

<August 16th, 2017

Dear Parent/Guardian,

We need your help with an important goal for White House Middle School this year. We want to ensure that every student attends school every day.

Attending school regularly has a significant, positive impact on your child's academic success—from kindergarten through high school. Even as he or she grows older and more independent, you play a key role in making sure your child gets to school safely and on time every day. For context, most students in Tennessee miss six or less days each school year.

We realize some absences are unavoidable due to health problems or other circumstances. But, we also know that when students miss too much school—regardless of the reason—it can cause them to fall behind academically. Absences can add up quickly. Students are less likely to succeed academically if they miss 10% or more of instructional days over the course of the school year (this means missing about two days of school per month or about 18 days per year).

Research shows:

- Tennessee students who are chronically absent in kindergarten are 15 percentage points less likely to reach proficiency in either 3rd grade math or ELA.
- Nationally, four out of five students who miss more than 10% of both kindergarten and first grade are unable to read on grade-level by third grade.
- The problem continues as students get older. Tennessee students who are chronically absent in 9th grade are 30 percentage points less likely to earn an on-time diploma (62% vs. 92%).

We don't want your child to fall behind in school or get discouraged. Please ensure that your child attends school every day and arrives on time. Attached are a few practical tips to help support regular attendance.

We want your child to be successful in school. Let us know how we can best support you and your child so that he or she shows up for school on time every day. If you have any questions or need more information, please contact your child's teacher, principal, or school counselor.

Sincerely,

Mark Mills
WHM Principal

Attendance Pointers for Parents

- Make sure your children keep a regular bedtime and establish a morning routine.
- Lay out clothes and pack backpacks the night before.
- Make sure your children go to school every day unless they are truly sick.
- Avoid scheduling vacations or doctor's appointments when school is in session.
- Develop back up plans for getting to school if something comes up. Call on a family member, neighbor, or another parent to take your child to school.
- Talk to teachers and counselors for advice if your children feel anxious about going to school or show other signs of not wanting to go to school.

For more information, contact your child's teacher or check out the parent resources available at www.attendanceworks.org.