



A Parent's Guide to Student Attendance

When your child misses school, he is missing opportunities to learn, socialize, gain confidence, and be inspired. *Each year, Central Texas students are absent 2.4 million days of school.* Many of these absences were potentially preventable, including routine medical or dental checkups, traveling, or just skipping. This guide has easy tips for you so you can make sure your children don't miss out.

Rule 1: Don't make others sick

In Texas, all students must be up-to-date on immunizations before starting school. Some grades require additional vaccines. See the full list at <http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/immunize/school/>.

- Given that acute illnesses like flu count for almost half of all absences, you can keep your child and family healthy by getting a flu vaccine. Healthy kids = healthy families and schools!
- Your child should stay home for at least 24 hours if:
 - ✓ She is running a fever of 100 degrees or more
 - ✓ He has vomited more than once or has diarrhea
 - ✓ She has flu symptoms, like fever, cough, sore throat, chills, aches and pains

Make sure your child is free of symptoms without medicine for a full day before sending him back. If you have questions about when your child should stay home, just ask your school nurse.

Rule 2: Appointment times matter

Schedule medical appointments when they are least disruptive to school: on Saturday, late afternoon, or first thing in the morning. In most school districts, students not present at 10 a.m. are counted absent. If your child must miss school for a medical appointment, ALWAYS get a note from your doctor and take it to your school so the absence is excused.

Rule 3: Listen to the nurse

School nurses are trained in how to understand symptoms. In most schools, students are not allowed to call or text parents directly. If your child contacts you from school, call the school nurse FIRST before deciding what to do.

Rule 4: Keep your child safe

If your child is being bullied or is scared to go to school, keeping him home won't solve the problem. Instead, immediately go to your counselor or assistant principal for help. If your child is depressed, your school nurse or counselor can assist you with finding help.

Rule 5: Don't miss out if you don't have to

If you take your child out of school to travel, or you let her stay home when you know she's not really sick, she misses important learning time and it costs your school almost \$40 per day. Missing school has long-term impacts, too: if your child misses 10 days of school, he is 3 times more likely to drop out than a child who missed 5 days.

Find tools to help at www.MissingSchoolMatters.org