



Why Your Attendance Matters



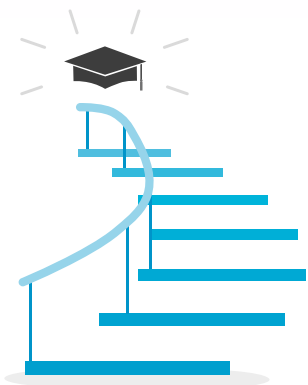
You're doing word problems in math class tomorrow. Sounds like the perfect day to suddenly come down with a cold, doesn't it? Not so fast! Learning builds day by day. You can't stay on top of your classwork if you're not there to listen and take notes. In subjects like math and science, where the lessons you learn this week will be the basis for next week's lessons, it is crucial that you attend class every day.

You might be able to think of a dozen things you'd rather be doing than sitting through class. But right now, your number one responsibility is learning. Look inside for more information on why attendance is so important.

Why does attendance matter?

Your teachers—and your school—have rules on the number of days you can be absent. That's because they want you to attend class! Here's why:

- **You're likely to get better grades.** Research shows a clear link: Students who attend every class do better in school.
- **You're likely to be more successful at work.** The habits you set now—attending class every day and coming to school on time—will carry over into the workplace.
- **You're more likely to stay out of trouble.** One study found that 78 percent of those who ended up in prison had a first arrest for school truancy.
- **You're more likely to graduate.** Missing too many classes is often the first step toward dropping out. Students who drop out of high school have a higher rate of unemployment.



Excuses, excuses ...

It's tempting to skip school when you haven't studied for a test or when you stayed up too late the night before. But by staying home, you risk falling behind on classwork. Consider why the following are **not** good reasons to stay home:

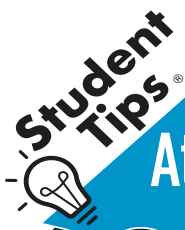
- **"Classes are boring."** Not every class can be your favorite. Try to find something about the subject that interests you.
- **"I don't like my teachers."** It's normal not to get along with everybody—but that's just a part of life. Remember, your teacher is in charge and deserves your respect.
- **"I don't feel safe at school."** If you have reason to believe you are not safe, talk to a teacher, your counselor or other school officials.
- **"I feel stupid."** Do you often find you just don't get it? Ask the teacher for help. Find a "study buddy" or a friend who can help you after school.
- **"My job is more important."** School is your most important job right now.

So what are good reasons to miss school?

- A death in your family.
- A family emergency.
- When you're truly sick.

If you must miss class, contact your teacher. See if a classmate can give you the assignments and class notes.



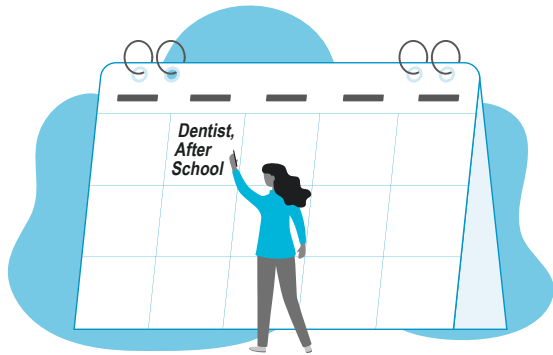


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Sounds good, but ...

Here is a list of things that sound like good reasons to skip school—but they're really not. Discuss them with your parents:

- **Doctor or dentist appointment.** Schedule it before school, during your lunch period or after school, if possible.



- **Family vacation.** If your family has scheduled a vacation during the school year, talk with your parents. Could it be rescheduled during a school break?
- **Babysitting for a younger sibling.** Your number one job is being a student, not a child care provider.
- **Being unprepared for class or a test.** If you didn't study or didn't complete your homework, it's your responsibility to face the consequences. Talk to your teacher. Together, you may be able to think of a way you can make up for it.



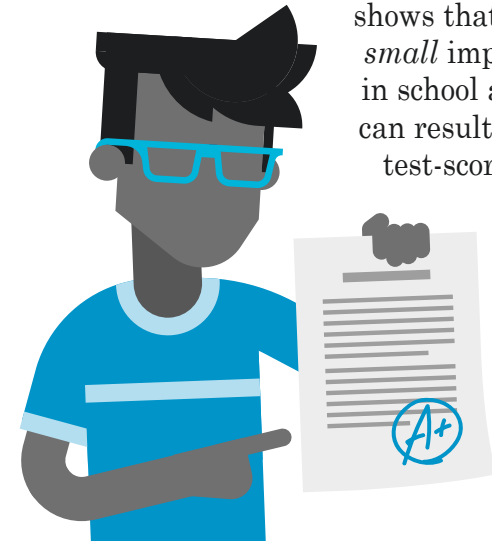
Don't let mornings drag you down!

The annoying thing about mornings is that they arrive so early. But, on the bright side, you know they're coming, so you have plenty of time to prepare. And the better prepared you are in the morning, the less likely you'll be to run late, miss the bus or (worst-case scenario) miss school altogether. To keep your mornings hassle-free and your attendance record spotless:

- **Prep the night before.** Lay out your clothes, plan your lunch and load up your backpack.
- **Know how you'll get to school.** Don't wait until the morning to make arrangements.
- **Get enough sleep** (about nine hours). Having a regular bedtime at a reasonable hour will help, too
- **Don't squeeze in too much.** Just shower, dress, eat and go.

It's a fact: Attendance can boost achievement

People say that eighty percent of success is just showing up. And there's strong evidence that school attendance makes a difference. Research shows that even a *small* improvement in school attendance can result in *big* test-score gains.



Remember, regular attendance can be your key to school success!

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