

Tips for Parents

School offers the opportunities

your child will need to succeed in life. *Make sure your child is in school all day, every day.*

- ◆ Make it clear that school is important to you by showing interest in your child's school work and activities.
- ◆ Know school policies on absences and making up work.
- ◆ Know and support the schools' rules and tell your children you expect them to follow the rules.
- ◆ Keep a calendar that shows school breaks and if you plan a family vacation, plan it during these times.
- ◆ Make sure your child arrives on time. Being late 10 minutes a day totals 30 hours of lost learning for the school year.
- ◆ Schedule appointments after school hours, whenever possible.
- ◆ Call the school when your child is absent. When possible, let the school know in advance that your child will be out.

Sometimes serious family or medical issues can impact attendance. It is important to talk with school staff and work together to overcome things that may hurt attendance.

Additional information is available at the Michigan Department of Education web site: www.mich.gov/mde



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Parent Guide

**school attendance
and the law**

**MUSKEGON
COUNTY**



SHERIFF
DEAN C. ROESLER

**IN CLASS
or
IN COURT**

Education is important for your child's success in life. Regular attendance ensures that your child gets all the benefits school can offer. When children are missing school, they're missing out on those benefits.

Michigan law makes it compulsory for all children of certain ages to attend school. When children are excessively absent, the law holds parents/guardians accountable.

If your child is truant (missing scheduled school time without an accepted excused absence), you and/or your child could end up in court with serious consequences.

Attendance may be the single most important factor in school success because:

- ◆ Children do best in school when they are in class every day. The U.S. Department of Education reports that for every missed day of school, it takes a student two days to catch up.
- ◆ In addition to academics, children learn valuable lessons about personal responsibility and commitment.
- ◆ Children keep up with their peers and have strong bonds with the school and community.
- ◆ Annually, students who graduate from high school will earn 30% more than those who don't complete high school.

Notify School of any Absence

Make sure you know your school's policies about absences and what paperwork your school accepts for:

- ◆ Illness
- ◆ Medical appointments
- ◆ Observance of religious holidays
- ◆ Family emergencies

Also know what absences your school will not excuse. Some activities **generally not accepted** for an excused absence include:

Babysitting	Missing the bus
Cold weather	Need for sleep or rest
Employment	Car broke down

If your school contacts you about attendance issues, it is important that you get in touch with school officials immediately. Delaying response to any letter, phone call, or email will limit your ability to settle these issues without further legal implications.

You should also know that if you end up in court, all attendance issues—including tardies—may be considered in the decision of the court.

For cases that end up in court, families pay a high price in terms of time, cost and emotional impact.

Results of Truancy

As a parent you are responsible for your child's regular attendance at school. School staff will work with you to keep you notified of any problems with your child's attendance. You can work with the school to get to the bottom of attendance issues.



However, when a student has too many attendance issues, schools will contact an attendance officer (an officer of the court) for legal resolution. In that case, you may receive a petition/warrant and be brought before the court. Based on the outcome of the hearing, a parent found neglectful could be arrested/jailed or the child could be removed from the home.

If you have done everything you possibly can to encourage attendance but the child is not responding and is intentionally truant from school (skipping), charges can be brought against the student and be handled by the juvenile court. The student could be placed on probation or end up in the Juvenile Justice Center.