

Guidelines

- Fever usually indicates the body is fighting infection. A child with a fever over 38°C (100.4°F) should stay home until the fever is gone for 24 hours.
- Children can attend school with a mild sore throat unless they show additional symptoms, like a fever, vomiting or abdominal pain.
- A child with a cough need not be kept from school unless it is interfering with sleep or their ability to take part in activities.
- Runny noses and coughs can continue for up to two weeks after a cold. Children can return to school once they no longer have a fever.
- Itchy or scaly rashes may be contagious. If a child with a rash looks ill or is having trouble swallowing or breathing, they should see a doctor.
- Children who are repeatedly vomiting should stay home until it stops and they are eating normally.
- Children with diarrhea should stay home until stools have been normal for at least 24 hours.

Frequent hand washing with soap and water is the most effective way to prevent the spread of contagious diseases.

RETSO belief statement

River East Transcona School Division believes that regular attendance and punctuality are positive behaviours that should be fostered in our school system. Regular attendance is necessary for a student to gain the full benefits of educational instruction.

Under the Manitoba Public Schools Act, a child must attend school regularly from age seven until the age of 18. A child who is not of compulsory school age is required to attend regularly once he/she enrolls.

For further information

Contact your school principal or guidance counsellor. For questions about the management of lice, immunization history and childhood illnesses, contact your local public health nurse at ACCESS River East (204.938.5000) or ACCESS Transcona (204.938.5555).

Source: Manitoba Education and Advanced Learning. *Attendance Facts*. Winnipeg, MB: Manitoba Education and Advanced Learning, 2014. Available online at www.edu.gov.mb.ca/k12/attendance/facts.html. All rights reserved.

ATTENDANCE

A guide for parents & students



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589 Roch St. Winnipeg, Manitoba R2K 2P7
Tel: 204.667.7130 Fax: 204.661.5618
www.retsd.mb.ca



REGULAR ATTENDANCE

Daily school attendance is important for all students. Students who attend school regularly are more engaged in learning, have a greater sense of belonging and are more likely to graduate from high school. If good attendance habits are not developed in early years, research shows that by middle years and high school, absenteeism becomes greater, academic achievement is lower and the likelihood of school dropout increases.

Regular attendance is defined as missing five days or less for the entire school year. Students who miss 10 per cent or more of the school year (about 15 days in total), including excused and unexcused absences, are considered chronically absent.

Did you know?

- School attendance is mandatory in Manitoba from age 7–18—not optional.
- If your child misses 15 days of school a year, they will have missed a year of school by the end of Grade 12.
- Being 10 minutes late for class every day means your child will miss six days of instruction over the year.
- Students who attend regularly are more likely to read at grade level after 3rd grade and are more likely to graduate from high school.
- Those youth without a high school diploma are twice as likely to be unemployed and earn a lower income than those youth who graduated.

Excused and unexcused absences

Both excused and unexcused absences can have an impact on your child's learning. Excused absences occur when students are absent from school with a valid excuse and parental approval, such as:

- Serious illness
- Death in the student's immediate family
- Attendance at a judicial proceeding (court) as a plaintiff, defendant, witness or juror
- Observance of a religious holiday
- Medical reasons such as a doctor's appointment

Unexcused absences are when students are absent from school without a valid excuse, with or without parental approval, such as:

- Minor illness
- Babysitting
- Shopping
- Cold weather
- Sleeping in
- Skipping classes
- Job hunting

How parents can help

- Let your child know you think school is important and explain the value of regular attendance starting at an early age.
- Set regular bed and wake-up times and enforce them.
- Help your child pack their school bag and lunch the night before to leave more time for them to get ready in the morning.
- Provide an alternate transportation plan for getting your child to school on time when you are unable to get them there.
- Plan with other neighbourhood families to have your children walk to school together.

- Be aware of school bell times and make sure your child arrives at school on time daily—students should arrive 10 minutes early.
- Plan medical, dental and other appointments after school, if possible.
- Plan family vacations around the school year.
- Request a meeting with your school principal or guidance counsellor to discuss any concerns affecting your child's attendance.
- If your child needs to miss school, call the school office before the start of the school day.



When is a child too sick for school?

Sickness is part of a normal childhood—the average child has between six and 12 illnesses a year. It can be challenging to balance your child's attendance with the risk of spreading illness to others at the school.

There are three key reasons to keep your child home from school:

1. Fever over 38°C (100.4°F)
2. Contagious illness or rash
3. Not well enough to participate in class