

ST. MARY'S COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Department of Student Services

TIPS FOR IMPROVING ATTENDANCE

Good attendance (present and punctual) benefits your child's education. Students who miss a day of school or are late to school not only miss instruction, but must make up work and keep up with new material at the same time.

1. Make education a family priority and emphasize the important role education plays throughout life. Establish a positive connection with your child's school and communicate any school-related concerns.
2. Have your child ride the school bus to school each day. Riding the bus is a consistent way to ensure your child arrives at school in a timely manner. Arriving late can be disruptive for your child, the teacher, and other children in the class.
3. Try to schedule doctor and dentist appointments on early dismissal days, school holidays, or at the beginning or end of the school day.
4. Monitor your child's attendance through HOME ACCESS CENTER on the St. Mary's County Public Schools' website (www.smcps.org) to keep track of absences. If an absence is marked incorrectly, please contact the school attendance secretary. Documentation of an absence must be submitted to the school within **3 school days of the absence** for it to be considered excused. Documentation may be a written note, an email, or a phone call, and must include the name of the student, dates of absence, reason for absence, and parents'/legal guardians' signature (written note).
5. Take vacations when school is not in session. Families are encouraged to take vacations during the summer vacation or other school breaks throughout the year. There are 180 school days out of the 365 days in a year. Vacations are not considered excused absences.
6. Keep in mind that habits are formed early in the life of a child. Saying no in the beginning when children want to stay home "just this one time" will encourage the habit of going to school. If your child seems reluctant to come to school and asks to stay home often, please contact your school counselor for help in problem-solving. It is easier to address attendance issues early on.

PRESENT AND PUNCTUAL

...on the road to high school graduation...

