

Attendance letter to parents draft

The Homer Central School District Board of Education recognizes the importance of regular student attendance to a successful learning experience. Research supports the fact that attendance is crucial to improving student achievement. On-time attendance is a critical starting point for high levels of student achievement. The opportunities lost through student absence and tardiness leave learning gaps that are difficult to fill. We appreciate the partnership the district has with its parents to ensure positive attendance. We recognize that most students have an excellent attendance record and plan to reward those who do.

However, for students where attendance interferes with their learning, Homer Schools has developed a clear, understandable procedure for the monitoring of student attendance. Below, find the attendance monitoring protocol in place for the 2015-2016 school year.

1. A daily robo-call will be used to notify families of a student absence. This call goes out by 9:30 a.m. for grades 6-12 and by 10:30 a.m. for grades K-5.
2. After three or more consecutive *unexcused* absences, a phone contact with the family will be made by the school nurse.
3. If a student falls below the 90% attendance threshold at any time, the student is spoken to and a letter is sent to the family detailing next steps if it does not improve. It will include a period of time for improvement and possible disciplinary consequences if it does not improve.
4. If a student falls below the 85% attendance threshold, a parent meeting or home visit is conducted; with a consideration of DSS preventative services or Cortland County Coordinated Children's Services Initiative (CCSI) referral.
5. A student who remains at or below the 85% attendance threshold for more than five weeks results in a Person in Need of Supervision (PINS) diversion referral.

Finally, some confusion has arisen about what constitutes a legal absence from school. Below, please find the definition of a legal absence...

A student is considered *legally absent (excused)* from school for the following reasons: sickness, death in the family, health treatment, and court appearances.

A written parent excuse for an absence that does not fit this definition does not make the absence legal.

If you have any questions about the attendance monitoring procedure, please contact your child's building principal.