

Hello _____.

This is [student's name]'s teacher. How are you today?

I'm calling because I've noticed that [student's name] has been absent ____ times in the last month. Missing even 1–2 days a month can make it harder to keep up. I just wanted to reach out to see if everything is okay and if there is anything we can do to help.

I miss [student's name] when [he/she/they/is/are] gone, and I especially miss [discuss student's great qualities].

I know how hard it can be for students to be in school every day. We want to work with you if there's anything that's making it particularly challenging for [student's name].

Can you share why [student's name] has missed school recently?

Conversation Tips:

- ✓ **Acknowledge the importance of setting goals for improved attendance**, rather than perfect attendance.
- ✓ **End the conversation by asking specific questions that prompt families to make a plan.** For example, what time will you wake up [student's name] so they can get ready on time? How will [student's name] get to school tomorrow? Where will [student's name] eat breakfast? At school? Or at home?
- ✓ **If parents are reluctant to discuss the problem**, share that you are happy when the student is in class and hope that the parents will reach out if there is anything you or the school can do to ensure that the student attends each day. Make sure to provide contact information for the school counselor and administrator.
- ✓ **If parents mention challenges that you can help solve**, spend time discussing ideas with them or schedule a follow-up call or conference at a convenient time. For example, if their child frequently complains about being sick, explain the district's sick policy and reassure the family that you have the child's best interest at heart.
- ✓ **If parents mention challenges that are beyond your capacity to support**, work to facilitate communication with the school counselor, administrator, or other personnel. Let parents know that you will remain a part of the problem-solving process as much as possible.

Checklist for Understanding Common Causes of Absenteeism

Teachers: Following your phone call, check the box of the causes noted and return to the attendance team.

Lack of understanding about the importance of attendance

Parents or students don't recognize the negative effects of absenteeism

The school does not place overt value on or emphasize the importance of attendance

Physical barriers to attendance

Chronic Illness

Asthma

Chronic pain

Diabetes

Specify other: _____

Minor illness or somatic complaints

Obesity

Dental problems

Mental health issues

Depression

Anxiety

Behavioral disorder

Transportation Problems

Unreliable parent transportation

Missing the bus

Too far or unsafe to walk or bike

Inability to be bussed from multiple residences

Financial Issues

Food insecurity

Lack of access to clothing or clean clothes

Unstable housing or homeless

Specify other _____

Pregnancy/teen parenting

Parents are unable or unwilling to help student get ready for school

Work

Caring or relatives

Siblings

Elderly family members

Parents

Lack of access to technology

Internet is slow or non-existent

Computer/device isn't functioning properly

Parents are technologically illiterate

Escape or avoidance

Deficits

Academic

Social skills

Coping skills

People

Conflict with students

Bullying situations

Conflict with staff

Situations

Punitive climate

Unsafe climate

Chaotic climate

Boredom

Embarrassment

Specify other _____

Desire to obtain or access something outside of school

Attention

Peer

Adult

Access to tangible items or activities

Technology

Food

Games

Sleep

Drugs/alcohol

Sexual activity

Illegal activities

School sponsored activities

Seasonal activities

Lack of value placed on school

Student, family, or community does not place value on school

Student, family, community, or school does not view school as "suitable" for specific students

Specify other _____