

THE GIFT OF ATTENDANCE: MESSAGING ATTENDANCE IN THE HOLIDAY SEASON



TALKING POINTS:

Attendance Works has developed talking points and sample messages for school leaders hoping to encourage good attendance around the winter holidays. Consider using these talking points in your interactions and communications with students and families.



- This holiday season, the best gift you can give your child is a good education. And the best place to get that education is in school. Every day. On time.
- Building a habit of good attendance is your child's ticket to success in school and eventually on the job.
- But every year, absences spike in the weeks before and after winter break. It's time to break that cycle.
- We know it's tempting to extend your vacation by a few days on either side of the holiday.
- We recognize that holidays are an important time for reconnecting with families far away and exposing your children to your home and language, whether you grew up in another part of the United States or a different country. The costs of plane tickets often influence when you want to travel. But keep in mind the costs to your children's education if they miss too much school.
- Just a few missed days here and there, even if they're excused absences, can add up to too much lost learning time and put your child behind in school. This is as true in kindergarten as it is in high school.
- So make sure your child is in school every day, right up until vacation starts. Our teachers will be teaching, and our students will be learning. But it's harder to teach and it's harder to learn when too many students are absent.
- If missing school is unavoidable, talk to your children's teachers in advance to create a plan for making up missed work.
- So give your child the gift of attendance and the habit of attendance.

PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENTS OR ROBO CALLS:

You can use local radio stations or the robo-call system in district schools to broadcast your message. Feel free to use these template scripts or tailor them to your community. Read our [tips for creating PSAs](#).

PSA 30 seconds

This holiday season, the best gift you can give your child is a good education. And the best place to get an education is in school. It's tempting to extend your vacation by a few days, but remember, those days count as absences. Just a few missed days here and there, even if they're excused, can add up to too much lost learning time. So make sure your child is in school every day, right up until vacation starts. Our teachers will be teaching, and our students will be learning.

PSA 15 seconds

Every year, school absences spike in the weeks before and after winter break, as families squeeze a few more days of vacation into the holiday season. Let's break that cycle. Make sure your child is in school every day. Because the best gift you can give your child is a good education.

SAMPLE LETTER OR EMAIL:

We hope your family had a good Thanksgiving break, and we're happy to see so many students back in school, ready to learn this week. As we enter the holiday season, we want to reinforce the importance of school attendance. Every year, absences spike in the weeks before and after winter break as families squeeze in a few more vacation days. It's time to break that cycle. This holiday season, the best gift you can give your child is a good education. And the best place to get that education is in school. We know that just a few missed days here and there, even if they're excused absences, can add up to too much lost learning time and put your child behind in school. This is as true in kindergarten as it is in high school. We also know that attendance is a habit that children should learn early on if they're going to succeed in school and eventually on the job.

We recognize that holidays are an important time for reconnecting with families far away. The costs of plane tickets often influence when you want to travel. But keep in mind the costs to your children's education if they miss too much school—and the message you will be sending about the importance of attendance. Our teachers will be teaching, and our students will be learning, right up until vacation starts. [Our schools will be offering incentives and contests to encourage students to come to school every day.] You can help us convey that message. Give your children the gift of an education and the habit of attendance.

INCENTIVES:

The Los Angeles Unified School District has developed a number of suggestions in its [attendance toolkit](#) for low-cost incentives and competitions designed to bring students to school in the days before and after winter break. They include:

- Plan an activity that will bring students and parents to your school on the last day before winter break (awards assembly, holiday program, parent raffle, etc.)
- Offer incentive “door busters” to the first 10 (target grade level) students who arrive at school/class during the last week before break.
- Provide a lesson plan for teachers in early December emphasizing the importance of good attendance
- Plan, promote and implement “A Day Without an Absence” campaign for the first week of school after winter break
- Develop a seasonal theme such as
 - » Celebrating A Season of Good Attendance
 - » Giving the Gift of Attendance
 - » On the 1st Day of Attendance my teacher gave to me
 - » Stuffing Our Stockings With Good Attendance
 - » Good Attendance is Coming to Town