

Talking to Students About Attendance

Attendance conversations provide an opportunity to show your support for your student. When you talk to students, remember that, especially as they grow older, they need to hear messaging from peers as well as teachers and parents.

Begin by talking with a student about their school experience. Some open-ended questions include:

- What is one word that explains how you feel about our school? Why?
- How do your friends make school easier or more fun?
- What makes it hard for you to get to school in the morning?
- If you could change one thing about school, what would it be?

Follow-up with attendance focused comments, such as:

- When you're not here, we notice because we care and want you to be successful.
- School only gets harder when you stay home too much. Sometimes it's tempting to stay home because you've got too much work or you don't understand what's going on in class. But missing a day only makes that worse.
- We understand that you will get sick sometimes and need to stay home. The important thing is to come to school as often as possible to help stay on track with assignments.
- If you're having trouble getting to school – issues with transportation, bullies, etc. – tell someone such as a guidance counselor or your parents. Many schools offer services to help.
- School is your first and most important job. You're learning about more than math and reading. You're learning how to show up for school on time every day, so that when you graduate and get a job, you'll know how to show up for work on time every day.
- Students who attend school regularly are more likely to graduate and find good jobs. High school graduates earn, on average, hundreds of thousands dollars more than a dropout over a lifetime.