



KES
Kingston Elementary School
Memo

November 12, 2008

Dear Parent and Guardians,

At the last Kingston School Committee Meeting, November 10th, the Assistant Superintendent presented some information to the School Committee in regards to a child's attendance in the elementary being a good indicator to whether a child will complete high school.

There are alarming statistics that show school attendance is correlated with high school completion and/or graduation rates. Poor elementary school attendance and tardiness is a strong predictor of future attendance problems. Please review the following [Elementary School Attendance Policy Rationale Letter](#) and the [Proposed Elementary School Attendance Policy Procedures](#). You will see they are much different than what is in the present Parent/Student Handbook, (page 7).

If you have any comments in regards to the information presented within these two documents, please feel free to email at pbartosiak@slrsd.org or call me at KES (781-585-3821). Thank you.

Mrs. Paula J. Bartosiak
Principal

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Elementary School Attendance Policy Rationale

Statistics show that school attendance is correlated with high school completion and/or graduation rates. The results of a study completed by Joseph Harris, PhD. of the National High School Center (betterhighschools.org.) illustrate this correlation. High school freshmen who were absent 0-4 days during their freshman year had a 87% high school graduation rate. Students who were absent 5-9 days had a 63% graduation rate. The graduation rate continued to fall as the number of days absent increased. Students who were absent from 35-39 days during their freshman year had a graduation rate of only 1%. Poor school attendance is certainly not the only contributing factor leading to the failure of a student to graduate from high school; however, as elementary school educators, we are aware that attendance patterns begin to develop during the elementary school years. Poor elementary school attendance is a strong predictor of future attendance problems. In developing an elementary school attendance policy, we hope to positively influence student and family attitudes about the importance of regular attendance and punctuality.

This policy will be consistent across the towns of Halifax, Kingston, and Plympton and will:

- Foster positive communication between school and home.
- Provide a uniform set of expectations and protocols that can be referenced by administrators when working with parents.
- Provide guidelines for school interventions for children with attendance and tardiness problems.
- Set standards for the documentation of interventions used to educate and inform families about attendance expectations.

Enable schools to access outside assistance for children and families through the CHINS process.

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Elementary School Attendance Policy Procedures (Proposed)

1. Monthly review of student attendance (both absences and tardies).
 - A. Each building will determine the composition of its “attendance review team”.
 - B. Possible attendance review team members include: building principal, vice principal, school psychologist, adjustment counselor, and the school nurse.

2. When a student reaches:
 - A. Seven absences:
 - i. A phone call will be made to discuss with the parent/guardian concerns regarding the child’s attendance.
 - ii. The parent/guardian *may be* asked to attend a meeting at school (with the child present) at this time.

The goals of the meeting will be:

 - To connect with and offer support for the parents.
 - To educate the parents of the impact that school absences and tardies have upon student learning.
 - To help students problem solve and increase their responsibility for his/her attendance.
 - iii. A letter will be mailed home to the family, which documents the school’s concern regarding the child’s attendance.
 - iv. The school may consider filing a CHINS with the courts at this time. Should the decision be made to file a CHINS, parent education about this process will take place at the meeting.

 - B. Twelve absences:
 - i. A phone call *will be* made to request that a parent/guardian attend a school meeting, which will include the student, to discuss the correlation between academic achievement/success and student attendance.

The goals of the meeting will be:

 - To connect with and offer support for the parents.
 - To educate the parents of the impact that school absences and tardies have upon student learning.
 - To help students problem solve and increase their responsibility for his/her attendance.
 - ii. A second letter will be mailed home to the family that documents the continued concerns expressed by the administration regarding the child’s attendance.
 - iii. The school may consider filing a CHINS with the courts at this time. Should the decision be made to file a CHINS, parent education about this process will take place at the meeting.

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C. Eighteen absences:

- i. A phone call will be made to request that a parent/guardian come to school for a meeting (which will include the student) to discuss the significant concerns regarding the student's attendance.
- ii. A third letter will be mailed to the student's parent(s)/guardian reiterating and documenting the significant concerns voiced by the administration regarding the child's attendance.
- iii. The school will consider filing a CHINS with the courts at this time. Should the decision be made to file a CHINS, parent education about this process will take place at the meeting.
- iv. Should additional intervention be required, see Massachusetts General Law, Chapter 76, Section 2 and/or Massachusetts General Law, Chapter 119, Section 63

3. The policy outlined above may be adapted for use with excessive tardies.

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