



## KEITHLEY MIDDLE SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

Attendance 298-4313

Main Office 298-4300

Counseling 298-4405/4335

Health Room 298-4324

### **WASHINGTON STATE LAW ON ATTENDANCE**

A state law, known as the Becca Bill, requires children from ages 8 to 17 to attend a public school, private school or a district-approved home school program. (RCW 28A.225.010). The truancy laws state that schools must notify parents of every unexcused absence. After two unexcused absences, schools are required to schedule a parent conference and individualized interventions for the student and his/her family. A district may file a truancy petition with the court after five unexcused absences in a month, but must file after seven unexcused absences in one month or ten unexcused absences in a year. This requirement to file is sometimes referred to as the 7-10 rule. The district may file a truancy petition against a parent or against both the student and the parent. In such cases, the parent is held responsible for the child's attendance, and sanctions may be levied on the parent (RCW 28A.225.020).

### **PHILOSOPHY**

A student's attendance is essential to learning- learning that includes not only factual subject matter, but also attendance habits, work habits, attitudes and ideals. Poor attendance interrupts the process of education. Students need to come to school every day and benefit from interaction, discussion and teacher support available during class time. Every absence, excused or not, interrupts the student's understanding of the material and impacts their overall school success. Research indicates a direct relationship between school attendance and achievement. Students who have good attendance typically achieve higher grades and enjoy school more, while excessive absences generally result in lower achievement. On the other hand, students with higher school attendance attain higher educational outcomes in terms of both grade point average (GPA) and standardized testing and are, therefore, more high school ready (Gottfried, 2010).

### **PROCEDURE TO REPORT AN ABSENCE**

- A parent/guardian is to call the attendance office at 253-298-4313 to report a school absence on or before the day of the absence.
- Voicemail is available 24 hours a day on the school office phone to report an absence.
- A call is needed EACH DAY a student is absent.

### **AUTO DIALER**

There are automatic calls during the school day to notify parents/guardians of a student's absence. We want notification to be timely; however, sometimes this happens in error due to students arriving after the first 5 minutes of class. Do not panic if you receive a call in error, please call to verify.

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## **APPOINTMENTS**

Parents are encouraged to schedule their child's appointments during NON-SCHOOL HOURS or during early dismissal times

## **ATTENDANCE NOTIFICATION**

Our goal is for students to miss 6 or fewer days during the school year. We understand that students may miss some school; however, those times should be limited. The attendance team monitors attendance closely and once a student has **7 excused absences or 5 unexcused absences**, a letter will be sent home requiring third party documentation to excuse all absences and late arrivals. Third party documentation qualifies as a note from a doctor, dentist, therapists, psychologist, ect. The note must contain specific dates that they wish to be excused. If you student's attendance is reviewed and has improved we may choose to allow notes from home. Without third party documentation, absences will be unexcused. If a student is deemed too ill to stay at school by the health aid, those absences will be excused. If absences continue, a conference will be requested so that we can work together to improve your student's attendance. When unexcused absences meet the requirements of the BECCA Bill, a petition will be filed.

## **ATTENDANCE TEAM**

An attendance team meets weekly to monitor student attendance, including tardies and early releases. Team members may include building administration, school counselor, attendance clerk, health/aid nurse, family support, ect.

## **ATTENDANCE RECOGNITION**

The majority of Keithley students attend regularly and meet out attendance goals. We celebrate these students with a variety of incentives and recognitions throughout the year.

## **ATTENDANCE RECORDS**

At the end of the year, each student's attendance data is transferred to his/her permanent records. Attendance is also recorded on all students' transcripts.

## **EXCUSED ABSENCES**

Students, at times, may appropriately be absent. Parents are permitted to excuse 6 absences in a school year before 3<sup>rd</sup> party documentation is required. The following are excused absences, per FPSD policy 3122:

1. Illness or health condition
2. Religious observances
3. School-approved activities
4. Family emergencies
5. Disciplinary actions or short-term suspensions
6. Exceptional circumstances

\*Absences will be excused according to the above criteria or at the discretion of the building administrator

## **HALF-DAY ABSENCES, TARDIES AND EARLY RELEASES**

Parents are encouraged to schedule their child's appointments during NON-SCHOOL HOURS or during early dismissal times. In the event that is not possible, the following guidelines apply:

- If a student misses more than TWO hours of the school day, it will be counted as a half-day absence. This includes excused and unexcused absences.
- Early dismissal days count as a full day of school when calculating a student's attendance rate.
- Students who arrive after school starts will be counted tardy. All tardy students are to be signed in by an adult in the school office.
- If a child is frequently tardy or dismissed early, further action will be taken.

## **ILLNESS**

According to the Tacoma/Pierce County Health Department, it is recommended to keep children home from school if they have:

- A fever: temperature over 100 degrees F along with behavior changes or other signs and symptoms of illness such as sore throat, rash, vomiting, diarrhea, earache or irritability
- Vomiting within 24 hours
- Diarrhea within 24 hours
- An open or oozing sore, unless it is properly covered with a bandage that will not leak wound drainage while at school.

Please contact Health Services (298-3047) or your school's health office (298-4324ssa) with questions.

## **VACATIONS DURING THE SCHOOL YEAR**

If parents/guardians are requesting their student be excused from school for a family vacation, a written letter notifying the school must be received before the first day of absence.