

# Kicking Off 2023 With Great Attendance!

## New Year, New Mindsets!

As we begin 2023, I want to remind students and their families of the importance of coming to school. The New Year is always a great time to reevaluate habits and routines, and it is **never** too late to improve your student's attendance!

## Why Does Attendance Matter?

Regular school attendance is critical for students of all ages.

By missing school, students are missing fundamental academic and social/emotional skills. Research shows that missing 10%, or about 2 days each month over the course of a school year (also known as chronic absenteeism) can make it harder to learn to read, and it negatively affects a student's academic performance. **By 6th grade, chronic absenteeism becomes a leading indicator that a student will drop out of high school.** It is evident that the habits and routines established in elementary school follows students into their future.

## Holding Space for Hardships

We understand that some absences are unavoidable, and difficult circumstances may arise – such as unstable housing, health issues, transportation issues, etc. If you find that this is the case, please reach out to the school to determine how we can assist. Finding solutions to these issues, as this is the key to success. Transparency from parents and guardians is

key.  
Source: <https://www.attendanceworks.org/chronic-absence/the-problem/10-facts-about-school-attendance/>

## Reminder of TCSS Attendance Policies:

### Absences

Students must provide an excuse for every absence. A written excuse must be provided within two days of returning to school. After 10 absences, a parent/guardian must provide medical or legal documentation for absences to be excused.

### Tardies

The school day begins at 8 AM. All students are expected to be in their classrooms by this time. All students arriving after 8AM must arrive at the front doors, be accompanied by an adult, and check in at the front office. Please be mindful, excessive tardies can result in attendance concerns.

### Letters and Pre-Early Warning Conferences

Once a student has acquired 3 unexcused absences, parents/guardians will receive a 3 day letter notifying the parent of these absences and concern for truancy. If the absences continue, the school social worker will schedule a Pre-Early Warning Conference with parents/guardians to discuss the student's attendance, address any barriers impacting the student's attendance, and establish a plan for improvement.

### ATTEND Meetings

At the end of each month, the school social worker will host an informational group meeting to address chronic absenteeism. Parents and guardians will be required to attend these meetings based on chronic absence data.

More information about TCSS attendance policy can be found in the Student-Parent Information Guide on pages 48-51.

## What Parents & Guardians Can Do:

- Make school attendance a priority.
- Talk about the importance of school with your student.
- Create morning & evening routines that includes appropriate bed times, laying out clean clothes for school, and packing backpack with necessary items.
- Develop backup plans for coming to school with a friend/neighbor in case something comes up.
- If transportation is an issue, let the school know so they can help come up with a plan.
- Create a habit tracker with a focus on attendance/punctuality.
- Don't let your child stay home unless truly sick. Complaints of headaches or stomachaches may be signs of anxiety
- Stay on top of academic progress and seek help from teachers or tutors if necessary. Make sure teachers know how to contact you
- Communicate with the school
- Talk to teachers if you notice sudden changes in behavior. These could be tied to something going on at school

***"Attend Today,  
Achieve Tomorrow"***

**Show up and stand out  
the Matthews way!**

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# Attendance Initiative

We would like to reward students for being here, as well as help them understand the importance of attending school. In order to recognize these students, the school social worker will give prizes for students with perfect attendance at the end of each nine weeks. Perfect attendance is a huge accomplishment, and should be celebrated!

## The Social and Emotional Benefit of On-Time Regular Attendance

At the period of life when young children are moving from the home environment into the broader community of school, there are significant benefits from consistent, on-time school attendance.

- Sleeping and eating patterns are stabilized with good effects on health.
- A predictable schedule builds the child's confidence at home and school.
- Children know what to expect in the classroom because they were there the previous day.
- Children recognize they are part of a community; their peers and teacher expect and include them and miss them when they are gone.
- Ongoing, extended conversations and learning are able to be built upon.
- Children learn to increasingly control their emotions simply by being in a consistent environment and on schedule every day.
- Teachers spend less time "catching them up" and more time building on what they learned the day before.
- Parents and families feel more a part of the school community and are able to support and engage with each other.

<https://www.hickmanmills.org/cms/lib3/MO01001730/Centricity/Domain/1711/Attendance%20Matters%20Newsletter.pdf>