



# Keep Your Student on Track in Middle and High School

## Pay Attention to Attendance

Showing up for school has a huge impact on a student's social and academic development. Even as children grow more independent, **families play a key role** in making sure students get to school and understand how attendance benefits their health and success in school and beyond.



### Did you know?

- Students should miss no more than 9 days of school each year to stay engaged and on track to graduation.
- Frequent absences can be a sign that a student is **losing interest** in school, **dealing with a bully** or facing some other difficulty.
- By **6th grade**, chronic absence (missing 10%, or 2 days each month) is one of **three signs that a student may drop out** of high school.
- By **9th grade**, attendance is a **better predictor of graduation** rates than 8th grade test scores.



### What you can do

#### Make school attendance a priority

- **Talk about** the **opportunities** available when your teen or preteen shows up to school every day.
- Help your middle and high schoolers maintain **daily routines**, such as finishing homework and getting enough sleep.
- Consider **limiting** use of **devices** if they interfere with sleep.
- Try not to schedule **nonurgent medical appointments** during the school day.
- Help your student to stay **healthy**.
- If your children must stay home because they are **sick**, make sure they have **asked teachers for materials** to make up for the missed learning time in the classroom.

#### Help your student stay engaged

- **Find out** if your children **feel engaged** by their classes and whether they **feel safe** from bullies and other threats.
- Make sure your students are not missing class because of challenges with **behavioral issues** or **school discipline policies**. If any of these are problems, contact the school and work with them to find a solution.
- **Monitor** your child's academic progress and seek help from teachers, school counselors or tutors when necessary. Provide teachers with your **contact information**.
- Stay on top of your child's **social contacts**. Peer pressure can lead to skipping school, while students without many friends can feel isolated.
- Encourage your child to join meaningful **after-school activities**, including sports and clubs.
- **If** you notice signs of **anxiety**, support your middle and high schoolers, and if needed, **seek advice** from your school or health-care provider.

#### Communicate with the school

- **Know** the school's **attendance policies** both incentives and penalties.
- **Check** on your preteen/teen's **attendance** to make sure absences are not adding up.
- **Seek help** from school staff, other parents or community agencies if you need resources and support.