
ATTENDANCE MATTERS

Argyle Secondary School

As the school year progresses, we often notice a rise in absenteeism.

Why is attendance so important? Does it really matter if my teen misses a few days or a few classes of school?

Research has shown that students who attend less than 90% of the time have greater academic struggles, disengage from school, and are at risk for not graduating. Students who miss several consecutive days are at greater risk. Just a few missed days here and there, even if they're excused absences, can add up to a lot of lost learning time and put your teen behind in school. Missing 2 classes per week adds up to 10% of the school year!



Missing school also removes students from their social circles and can make it challenging for them to reintegrate with friends, particularly if they have missed important social bonding situations.

Being late is a distraction to the learning process for the student, the teacher, and the class. Students often miss out on key information at the start of the class when they are late.

How can you help?

- **Insist** on daily attendance.
- Establish a morning routine: have your teen set 1 or 2 alarm clocks (not their phone) , determine a plan A and B for getting to school, determine what time they need to leave home and what time they must get up by. It is recommended that teens get 8.5 to 9 hours of sleep per night.
- Establish a bedtime routine: remove all screens from the bedroom, do not use screens at least 30 minutes prior to bed, pack their bag and lunch at night.
- Role model routines including responsible technology use.
- Support them in developing their time management skills - breaking down assignments into smaller chunks, dividing up their after school time between homework, after school activities, family time, etc. Be mindful of employment shift hours and hours per week.
- Be patient. New habits take on average 3 weeks to form.
- Positively encourage your teen. Acknowledge small successes.
- Avoid appointments and extended trips when schools is in session.
- Keep track of your child's attendance by regularly logging into the MyEd Parent Portal. Talk about the importance of attendance.

Is it okay to excuse my teen for the 8irst block or two if they: Had a late night? Want to study 8irst block for a test later that day? Have a project to 8inish?

No. You may feel like you are helping your teen, however, this is actually causing more harm than good. Helping them develop time-management strategies, learning to prioritize tasks and building resiliency are life-long skills that will beneYit them as adults.

What if my teen is sick?

Illness can and does happen. If your teen is very ill, please keep them at home. Upon their return they should meet with their teachers to create a plan to help them catch up. Parents/guardians need to call the attendance line to report the absence.

Is it okay to take students out of school for a family vacation?

Removing your teen from school for a family vacation is typically not in their best interests academically or socially, even if they are successful learners. Students very quickly get behind, fall out of the pattern of attending and can feel stressed about getting caught up again. If you must remove your teen from school, please contact the school and have your teen meet with their teachers before and after their absence. Students are responsible for missed course learning outcomes; the teaching staff are not expected to make special arrangements for missed work and tests due to vacations.

My teen loves school and has always attended well, but now does not want to go. What do I do?

A sudden change in behaviour may indicate that something else may be going on. There may be a conflict with a teacher or a peer. There may be a misunderstanding about their work. Talk to your teen to try to determine what is causing this change. Contact their teacher(s)/grade counsellor immediately to determine what has happened and what solutions and strategies can be put in place to re-engage them in school.

Absenteeism is the most significant predictor of academic underachievement, disengagement from school, and failure to graduate.

Studies have linked absenteeism with mental health issues, maladjustment, substance abuse, delinquency and future unemployment. School attendance is improved when there are:

- supportive school environments
- positive student-teacher relationships
- appropriate community supports
- supports for complex family circumstances

What other supports can parents access to help with the underlying issues that may be making school attendance problematic?

There are many community agencies on the North Shore that can support youth and their families such as The Foundry North Shore, Family Services of the North Shore, and Hollyburn Family Services. Please contact your teen's school counsellor for more information.

Argyle Attendance Reporting: Email argyle@sd44.ca or call 604-903-3314