

Dear Parent/Guardian:

Grand Coulee Dam School District is making a special effort to ensure that all students fully benefit from their education by attending school regularly. Attending school regularly helps children feel better about school. Consistent attendance will help children do well in elementary, high school, college, and at work.

**WHAT WE NEED FROM YOU** If your student is going to be absent, please contact **Shelly Black** at 631-3184 or 633-1442 (extension 302) for grades 7-12 or **Marci Doughty** at 631-3183 for grades k-6.

- *Please note that the state of Washington has defined by law which types of absences can be excused by a school. Per WAC 392-400-325 and Grand Coulee Dam School District board policy 3122 only the following activities may be excused\*:*
- Participating in school or community events;
- Illness, health condition or medical appointment;
- Family emergency (death/funeral/illness);
- Court or judicial proceeding;
- Religious or cultural purpose including observance of a religious or cultural holiday or participation in religious or cultural instruction;
- Post-secondary, technical school or apprenticeship program visitation, or scholarship interview;
- State recognized search and rescue operations;
- Absence directly related to student's homeless status
- Absence resulting from a disciplinary/corrective action
- Principal or designee and parent, guardian, or emancipated youth mutually agreed upon activity.

*\*The above definition of an excusable absence is a change from recent past practice in our district.*

**\*SCHOOL POLICIES AND STATE LAWS** It is important that you understand our school policies and procedures, as well as Washington State Law, to ensure your child is successful in school. State law for mandatory attendance, called the Becca Bill, requires children from age 8 to 17 to attend a public school, private school, or a district-approved home school program. Children that are 6- or 7-years-old are not required to be enrolled in school. However, if parents enroll their 6- or 7-year-old, the student must attend full-time. The school is required by law to take daily attendance and notify you when your student has an unexcused absence.

If your student has two unexcused absences in one month, state law (RCW 28A.225.020) requires we schedule a conference with you and your student to identify the barriers and supports available to ensure regular attendance. The district is obligated to develop a plan that may require an assessment to determine how to best meet the needs of your student and reduce absenteeism.

In elementary school after five excused absences in any month, or ten or more excused absences in the school year, the school district is required to contact you to schedule a conference at a mutually agreeable, reasonable time with at least one district employee, to identify the barriers and supports available to you and your student. A conference is not required if your student has provided a doctor's note, or pre-arranged the absence in writing, and the parent, student and school have made plan so your student does not fall behind academically. If your student has an Individualized Education Plan or a 504 Plan the team that created the plan needs to reconvene.

If your student has five unexcused absences in any month or ten unexcused absences within the school year, we are required 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 Truancy Board, or you and your student may need to appear in Juvenile Court. If your student continues to have unexcused absences or tardies, you may need to go to court.

Sincerely,

B. Paul Turner  
Superintendent, Grand Coulee Dam School District.