

Dear Parents & Guardians,

Daily attendance is a crucial aspect to student learning. Chronic absenteeism is not as high of a number as most people think. A student is considered chronically absent if they have missed 10% or more of the total days of school. This is around 18-20 days by the end of the school year, but most experts agree that missing more than 10 days will impact a student's education.

Both unexcused and excused absences are used for chronic absenteeism, along with whenever a student arrives an hour or more late or leaves an hour or more early from school. All of this is counted because it can take up to three school days to recover the learning from just one day or period missed. Afterall, it is not just the work that the students miss when they are gone, it is important instruction and peer interactions. What is said, the questions asked, and the experience lesson provided is not something that is easily duplicated. With time a student that misses a day can catch up, but it will mean doing all of the learning that was missed in addition to the current learning that is happening.

Sometimes missing a day is unavoidable. When someone is sick or there is a family emergency, it is important that students stay home to feel better or be with family. However, optional activities, appointments, and extended vacations should be scheduled outside of the school day. Doing this not only helps student learning, but sends an important message that education matters.

Schools also have a role to play in helping curb absenteeism. It is important that students feel safe and welcomed at our school. That is why it is important for students and parents to communicate with their teacher, dean of students, and principal about anytime someone feels unsafe or not welcomed. We strive to create a positive learning environment where students can thrive, but doing so is a team effort to meet the individual needs of each student.

I look forward to this school year and the opportunity it will bring for us to learn, grow, and play together.

Go Orioles; Oriole Pride!