

## **Sennett Middle School**

### **General Attendance Information**

**MMSD and Sennett Middle School have a goal that all students will attend school at a rate of 94%. This means they will have no more than 10 days of excused absence during the entire school year. Attendance is closely related to academic achievement. When students miss a day of school, they miss valuable instruction and opportunities to develop important relationships with staff and students. It can be very challenging for some students to make up missed work and grades can quickly drop.**

**The District purchased a new student information system so beginning this fall, teachers will be taking attendance on the computer every class period. This should improve our reliability for having accurate attendance records, and will reduce the number of errors with our automated phone system (which leaves a message on your phone that the child has missed all or part of a day of school).**

**Students arriving late for school must check in at the office for a tardy pass. Teachers will issue all other passes. In order to reduce hallway disruption and maintain focus on classroom instruction, a pass is required for any student to be in the halls during class periods. Students are expected to use the restrooms, get drinks, go to their lockers and take care of other business during designated House breaks or between academic and Encore times. Students are expected to request a pass in advance when they need to be excused from a class.**

**Of course, we know that students get sick and families occasionally have emergencies that require missing school. We want families to understand that we take attendance very seriously because we care about the health, safety and education of your child, and it's the law.**

### ***When is it appropriate to miss school?***

**It may be helpful to know that students should not attend school if they have a temperature of 100 degrees or above or if they are vomiting or have diarrhea. The health office is always available for students during the day if they are not feeling their best and may just need to lie down for a few minutes. If a doctor recommends that your child should miss school or should not participate in certain activities (such as physical education) please have the doctor put this information in writing and have your child bring the note to the main office at school.**

***What happens if my child is late for school in the morning?***

Students who are late coming to school must report to the office for a pass before going to their class or homeroom. All incidents of tardiness are recorded. By law, when it becomes a pattern, tardiness is considered truancy. Any student who is tardy for class must make arrangements with his or her teacher(s) to make up the time and work missed. Students receiving 3 tardies in a week are assigned to a lunch detention.

***If my child is ill, how do I go about requesting homework?***

Parents should call their child's teacher and leave a message requesting homework for any student who is out of school for two or more days due to illness or injury. If the parent wants homework sent home with another student, they should include that student's name and homeroom teacher in the message.

***How do I handle appointments or partial day absences?***

Students who must leave the building during regular school hours due to illness or emergency must have an Outside Permit. To obtain a permit the student must bring a note signed by a parent/guardian to the office before school on the day the permit is needed. The student must return the permit, signed by someone at the student's destination, to the office before returning to class.

***How do I handle a planned or extended absence?***

Planned absences are those days when parents know in advance that it is necessary for their child to be absent. Prior to the absence, the student must bring a note to the office, signed by the parent/guardian, explaining the reason for the absence. If the student will miss five or more school days, he or she is required to complete an Advanced Absence Request form at least 1 week prior to the absence. This form is available in the office. The student must have his or her teachers sign the form and make a plan for making up missed work) and the Principal. Extended absences are generally not excused if the student has over seven excused absences for the first semester, over ten for the entire school year, or has failing grades. Whenever possible parents/guardians should notify the school in time to allow the teachers to assign work and, if possible, to have the work completed before the absence (a week to ten days).

***What happens if my child has an unexcused absence?***

You will receive a call from the automated message system indicating your child missed all or part of a day. When this occurs, discuss the call with your child, and contact the main office the following day to clear the absence.

***What happens when my child has had more than 5 excused absences before the end of first semester?***

You may receive a letter from us indicating the number of missed days and asking for your help in trying to avoid missing too many more days. If you receive this letter it is a great opportunity to make contact with one of our support staff or your child's teacher or one of our support staff to let them know if your child is experienced a serious illness or if there is some other reason for the missed days.

***What happens if my child reaches 5 unexcused absences during a semester?***

If your child has five or more unexcused absences during a semester your child will be considered legally "habitually truant" and we will ask you to come to school to discuss the reasons for your child's absence and come up with a plan for improvement. If students continue to have unexcused absences the student may be referred to truancy court. Truancy court can usually be avoided if we are able to meet with the family and develop an effective plan for improving the child's attendance.

***What happens if my child misses 10 days during the school year?***

If we are unable to identify a legitimate cause for the missed days, we may require a note from a doctor or a visit to our health office in order to excuse further absences.

***What is the procedure for withdrawing my child from school?***

The procedure for transfer or withdrawal is as follows:

1. A note from the parent/guardian requesting transfer or withdrawal must be brought to the office.
2. The student will be given a Withdrawal Form that must be filled out by all of his or her teachers.
3. All school books including LMC materials must be returned and all fees paid.
4. The completed forms should then be taken to the office for final clearance.

**Important things to remember:**

- **Always call the Safe Arrival Number (204-4020) when your child is going to miss school.**
- **If you receive a recorded call saying that your child has missed all or part of the day and is “unexcused” please discuss it with your child AND call the main office (204-1920) to clear the attendance record.**
- **If your child has a medical condition such as migraines, asthma or severe allergies that cause them to miss more school than other kids, please contact our health office early in the year to discuss this with the our nurse so that we can be sure that we are providing the medical and academic support your child needs.**
- **If your child needs to take medication (prescription OR over the counter) during school hours, please be sure that they health office has the medication and that your child is not carrying the medication with them during the school day.**
- **If you receive a letter from us expressing concern about your child’s attendance, please know that our goal is to increase communication and understanding between home and school.**
- **If you are planning vacation that will require your child to miss multiple days of school, please contact Principal Colleen Lodholz at 204-1923 to determine whether or not the absence will be excused and to develop a plan for completing missed work.**