

September 9, 2014

Dear Parents,

Did you know that SMMUSD averages 500 student absences each day? I am pleased to say that these do not all belong to Roosevelt students; however, our percentage of absenteeism still needs to improve. Since daily school attendance is directly related to high student achievement, improved student attendance is a priority at Roosevelt. We need to remember that EVERY MINUTE COUNTS and "It is not "OK" to stay away!"

On September 12th and each subsequent month, letters will be sent to inform families whose children have accumulated excessive absences this school year. These letters are generated by a computer system that monitors absences so that we fulfill our legal obligation to inform parents when their child is considered "truant" by the state of California.

The progression of alerts is as follows:

- **First Notice:** This letter will be mailed after three (3) unexcused absences.
- **Second Notice:** This letter will be mailed after six (6) unexcused absences. It notifies parents that they will be expected to meet with school administration for a pre-SARB (School Attendance Review Board) conference.
- **Third Notice:** This letter will be mailed after nine (9) unexcused absences. It gives notice that the family will be referred to SARB.

Letters will also be mailed for students with excessive excused absences (8 or more).

Tardies over 30 minutes are considered unexcused absences.

At Roosevelt we continually strive to improve student attendance. Good attendance is directly related to high student achievement! We encourage you to bring your child to school every day and on time. Certain **excused absences** are to be expected. Examples of these are: illness, medical appointments and bereavement. Certain, less common, excused absences include religious observation and court appearances, when requested by the parent. A detailed list can be found in section 48205 of California Education Code.

Other absences, including **family vacations**, business trips and personal days are considered **unexcused**. A parent may request independent study for a child who will be absent for 5 or more consecutive school days. Independent study must be prearranged with your child's teacher two (2) weeks prior to the absence. A contract is available from Ms. Flores in the front office and all schoolwork must be completed so that your child and the school receive credit for the missed days. However, independent study is no substitute for the instruction that your child receives from his/her classroom teacher. Please make every effort to schedule family vacations during our school vacations.

When a child is absent, it is the parent's responsibility to inform the school promptly. Please contact Ms. Flores by email at absence@smmusd.org, or call the attendance line at 310 395-0941 ext. 68208 or by sending a signed note with your child including his/her name and teacher, the date(s) of the absence and the reason for the absence on the day he/she returns to school. All absences that have not been cleared within five days will be recorded as unexcused.

What is the cost when my child is absent?

When your child misses school, he or she misses valuable instruction. There is also a financial cost associated with absence. Each day that your child is out of school costs us **\$45.00**. If your child is out 10 days, then we lose **\$450** dollars. If 100 children are out 10 days, then we lose **\$45,000**. We are not reimbursed for students' absences for any reason, even illness; however, independent study is the exception.

Once again, we plead with all of our families to consider the impact not only to our budget, but to your child's education prior to having your child stay home from school. We are **NOT** advocating sending students to school sick. **We ARE advocating scheduling appointments and vacations during times school isn't in session.** If there is an emergency, and you must be gone for **five days** or more, please arrange for independent study through the front office. Upon verification of completion of the independent study, the school district will be able to recoup the lost funding for those days.

Thank you for making sure that your child is in school and on time daily! We greatly appreciate your partnership in ensuring that your child receives an excellent education.

Sincerely,

Tristen Gartrell
Assistant Principal