

Dear Morgan Middle School Family,

Morgan Middle School is making every effort to ensure that each student fully benefits from their education by attending school regularly. Regular school attendance helps children stay caught up in class, stay connected to staff and peers, and generally feel better about their education. Consistent attendance will help children do well in high school, post-secondary education, and at work.

DID YOU KNOW?

- Missing 10 percent (18 days) of the school year increases the chance that your child will not read or master math at the same level as their peers.
- Students often fall behind if they miss just a day or two days every few weeks.
- Being late to school frequently leads to poor overall attendance.
- Absences can affect the whole classroom if the teacher has to slow down learning to help children catch up.
- Absences can be a sign that a student is losing interest in school, struggling with school work, dealing with a bully or facing some other potentially serious difficulty.
- **By 9th grade, regular and high attendance is a better predictor of graduation rates than 8th grade test scores.**

WHAT WE NEED FROM YOU

If your child is going to be absent, please contact **Jenieve Foster** in the attendance office at **509-925-8204** or **jenieve.foster@esd401.org**. We miss your child when they are gone, we value their contributions to our school, and we are concerned they will fall behind. We would like you to help ensure that your student attends regularly and is successful in school. **We need this form signed and returned by Friday, September 8, 2023.**

OUR PROMISE TO YOU

We promise to track attendance daily, notice when your child is missing from class, communicate with you to understand why they were absent, and help identify barriers and supports available to overcome challenges you may face in helping your child attend school. Counselors, administrators, and teachers are ready to assist in finding ways to help your child attend regularly.

SCHOOL POLICIES AND STATE LAWS

It is important that you understand our school policies and procedures, as well as Washington State Law, to ensure your child is successful in school. Washington State law for mandatory attendance, called the Becca Bill, requires children from age 8 to 17 to attend a public school, private school, or a district-approved home school program. <http://apps.leg.wa.gov/rcw/default.aspx?cite=28A.225>

The school is required to take daily attendance and notify you when your student has an unexcused absence. An unexcused absence for Truancy reporting is defined as 50% or more of a student's scheduled class periods in a day. While there are specific requirements for unexcused absences, Morgan Middle School staff will also take action regarding cumulative excused absences to help prevent chronic absenteeism (missing 10% or more of the school year).

RCW 28A.225.020 Requires

At **three unexcused absences** in one month (the law requires this, but we will schedule this at your child's 3rd overall unexcused absence if it is not within one month), we will schedule a conference with you and your child to help identify barriers and develop a plan for regular attendance. At that time, we will discuss an assessment called the WARNS to help with the identification of barriers and supports that may be beneficial.

At **seven unexcused absences in one month**, we will schedule a conference to either create an agreement for attendance, refer your family to the Community Engagement Board, or file a truancy petition with Juvenile court.

No later than the **15th cumulative unexcused absences within the school year**, we are required to file a truancy petition with the Juvenile Court. The petition must be stayed and your student and family may be referred to a Community Engagement Board, or you and your student may need to appear in Juvenile Court.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

- Talk to your child about the importance of attendance.
- Don't let your child stay home unless they are truly sick. Keep in mind complaints of a stomach ache or headache can be a sign of anxiety and not a reason to stay home. If you have concerns about potential anxiety or depression, please work with your child's school counselor for additional support.
- Avoid appointments and extended trips when school is in session.
- Develop back-up plans for getting to school if something comes up. Call on a family member, a neighbor, or another parent.
- Keep track of your child's attendance. Use the Skyward Mobile app to follow your child's attendance and grades on a weekly basis.
- Talk to your child's teachers or counselor if you notice sudden changes in behavior. These could be tied to something going on at school.
- Encourage meaningful afterschool activities, including sports and clubs, to build connections.
- Set a regular bedtime and limit the use of electronic devices after a predetermined time.
- Prepare for school the night before, finishing homework and getting a good night's sleep.

Sincerely,

Michelle Bibich- Principal

Kevin Kjorsvik- Assistant Principal

Briley Cameron- Dean of Students/Athletic Director

Portions of this letter are attributable to Attendance Works <http://www.attendanceworks.org>

*****PLEASE RETURN*****

Your signature below indicates that you have read and understand the attendance policies and procedures at Morgan Middle School.

Student Name_____ Grade _____

Parent Signature_____ Date _____

Please return to your student's advisory teacher by September 19, 2022

GO BULLDOGS!!!

*****PLEASE RETURN*****