Ohio's New Attendance Law & Your Child's Health

What Families Need to Know

Starting in the 2026-2027 school year, Ohio schools must keep track of all missed school time. Even time missed for doctor's visits or being sick. Because of this, you may get an attendance letter even when your child's absences are excused.

What Counts as Missed School Time?

All missed school time counts toward "chronic absenteeism," including:

- Staying home because they are sick
- Hospital stays
- Leaving school early
- Going to a doctor or dentist visit
- Going to school late
- Missing school without an excuse

ANY time your child misses class, it counts as missed school time.

Does an Attendance Letter Mean My Child is in Trouble?

No. An attendance letter does NOT mean your child is in trouble, did anything wrong, or should miss medical care or doctor's visits. It just means that the school must track all missed school time.

Chronic Absenteeism

This means a student has missed a lot of school time.

- It counts all absences
- It includes medically excused absences (even when your child is sick or visiting a doctor)
- It helps schools find students who may need extra support to get to school

Truancy

Truancy is different than chronic absenteeism.

- It only happens when a student has certain unexcused absences.
- It has different school and legal rules.

What Should I Do?

- Keep taking care of your child's health
- Save notes from doctors and medical visits
- Read and respond to school letters
- Talk with your school if your child misses

Ask About School Supports

Your child may be able to get extra help at school. Ask your school about:

- An IEP (Individualized Education Programs)
- A 504 Plan
- An Individualized Health Plan
- Help from the school nurse
- Learning at home or other school services if your child cannot come to school

The help and services may be different for each student and school district.

We Are Here to Help

Your health care team and school can work together to help your child stay healthy and keep learning.

PARTNERS FOR KIDS® | NATIONWIDE CHILDREN'S®