRC)
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