

Dear Parent or Guardian:

Welcome to the 2023-2024 school year! This letter contains important expectations for attendance. When students attend school daily, they have a better opportunity for higher student achievement and feel confident about their work at school and in the community. Our goal is for every student to have **Satisfactory Attendance**, meaning that they have **8 or fewer total absences** during the school year.

### Why Does Attendance Matter?

- Students have a better opportunity for higher student achievement.
- Students feel confident about their work at school and in the community.
- Students learn valuable social skills and develop meaningful relationships with other students and staff when daily present.
- Students that are tardy miss important instruction and routine.

### What is the State Law?

- Tennessee's Compulsory Attendance Law says parents are responsible for ensuring school attendance of children ages 6-17.
- To be counted present, students must be in school at least half of the day.

### What is Chronically Absent?

- Students who miss 10% (17 days, excused or unexcused) of the school year are deemed chronically absent.
- Students are truant after they have more than 4 unexcused absences in a school year.
- When a student has excessive unexcused absences, the principal may make a referral to juvenile court so the court can review the student's attendance if school-level actions have failed.
- Missing 10% of instruction days (17 days or about 2 days each month), over the course of a school year, can make it harder to learn to read and increases the chance that your student will not read or understand math at the same level as their peers.

### What About Late Arrival and Early Dismissal?

- Late arrivals and early dismissals contribute to loss of instructional time. All instructional time is important. Students should arrive on time at 7:45 and stay all day.
- Students must be present at least half of the day to be counted present.
- Students who arrive after 8:00 must report to the front office accompanied by a parent, who will sign them in.
- When a student is released for an early dismissal, a parent/guardian or an adult whose name is listed in the student's file must report to the office to show their picture ID and sign out the student.

### What if My Child is Absent?

- Any time your student is going to be absent, please email or send a note to your child's teacher.
- Please include our attendance secretary, Leslie Hart at 615-847-7305 or [leslie.hart@mnps.org](mailto:leslie.hart@mnps.org) in any attendance communication.
- A parent or guardian's handwritten note or email will be accepted up to excuse **10** absences.
- **After receiving 10 parent/guardian excused absence notes, doctor notes are required** for a student's absence to be excused.

### What Absences are Excused?

- Student's personal illness
- Family member's illness that requires the student's temporary help
- Death in the family (up to three days)
- Deployment of a parent or guardian serving in the military (one day for deployment, one day for return and up to 10 days when the service member is on temporary leave at home)
- Head lice (up to three days per infestation) and must be cleared by a medical professional with documentation upon return.
- Recognized religious holidays regularly observed by persons of the child's faith
- Court appearance or legally mandated meetings

### What is Our Promise to You?

- Track attendance daily
- Notify you when your student is missing from class
- Talk with you to understand why they were absent
- Listen when you identify barriers or challenges causing your student to miss school and tell you about supports and resources that could help your student attend school. There are many people in our building who can help if you or your student face challenges getting to school regularly and on time
  - Principal, Stephanie Hoskins, [stephanie.hoskins@mnps.org](mailto:stephanie.hoskins@mnps.org), 615-847-7305
  - School Counselor, Katie Criss, [caitlin.criss@mnps.org](mailto:caitlin.criss@mnps.org), 615-847-7305
  - Attendance Secretary, Leslie Hart, [leslie.hart@mnps.org](mailto:leslie.hart@mnps.org), 615-847-7305

### How Do We Celebrate Positive Attendance?

Recognition	Criteria	Reward
Perfect Attendance	Attending school every day in a given month	Non-SSA on a designated day the following month
Satisfactory Attendance	Attending 95% of the school days in a given month	Quarterly attendance celebrations
Highest Grade Level Attendance	Class with the highest attendance rate in a given month	House and display the Bulldog Attendance Trophy the following month

### What is Your Parent/Guardian Promise?

- Talk to your student about the importance of attendance.
- Set a regular bedtime and morning routine.
- Prepare for school the night before, finishing homework and getting a good night's sleep.
- Avoid appointments and extended trips when school is in session.
- Develop back-up plans for attending school if something comes up. Contact family members, friends, or other parents for help.
- Keep track of your student's attendance through the **Campus Parent Portal** (<https://www.mnps.org/cms/one.aspx?portalid=32970327&pageid=33401196>)

For more information on district attendance policies, please review our district's Student-Parent Handbook available on the MNPS website at [www.mnps.org](http://www.mnps.org).

**We miss your student when they are absent, and we value their contributions to our school.**

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