



## PROSSER SCHOOL DISTRICT

DEDICATED TO EDUCATING, GRADUATING AND  
EMPOWERING ALL STUDENTS TO BECOME RESPONSIBLE  
MEMBERS OF SOCIETY

1126 Meade Avenue Ste. A, Prosser, WA 99350

Phone 509-786-3323

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Dear Parent/Guardian of Prosser School District Students,

This year, Prosser 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 - and themselves. Your student can start building this habit in preschool so they learn right away that going to school on time, every day is important. Consistent attendance will help children do well in high school, college, and at work.

### DID YOU KNOW?

- By being present at school, your child learns valuable social skills and has the opportunity to develop meaningful relationships with other students and school staff.
- Starting in kindergarten, too many absences (excused and unexcused) can cause children to fall behind in school.
- Students can still fall behind if they miss just a day or two days every few weeks.
- Missing 10 percent increases the chance that your student will not read or master math at the same level as their peers.
- Being late to school may lead to poor attendance. **If your child continues to miss just 10% of their school days on an annual basis, by the time they have completed their freshman year in high school, they will have missed one entire school year.**
- Absences can affect the whole classroom if the teacher has to slow down learning to help children catch up.
- By 6th grade, absenteeism is one of three signs that a student may drop out of high school.
- Absences can be a sign that a student is losing interest in school, struggling with school work, dealing with a bully or facing some other potentially serious difficulty.
- By 9th grade, regular and high attendance is a better predictor of graduation rates than 8th grade test scores.

### WHAT WE NEED FROM YOU

We miss your student when they are gone and we value their contributions to our schools. We would like you to help ensure that your student attends regularly and is successful in school. If your student is going to be absent, please contact the attendance secretary at your student's school as soon as possible.

### OUR PROMISE TO YOU

We know that there are a wide variety of reasons that students are absent from school, from health concerns to transportation challenges. There are many people in our building prepared to help you if you or your student face challenges in getting to school regularly or on time. Please contact your student's counselor with any questions or concerns. We promise to track attendance daily, to notice when your student is missing from class, communicate with you to understand why they were absent, and to identify barriers and supports available to overcome challenges you may face in helping your student attend school.

### SCHOOL POLICIES AND STATE LAWS

It is important that you understand our district 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. Youth who are 16 or older may be excused from attending public school if they meet certain requirements. For more information, you can visit:

<http://apps.leg.wa.gov/rcw/default.aspx?cite=28A.225>.

Each school is required 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 may not be required if your student has provided a doctor's note, or the parent, student and school have already made plans 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 may need to reconvene.

If your student has seven 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.

The Prosser School District will establish rules on attendance that will help you ensure your student is attending regularly. These can be found on our district website: <http://web.prosserschools.org/policy/> under Policy 3122, Excused and Unexcused Absences.

#### **WHAT YOU CAN DO**

- Set a regular bed time and morning routine.
- Prepare for school the night before, finishing homework and getting a good night's sleep.
- Find out what day school starts and make sure your child has the required immunizations.
- Don't let your student stay home unless they are truly sick. Keep in mind complaints of a stomach ache or headache can be a sign of anxiety and not a reason to stay home.
- Avoid appointments and extended trips when school is in session.
- Develop back-up plans for getting to school if something comes up. Call on a family member, a neighbor, or another parent.
- Keep track of your student's attendance. Missing multiple days could put your student at risk of falling behind.
- Talk to your student about the importance of attendance.
- Talk to your students' teachers if you notice sudden changes in behavior. These could be tied to something going on at school.
- Encourage meaningful afterschool activities, including sports and clubs.

Sincerely,

Ray Tolcacher, Ed. D. Superintendent  
Prosser School District

#### **PSD School Phone Numbers**

Keene-Riverview Elementary: 509-786-2020  
Prosser Heights Elementary: 509-786-2633  
Whitstran Elementary: 509-778-4434

Housel Middle School: 509-786-1732  
Prosser High School: 509-786-1224  
Prosser Falls High School: 509-786-2527

Your signature below indicates that you have read and understand the attendance expectations of the Prosser School District. Please return **ONLY THIS SIGNATURE PAGE** to your student's school no later than Friday, September 16, 2016.

**Student Information**

Last Name: \_\_\_\_\_ First Name: \_\_\_\_\_

School: \_\_\_\_\_

**Parent/Guardian Information**

Last Name: \_\_\_\_\_ First Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_