**Attendance and Truancy Compliance Checklist**

* Enter into an MOU with your county’s juvenile court. To begin the process, connect with your county’s contact listed in the table below.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **County** | **Name** | **Contact Information** |
| King  | Connor Lenz | Connor.Lenz@kingcounty.gov |
| Pierce | Pam Sias | Pam.Sias@piercecountywa.gov |
| Spokane | Scott Stevens | 509-477-2418 |
| Walla Walla | TBD | 509-524-2800 |

* Ensure your attendance policy & procedure is up-to-date and aligned with the most recent WSSDA model policy.
* Include the attendance policy & procedure in your student and family handbook.
* Work with your student information system (SIS) to run attendance reports/track excused and unexcused absences.
* Work with your SIS automate attendance letters to be sent out for each unexcused absence.
* At the beginning of each school year, send every family a copy of the attendance letter drafted by OSPI (Pages 2-3)
* Establish an attendance team to review school and student attendance trends on a weekly basis and establish schoolwide and student level interventions.
* Once a student has 10 excused absences, send a nudge mailer to the parent/guardian (Page 5-6)
* Once a student has 1 unexcused absence, begin the Unexcused Absence & Truancy Documentation Checklist (Page 4)

**OSPI Developed Attendance Letter to Parents**

Dear Parent/Guardian or **[or actual names]**,

This year, **[insert school name]** is making a special effort to ensure that all students fully benefit from their education by attending school regularly. Attending school regularly helps children feel better about school—and themselves. Your student can start building this habit in preschool so they learn right away that going to school on time, every day is important. Consistent attendance will help children do well in high school, college, and at work.

**DID YOU KNOW?**

* Starting in kindergarten, too many absences (excused and unexcused) can cause children to fall behind in school.
* Missing 10 percent (or about 18 days) increases the chance that your student will not read or master math at the same level as their peers.
* Students can still fall behind if they miss just a day or two days every few weeks.
* Being late to school may lead to poor attendance.
* Absences can affect the whole classroom if the teacher has to slow down learning to help children catch up.
* By 6th grade, absenteeism is one of three signs that a student may drop out of high school.
* By being present at school, your child learns valuable social skills and has the opportunity to develop meaningful relationships with other students and school staff.
* 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**

We miss your student when they are gone and we value their contributions to our school. We would like you to help ensure that your student attends regularly and is successful in school. If your student is going to be absent, please contact **[insert attendance secretary’s name]** at **[insert attendance secretary’s phone number]**. **[Insert additional policies or expectations including signing and returning this information].**

**OUR PROMISE TO YOU**

We know that there are a wide variety of reasons that students are absent from school, from health concerns to transportation challenges. There are many people in our building prepared to help you if you or your student face challenges in getting to school regularly or on time. **[Insert here list of resources or preferred contact person. Examples include nurse, counselor, interventionist, etc.]** We promise to track attendance daily, to notice when your student is missing from class, communicate with you to understand why they were absent, and to identify barriers and supports available to overcome challenges you may face in helping your student attend school.

**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. 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. Children that are 6- or 7-years-old are not required to be enrolled in school. However, if parents enroll their 6- or 7-year-old, the student must attend full-time. Youth who are 16 or older may be excused from attending public school if they meet certain requirements. <http://apps.leg.wa.gov/rcw/default.aspx?cite=28A.225>

We, the school, are required to take daily attendance and notify you when your student has an unexcused absence.

If your student has three unexcused absences in one month, state law (RCW 28A.225.020) requires we schedule a conference with you and your student to identify the barriers and supports available to ensure regular attendance. The district is obligated to develop a plan that requires an assessment to determine how to best meet the needs of your student and reduce absenteeism if they are in middle or high school.

In elementary school after five excused absences in any month, or ten or more excused absences in the school year, the school district is required to contact you to schedule a conference at a mutually agreeable, reasonable time with at least one district employee, to identify the barriers and supports available to you and your student. A conference is not required if your student has provided a doctor’s note, or pre-arranged the absence in writing, and the parent, student and school have made plan so your student does not fall behind academically. If your student has an Individualized Education Plan or a 504 Plan the team that created the plan needs to reconvene.

If your student has seven unexcused absences in any month or ten unexcused absences within the school year, we are required to file a petition with the Juvenile court, alleging a violation of RCW 28A.225.010, the mandatory attendance laws. The petition will be automatically stayed and your student and family may be referred to a Community Truancy Board or other coordinated means of intervention. **[Insert language here about your district’s community truancy board process here or if your district is three hundred students or less your other coordinated means of intervention to ameliorate truancy ]**. If your student continues to be truant you may need to go to court.

At **[insert school name]**, we have established the following rules on attendance that will help you ensure your student is attending regularly. **[Insert school policies & procedures on excused and unexcused absences, tardies, etc. excerpted from your Student Rights & Responsibilities Handbook or provide a link to your handbook here.]**

**WHAT YOU CAN DO**

* Set a regular bed time and morning routine.
* Prepare for school the night before, finishing homework and getting a good night’s sleep.
* Find out what day school starts and make sure your child has the required immunizations.
* Don’t let your student 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.
* 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 student’s attendance. Missing more than 9 days could put your student at risk of falling behind.
* Talk to your student about the importance of attendance.
* Talk to your students’ teachers 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.

Sincerely,

**[Insert principal’s name]**

Your signature below indicates that you have read and understand the attendance policies and procedures in **[insert school/district]**.

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Unexcused Absences & Truancy Documentation Checklist**

|  |
| --- |
| **Steps Prior to Filing a Truancy Petition** |
|  | **Activity** | **Date** | **Communication Method** |
|  | Send parent/guardian information on school’s attendance policy/procedure and the benefits to regular school attendance. |  |  |
| **After 1 Unexcused Absence** |
|  | **Activity** | **Date** | **Communication Method** |
|  | Inform the parent by phone or letter of the unexcused absences making every attempt to provide information in the parent’s fluent language. |  |  |
| **After the 2nd Unexcused Absence but Before the 5th** |
|  | **Activity** | **Date** | **Communication Method** |
|  | For middle and high school students, administer the WARNS or other assessment. N/A Elementary aged student |  |  |
|  | For elementary school students, take data informed steps to eliminate barriers to attendance. |  |  |
|  | If the student has an IEP or 504 plan, the team must be convened to address barriers to the student’s attendance.  N/A Date of Scheduled Meeting \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ |  |  |
|  | If the student is reasonably believed to have a disability, the parent must be informed of their right to a free evaluation.  N/A  |  |  |
| **After the 3rd Unexcused Absence in a 30-Day Period** |
|  | **Activity** | **Date** | **Communication Method** |
|  | Schedule a conference. If the parent does not attend, the conference can be held with the student. The parent must be informed of the outcomes/agreements of the conference.  Parent attended Parent did not attend |  |  |
| **Elementary Students Only: After the 5th Excused Absence in a 30-Day Period** |
|  | **Activity** | **Date** | **Communication Method** |
|  | Request a conference with parents to analyze the causes of the absences and put interventions in place.  |  |  |
|  **After the 7th Unexcused Absences in a 30 Day Period or the 10th within 1 Academic Year** |
|  | **Activity** | **Date**  | **Communication Method** |
|  | File a petition with your county’s juvenile court. |  |  |
| **Check All Interventions that the District Attempted** | **Date** |
|  Scheduling additional meetings with the parent/student |  |
|  Assigning a staff member that the student trusts to check in with the student on a regular basis at school |  |
|  Providing a wake-up call or alarm |  |
|  Arranging a regular time for the student to meet with the school counselor individually or in a small group. |  |
|  Addressing McKinney Vento issues |  |
|  Providing remediation/tutoring |  |
|  Addressing social emotional needs using the OSPI Behavior Menu of Best Practices |  |
|  Assisting the parent/guardian/student in arranging supplementary services  |  |
|  Referral to outside program such as counseling, drug/alcohol treatment, etc. |  |
|  Adjusting the student’s schedule |  |
|  Addressing student concerns regarding harassment, intimidation and bullying |  |
|  Referral to the student support team for possible 504 or IEP evaluation |  |
|  Other:  |  |
|  Other: |  |



School Name StreetAddress City,ST ZIP

Name
Street Address
City, ST ZIP Code

**Attendance Information**

Dear Parent/Guardian of [Student Full Name]:

Attendance matters and we need your help this ye a r. A few absences every month can add up to weeks of los t learning over the year. Missing school, whether for excused or unexcused reasons, disrupts their education.

You can play a crucial role in improving [Student First Name]'s attendance. If you’d like to schedule time to talk about your student’s attendance and ways the school can support you, please call [insert number] or email [insert email]

Sincerely, [Insert Name] [Insert Role]

[Student Name] missed [insert number of days].

Missing just 2 days per month adds up!

 

**Editable Attendance Success Plans from Attendance Works**

[Elementary Success Plan](https://wacharters.box.com/s/nai8ot0dnsasp3ti5y6ysmnoysis30e5)

[Secondary Success Plan](https://wacharters.box.com/s/o9d4k3y38hw6k6terzneeax5q02hypa0)

**Toolkits**

[PSESD Attendance Awareness Communications Toolkit](http://www.psesd.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/ToolkitRough2017-18-post.pdf)

[Attendance Works: For Principals: Leading Attendance](http://www.attendanceworks.org/resources/toolkits/for-principals-leading-attendance/)

[Attendance Works: Teaching Attendance 2.0](http://www.attendanceworks.org/resources/toolkits/teaching-attendance-2-0/teaching-attendance-2-0-introduction/)