Sending the Right Message about Attendance to Teens

Beyond the talking points for parents, you should add in some messages targeted to students. Remember to approach the conversation with concern and with clear information. A national survey of youth shows that teens are motivated to go to school after hearing messages that connect absences with consequences—such as not graduating from high school.

WHAT TO SAY TO STUDENTS

• When you’re not here, teachers and administrators notice because we care about you and we want you to be successful.

• If you think missing a day here or there won’t matter, think again. By missing just one day every two weeks, you would be on track to miss two full weeks of the school year.

• Students who miss often fail their classes!

• Did you know that a student who misses 10 days or more during a school year is 20 percent less likely to graduate from high school and 25 percent less likely to ever enroll in college?

• Chronic absence can affect your ability to earn a living. Dropouts are less likely to succeed in a career. Nearly 80 percent of people in prison lack a high school diploma.

• In fact, a high school graduate makes, on average, $1 million more than a dropout over a lifetime.

• School only gets harder when you skip a class. Sometimes it’s tempting to skip or stay home because you don’t understand what’s going on in class. But missing a day only makes that worse because you aren’t learning something that will help you understand a lesson later on.

• Try thinking about it this way: school is your most important job right now, because you’re learning about more than math and reading. You’re also learning how show up for school on time every day, so that when you graduate and get a job, you’ll be able to get to work on time every day.

• I understand that you will get sick sometimes and need to stay home. The important thing is to get to school as often as possible to help stay on track with assignments.

• If you’re having trouble getting to school— and have challenges such as transportation, bullies, etc.—tell someone, such as a teacher, guidance counselor or your parents. Many schools offer services to help the whole family.