



## PARENT NOTIFICATION -ATTENDANCE-

Dear Parent/Guardian,

The Pasco School District makes an effort to ensure that all students fully benefit from their education by attending school regularly. Attending school regularly helps students feel better about school – and themselves. Attendance has a significant impact on academic success.

### OUR PROMISE TO YOU

We know there are many reasons students are absent from school. The Pasco School District has many people prepared to assist with challenges your student may face in attending school regularly or on time. Please contact the school office so we can assist you. We will track attendance daily, communicate with you regarding unexcused absences, and identify barriers and supports available so your student can attend school regularly.

### WHAT WE NEED FROM YOU

We miss your student when they are gone, and we value their contributions to school. We would like you to help ensure that your student attends regularly and is successful in school. If your student is going to be absent, please contact your child's school at **[INSERT PHONE/E-MAIL]** to notify them of their absence. Board policies regarding attendance can be found on the district website at [www.psd1.org](http://www.psd1.org) (Policies 3110 – 3122).

### SCHOOL POLICIES AND STATE LAWS

The Becca Bill, our state law for mandatory attendance, requires children ages 8 through 17 to attend a public or private school, or a district-approved home school program. While children ages 6 or 7 years old are not required to be enrolled in school, if they are, the student must attend full-time. Students ages 16 or older may be excused from attending public school if they meet certain requirements. (RCW 28A.225)

If your student has three **unexcused** absences in one month, state law (RCW 28A.225.020) requires a conference to be scheduled for you and your student. A plan will be developed that may require an assessment, to determine how to support your student's attendance.

In elementary school, after seven **excused** absences in any month, or fifteen or more **excused** absences in the school year, the school district is required to schedule a conference to identify the barriers and supports available to you and your student. A conference is not required if a doctor's note is provided or the absences are pre-arranged, and plans have been made to support the student's academic progress while absent. If your student has an Individualized Education Plan or a 504 Plan the team that created the plan needs to reconvene.

Seven **unexcused** absences in any month or 15 **unexcused** absences within the school year, requires the District to file a petition with the Juvenile Court, alleging a violation of RCW 28A.225.010, the mandatory attendance laws. The petition may be automatically stayed, and your student and family may be referred to a Community Engagement Board, or other coordinated means of intervention. If your student continues to be truant, you may need to go to court.

***Thank you for your continued partnership in supporting your student's attendance!***

### DID YOU KNOW?

- Starting in kindergarten, too many absences (excused and unexcused) can cause children to fall behind in school.
- Missing 10 percent (or about 18 days) increases the chance that your student will not read or master math at the same level as their peers.
- Students can still fall behind if they miss just a day or two days every few weeks.
- Being late to school may lead to poor attendance.
- Absences can affect the whole classroom if the teacher has to slow down learning to help children catch up.
- By 6<sup>th</sup> grade, absenteeism is one of three signs that a student may drop out of high school.
- By being present at school, your child learns valuable social skills and can develop meaningful relationships with other students and school staff.
- Absences can be a sign that a student is learning interest in school, struggling with schoolwork, experiencing bullying, or facing other potentially serious challenges.
- By 9<sup>th</sup> grade, regular attendance is a better predictor of graduation rates than 8<sup>th</sup> grade test scores.

### WHAT YOU CAN DO

- Set a morning and bedtime routine.
- Prepare for school the night before by finishing homework and getting a good night's sleep.
- Find out what day school starts and make sure your student has the required immunizations.
- Avoid appointments and extended trips when school is in session.
- Develop back-up plans for getting to school if something comes up. Call on a family member, a neighbor, or another parent.
- Keep track of your student's attendance. Missing more than 9 days could put your student at risk of falling behind.
- Talk to your student about the importance of attendance.
- Talk to your student's teachers if you notice sudden changes in behavior. These could be connected to something going on at school.
- Communicate any needs or concerns with school staff – we are here to help!