

STUDENT-PARENT HANDBOOK

JAMES SALES ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
11213 Sheridan Ave S, Tacoma, WA 98444
(253) 298-4200
Fax: (253) 298-4215
School Web Site: www.fpschools.org/js



Dear Students and Parents,

Welcome to the 2015-2016 school year at James Sales Elementary School. The intent of this handbook is to provide you with information about our school and to answer some of your questions. Please take the time to read the information and we hope you will keep these pages handy for reference throughout the year. If you have questions, feel free to contact us for clarification.

Sincerely,

Brandy Nelson, Principal

**JAMES SALES STAFF ROSTER
2015-2016**

KINDERGARTEN	Ms. Caitlyn Zwang	Room K26
	Mrs. Marietta Brown	Room 107
	Mrs. Joy Sims	Room K25
	Mrs. Brianna Williamson	Room 105
GRADE ONE	Ms. Kelsey Bidwell	Room 101
	Mrs. Ronda Siebert	Room 104
	Mrs. Maraye Davis	Room 106
	Ms. Madeline Isaacson	Room 101
GRADE TWO	Ms. Jessica Stewart	Port 122
	Mr. Nick Edwards	Port 123
	Mrs. Sophia Stover	Port 124
	Ms. Robyn Paczkowski	Room 103
GRADE THREE	Ms. Allison Shearer	Room 113
	Ms. Kelsey Osborne	Room 119
	Ms. Angela Silk	Room 114
GRADE FOUR	Mrs. Marina Popkov	Room 110
	Ms. Kayla Meyers	Room 115
	Ms. Lisa Green	Room 116
GRADE FIVE	Ms. Erin Wells	Room 112
	Mrs. Carol Gillon	Room 111
	Mr. James Wrede	Room 117
STRIDES	Mrs. Teri Soholt/Mr. Scott Stugelmeyer	Room 108/109
RESOURCE ROOM	Mrs. Penni Sulkosky	Room 114
LEARNING SPECIALIST	Mrs. Cindy Miller	Room 118
MATH SPECIALIST	Ms. Denise Petrovich	Room 118
MUSIC	Ms. Mary Boyum	Music Rm.
LIBRARY	Mrs. Jennifer Bruce	Library
YMCA	Mr. Jamel Jackson	Gym
COUNSELOR	Ms. Sharika Callaway	Office
SOCIAL WORKER	Ms. Jennifer Parsons	Rm.108
OCC. THERAPY	Ms. Susi Esson	Rm. 04
SPEECH	Mrs. Amanda Adams	Rm. 02
ELL	Mrs. Euna Bae	Port. 120
HEALTH ASST.	Mrs. Joan Cassaw	Health Room
INST. COACH	Mrs. Auna Doyle	Office
PSYCHOLOGIST	Ms. Kelly Demarco	Rm. 3
PRINCIPAL	Mrs. Brandy Nelson	Office
OFFICE MANAGER	Mrs. Cindy Daybell	Office
OFFICE CLERK	Mrs. Linda Morrison	Office
KITCHEN MANAGER	Mrs. Kelly Kimball	Kitchen
CHIEF CUSTODIAN	Mrs. Cheryl Larson	Custodial Office
ASST. CUSTODIAN	Mr. Ryan McCormick	Custodial Office

CLASSIFIED STAFF: Maria Caballero, Faith Collins, Linda Graff, Cesar Granados, Linda Heitz, Katie James, Janet Mulholland, Susan Puterbaugh, Paula Roybal, Patti Screws, Marian Ufland, and Carol Yet

Daily Schedule for Students
2015-2016

8:15 Breakfast begins

8:30 Bus Breakfast begins

8:45 Students picked up from the gym by teachers/First bell rings

8:55 Students considered tardy/Must be done with breakfast

10:00-10:40 5th grade specialist

10:40-11:20 3rd grade specialist

Grade	Lunch	Recess
K-2	11:25-11:55	11:55-12:25
3-5	11:55-12:25	11:25-11:55

12:30-1:10 1st grade specialist

1:10-1:50 Kindergarten Specialist

1:50-2:30 2nd grade specialist

2:40-3:20 4th grade specialist

PM Recess
K-2 – 2:45-2:55
3-5 - 2:30-2:40

3:25 Dismissal

GENERAL INFORMATION

Breakfast and Lunch:

We have the opportunity to provide free breakfast and hot lunch for all of the students at James Sales Elementary. No applications for free and reduced lunch are necessary this year for James Sales students.

Adult lunches are \$4.00 with or without milk. If your child brings a lunch from home, he/she may wish to just purchase milk. Cartons of milk sell for 55 cents.

School Dress: School Board Policy 5200 (Section 11.9--Student Dress and Appearance) requires students "to observe modesty, appropriateness, and neatness in clothing and personal appearance." Students are not appropriately dressed if their appearance causes a disruptive influence either to themselves or to others. Students are not allowed to wear clothing or other items that are lewd, profane, or that advertise alcohol, tobacco, and/or illegal drugs.

Hats and caps will be worn outside ONLY. No make-up or temporary hair color is allowed. While shorts are OK to wear (hem must extend *beyond* fingertips when arms hanging at side) and may be quite practical on hot days, "short-shorts", shirts exposing bare stomachs, halter tops, tank tops, sagging pants, disconnected straps on overalls, over-sized coats, bandannas, scarves, and very tight spandex shorts are examples of clothing that are not appropriate. **Please be aware of what your child is wearing to school and help us avoid problems.** If a student wears something that is inappropriate for school, which disrupts the learning process, then their parents will be contacted to help find a solution. If possible, the parent may come up to school to deliver clothes or there are some extra clothes at school that may be used as a replacement if the parent is unavailable.

Grades K-3 students should please carry a change of clothes inside their backpacks in case of emergency or accident. Please make sure that these clothes get replaced/cleaned after use.

Phone Numbers/Email: It is extremely important that we have a current phone, cell phone, and/or email address on file in the office. We will be using a messenger system this year to remind parents of upcoming events, early dismissals, and closures. Without the correct information in the office, we will not be able to effectively communicate with your family. Thank you for your cooperation with this matter.

Physical Activity Shoes: Any type of tennis or athletic shoes, which do not leave black marks on the floor. These are to be worn on Physical Activity days.

Visiting School: **Parents are welcome** in our classrooms. In order to minimize classroom interruptions of the teacher, however, **we ask that you make arrangements**

before your visit with your student's teacher or through the school office. On the day of your visit, please stop by the office to notify us of your arrival. We ask that you sign in and sign out in our Visitor Book and wear a nametag that identifies you as having signed in. All visitors in the classroom during school hours and classroom volunteers must be cleared through the district and will need to fill out paperwork (good for one year) allowing you to help in the classroom or on field trips. **This helps us provide a safe and productive learning environment for all students and staff.**

On occasion parents stop by to drop off a lunch or homework to their student. We ask you to leave these in the office and we will see that they receive it. If a parent has an emergency situation and needs to speak to their child, we ask you to stop in the office, and we will call your student down to the main office.

Field Trips

We frequently need parent volunteers for classroom field trips. Please make sure you have a current, approved volunteer form on file. New applications are required to be filled out **every** year and volunteer applications are found on the FP District website; **all applications are completed on line.** Please allow two weeks for processing these forms. Once you have been cleared, you will be notified by email. If you are asked to supervise students and are not comfortable, please make sure to let the teacher know right away to prevent any student emergencies. Every effort will be made to allow all students to attend field trips. Students are not allowed to attend a field trip for discipline/behavioral concerns and if previously paid for field trip will not be refunded any admissions paid.

Fines

Students with outstanding fines for lost or damaged school materials will not be permitted to attend field trips or participate in extra curricular activities. You may pay for outstanding fines through the school office manager, Cindy Daybell.

Closed Campus: Once students arrive to school, regardless of their mode of transportation or time of arrival, they will not be permitted to leave the school grounds until dismissal for any reason, unless a parent or guardian has signed them out of school in the office.

Early Release from School: If a situation arises whereby it is necessary to take your child out of school during the school day, please come to the school office to sign out the student. If you're sending someone to pick up the child, please send a note with your signature and make sure they are listed on your child's enrollment card. **If at all possible, please set appointments before or after school.** When students leave for appointments, they are missing valuable learning time. If a student arrives ten minutes late consistently and is picked up early occasionally, throughout the year they will have missed approximately thirty hours of instruction.

If your child needs to be released early from school, please do not forget to send a note to the office that morning letting us know the reason and what time you will be here. This allows the student and staff to be prepared with all supplies and homework your child will need so that your departure will not be delayed. **Please do not call us and ask to have your child waiting in the office when you get here. As a part of our school safety procedures, we only release students after you have arrived with identification and signed them out.**

Our pick up policy is such that we will not release students between 2:55-3:25 (or the last ½ hour of the day on early release days), except for *extreme* emergencies. Please plan ahead for this situation. The teachers are giving last minute instruction and want to make sure that every child has the opportunity to ask questions or receive help if needed. Following these procedures will expedite your child's release. Thank you for your attention and understanding with this important matter.

Arriving and Leaving School: If you drive your child to or from school, please be very aware of the intense traffic situation which develops around the school just before and after school. Drive with extreme caution and be especially careful as you back out of the parking spaces along Sheridan. Due to the congestion in the gym in the mornings, parents will not be allowed in the gym. Parents need to say goodbye to their student at the door. Parents are welcomed to come into the office in the morning if you have any business to conduct.

If your child is not riding the school bus, they will be picked up by parents in the gym at dismissal. Please do not ask your children to exit the building unaccompanied. **Because your child's safety is important to us, students will not be released to meet an adult across the parking lot or across Sheridan.**

Likewise, please help us teach our students to make responsible choices by using the cross walks located at 113th and Sheridan when walking home and watching carefully in our parking lot.

The school district provides a bus for students living on the north side of 112th. Your child's safety is our utmost concern. **Students are NOT permitted to cross 112th at Sheridan.** This is a corner that is difficult to see around and cars coming off of 112th often are traveling at high rates of speed. If you would like your child to walk home across 112th, they MUST use the light and cross walk at Ainsworth and 112th. It is highly recommended that if you live on the north side of 112th, your child use the bus transportation system.

Automobiles should never enter the bus area on the north side of the building. **Students should not be dropped off in the mornings prior to 8:30 unless they're here for breakfast. Students wanting to eat breakfast should NOT arrive before 8:15.** Also, please do not park in the Handicapped Parking space reserved for those with disabilities.

If you enter the building to pick up your student we ask you to **PLEASE** wait outside the building until 3:25 when you can enter the gym. This helps keep congestion down and helps us monitor who is picking each child up. *Do not go out to the bus to retrieve your child off the bus.* The office has the ability to contact the bus supervisors to help with this process.

If you have any concerns regarding incidents on the buses or locating your child on a bus route, please call transportation at 298-3865. If you wish your child to get off at a different stop, the parent needs to write a note to the office with the different stop clearly identified.

Students in grades 3 and above may ride bicycles to school with their parent's permission. Bikes are to be walked across the crosswalks when safety patrols are on duty and any time they are on the school grounds. They are to be locked to the bike rack with a sturdy cable or chain. Wearing bicycle helmets is a county law and protects against serious injury. Those students that ride their bicycles to James Sales must wear a helmet. If they choose not to wear a helmet, then they will need to arrange for other transportation home and their bicycle will stay at school until they bring a helmet. James Sales assumes no responsibility for damage or theft of bicycles.

Parties at School: Two general room parties are allowed each year. Occasionally students bring invitations to school inviting some of their friends to birthday parties or other private events in their homes. We discourage the distribution of such invitations at school because they often result in hurt feelings for those not invited. Please help your child find a way to distribute such invitations other than passing them out at school.

If you would like to celebrate your child's birthday with their classroom, we ask that whenever possible, you donate a favorite book or rainy day game rather than provide sweet treats. We are working hard to fight childhood obesity and have many healthy choices of fruits and vegetables available to students throughout the day.

Toys at School - (Including all electronics, tape recorders, video games, trading cards, scooters, skateboards, and heelies, etc.) are to remain at home. Teachers may give permission occasionally for certain items to be brought for "Show and Tell".

Cell Phones: It is strongly advised to leave cell phones at home to avoid theft. If a student must carry a cell phone, they will need to store the phone in their backpack. Students may only use a cell phone outside of school hours. Staff members who see a cell phone out, may confiscate the phone until a parent is able to pick it up.

Weapons & Instruments: Regulation 5200.2.8 states that "A student shall not knowingly possess, handle, or transmit any object that can reasonably be considered a

weapon or instrument that may create a danger to self or others, or cause a disruption of the learning environment." Consequences can be: School discipline, short-term or long-term suspension, Referral to the Pierce County Sheriff, or Expulsion. The possession of firearms on school property will result in a one year mandatory expulsion, subject to appeal with notification to parents and law enforcement.

Student Accident Insurance: Each fall brochures are sent home informing parents of an inexpensive insurance plan which provides medical coverage in the event of bodily or dental injury to their child. We urge you to carefully consider this insurance for your child, particularly if you do not have other medical/dental insurance.

Report Cards/Conferencing: There are three academic reporting periods during the school year. These periods end in December, March, and June. **Student-led conferences are scheduled for all students in October and again in May.** *Parents, of course, may request a conference with their child's teacher at any time throughout the school year.* Likewise, teachers may request a conference whenever they feel it is in the child's interest to do so. We urge parents to call for an appointment or to send a note anytime there are concerns.

Homework Policy: Every grade level teacher encourages after-school and evening time set aside for minutes of reading, spelling, math, and special projects. National PTA recommends an average of 10 minutes/grade level/day (ex. 3rd grade = 30 minutes per day) to work on homework **in addition to daily reading practice.** Online grades are available through our website from grades 3-5. If you are having difficulty accessing your child's grades, please contact their teacher for more information. Parents taking vacations during the school year that are a week or more in duration often request homework for their children. While it is important for students to be current with their homework, it is difficult to provide relevant work without proper instruction and direction from the teacher. From the school's and teacher's perspective, the instruction that the child receives while in attendance in the classroom is most important. When the child returns, any makeup work arrangements should be made with the teacher to fill gaps that may have occurred. Requests for homework for students who are absent due to illness or emergencies will be available the day after the request is made. When schoolwork/homework is lost by the student, the teacher may choose not to replace that item and allow the student to problem-solve another solution.

Pets: Pets are never to be brought to school without permission from the office, and they are not allowed on the school bus under any circumstances. Parents also need to be sure that the family dog is secured at home so that it cannot follow your child to school. Even the gentlest dog can be a hazard on a playground full of children because in such an exciting atmosphere dogs may chase, nip, or scratch children. If a dog comes onto the school grounds while the children are there, the adults on duty will attempt to chase the dog away. If the dog will not leave, the custodian or principal will catch the dog and call the Humane Society.

Voter Registration: A voter registration service is provided at James Sales in our school office. Any citizen 18 years of age or older may register to vote. Citizens will be able to register to vote by simply filling out a registration card and mailing it.

Registering Students for Kindergarten: We begin to register kindergarten students during the month of April/May for the next school year. Students must be 5 years old before September 1st and have their immunizations up-to-date by the first day of school. Parents must also show a birth certificate and proof of residency at the time of registration. James Sales Elementary currently offers a free all-day kindergarten program.

Fifth Grade MMR Booster: All 5th graders will need a second MMR (measles, mumps, and rubella) booster before they enter 6th grade.

Preschool: Franklin Pierce School District offers a Head Start/ECEAP program for four year old children from low income families. For information, call 298-4675. This program is not housed at James Sales Elementary.

Lost and Found: We have a Lost and Found area which is located at the school's entrance. Parents and students are invited to claim lost articles at any time. It is very helpful if clothing is clearly labeled with the child's name, particularly items such as coats, hats, gloves, mittens, lunch boxes, and backpacks.

Emergency Preparedness: The staff at James Sales has established and practiced a plan to deal with emergency situations such as earthquakes or evacuations. Every family is asked to fill out an emergency information form on each child at James Sales. These forms are kept in a separate and accessible location to be taken out of the building if we have to evacuate. We cannot stress too strongly how important it is to have the information about your child up-to-date. These forms identify who may pick up your child from school if you are not available. Children are also asked to supply an earthquake kit for their classroom. The kit is described on the yearly School Supplies List.

EMERGENCY WEATHER CONDITIONS

Occasionally, weather conditions do not permit normal operation of the school schedule. A separate flyer will be sent home in November listing the radio and TV stations that would carry announcements about school closures, later starting times, etc. **Remember, we are Franklin Pierce School District.**

Although very unlikely, it is possible that some type of extraordinary weather or other emergency at the school would force us to send the students home earlier than normal. BE SAFE and develop a plan so that your child would know what to do if he/she was sent home early with no adult at home. Do you have a neighbor who could help?

STUDENT DISCIPLINE POLICY

A Total School Program: We believe every student can be successful. Discipline is not punishment. It is training for making appropriate, positive choices in life. Management is a shared responsibility involving parents and all school personnel.

One of the most important lessons education should teach is self-discipline. While it will not appear as a subject, it underlies the whole educational structure. It is the training that develops self-control, character, orderliness, and efficiency. It is the key to good conduct and proper consideration for other people.

Students are reminded that they must adhere to a code of good behavior not only for their own benefit, but for the benefit of others as well.

General Expectations: We believe all students can behave appropriately at James Sales Elementary. Clear expectations for all areas of the building have been shared and defined for students. Positive behavior will be encouraged and recognized. When difficulties arise, the staff will help students resolve problems in dignified, constructive ways. Corrections and/or restitution are used to help students make better choices in the future.

JAMES SALES GUIDELINES FOR SUCCESS

1. Be safe.
2. Be responsible.
3. Be respectful.

JAMES SALES RULES AGAINST BULLYING

1. We will not bully others.
2. I will get help for students who are bullied.
3. We will include students who are left out.
4. If I am bullied, I will tell an adult at school and at home.
5. If I know someone is being bullied, I will tell an adult at school and at home.

Students that demonstrate these expectations receive positive recognition, positive rewards and responsibilities to promote their excellent behavior. These include verbal praise, individual celebrations, Good News notes, and Student of the Month.

**JAMES SALES ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
SCHOOL WIDE EXPECTATIONS**

Guidelines for Success	I will be safe.	I will be respectful.	I will be responsible.
Bus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Follow Directions Remain seated Stay out of the danger zone Keep the aisle clear Look both ways before crossing the street Keep my hands, feet and objects to myself. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Listen to the driver. Use a quiet voice. Wait my turn. Share the seat. Be friendly. Help others. Choose my attitude. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Be on time. Keep my things on my lap. Eat or drink later, not on the bus. Walk straight to my destination. Be honest.
Hallways	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Walk, facing forward Stay to the right Keep my hands, feet and objects to myself 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Walk quietly. Honor others' space. Listen to adults. Stay in line. Silent wave and smile greetings. Choose my attitude. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Go straight to my destination. Be honest Carry a hall pass if not with an adult. Help others.
Lunchroom	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Walk Eat only my food Dispose of waste appropriately. Keep my hands, feet, and objects to myself. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use a quiet voice Use good manners Listen to adults Honor others' space Wait my turn patiently Help clean up Be kind Choose my attitude. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Take care of my own garbage. Eat healthy foods Be honest Turn in money in A.M. Help others.
Classroom	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Walk Use furniture appropriately Use materials safely. Follow directions Put items in assigned places Keep my hands, feet, and objects to myself. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use a quiet voice. Listen to the speaker. Honor others' space Use good manners Encourage others Compliment others. Share Choose my attitude 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Follow directions the first time they are given. Use time wisely Ask for help when needed. Complete work on time Try my best in all things. Take care of the materials Be honest Help others.
Restroom	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Keep the floor dry. Use soap to wash hands 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use a quiet voice Wait my turn Listen to adults Choose my attitude 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use equipment and materials appropriately Report any problems to an adult Flush, wash, leave Help others
Playground	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Follow directions Know my surroundings Use equipment safely Keep my hands, feet, and objects to myself Freeze when the bell rings Walk when the whistle blows 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Take turns on equipment Honor others' space Use acceptable language Be nice to others Listen to adults Include others Encourage others Be a problem solver Choose my attitude 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Take care of the equipment Watch out for others Follow game rules Be honest Choose any one activity Put equipment away
Assemblies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Follow directions Stay with my class Keep my hands, feet and objects to myself 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Honor others' space Listen attentively Clap when appropriate Show appreciation Choose my attitude 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participate appropriately Be honest Be silent when asked
Traveling to and from school	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Walk safely Stay out of streets Use crosswalk Speak only to people I know Cross with the crossing guards 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Share the walk area Use kind language Be nice to others Respect the property of others Choose my attitude 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Keep my belongings with me Help other children Go straight to my destination Be honest

Learning Opportunities: At James Sales Elementary, students are expected to know and practice the Guidelines for Success. James Sales staff will use the following 3-level system (mild-moderate, serious or chronic, severe) for responding to student misbehavior.

Level 1 (Mild-Moderate) Infractions:

Minor misbehaviors that can be adequately corrected at the time they occur, and which do not require an incident report, but may require some documentation such as classroom or playground log. Any adult in the James Sales community can correct these, and has a responsibility to correct these.

Level 2 (Serious or Chronic Infractions)

Misbehaviors that, while not requiring immediate office involvement, do require an incident report for documentation because:

- The reporting staff member has assigned a school-wide correction that involves other staff members (i.e. Solution Room)
- The reporting staff member wants/needs administrative input on the incident
- The reporting staff member feels the office should be aware and/or have a record of the situation (i.e. a Level 1 misbehavior is becoming chronic)

Parent contact is frequently made for Level 2 behaviors so that you may assist us in reinforcing the behavior expectations of our school. Parent contact may take the form of a phone call, note home, or by sending home a Behavior Improvement form filled out by your child. Should a Level 2 incident occur, please take the opportunity to review our school wide expectations chart, sign the Behavior Improvement form, and return the form to school with your child.

In addition, a pattern of Level 2 behaviors may indicate that your child needs greater support from our school personnel. You may be asked to participate in a team meeting to help generate ideas that would assist your child in making good choices.

Level 3 (Severe/Dangerous)

These infractions will require immediate office involvement and written documentation.

The specific misbehaviors considered Level 3 (severe) infractions include:

- **Illegal acts-** Acts that involve breaking of a state or federal law such as weapons, drugs, or assault.
- **Physically dangerous acts-** Acts that pose a threat to physical safety
Any physically dangerous act may be considered a Level 3 infraction, however not all potentially dangerous acts have to be reported as Level 3 infractions---it's up to the observing staff member's discretion.

- **Acts of extreme defiance-** Acts in which a student engages in overt and immediate refusal to comply with a reasonable adult direction.

Final Thoughts: We expect parent cooperation and support while working with your child to meet these expectations. You can expect us to be fair, consistent and to communicate openly with you. We welcome your comments and concerns; feel free to contact your child's teacher or the principal at any time.

HEALTH CONCERNS

Illness: If your *child is ill* and unable to attend school, *please call us* (298-4200) in the morning by 9:00 AM to let us know. If we do not hear from you, we will call you after school begins. This procedure is for your child's safety, so that you'll always know that he/she arrived at school. Please write an excuse note and send it with your child when they return after an absence, even if you have been in contact with the school. (see attendance below)

It is advised that children who have had a fever remain at home for 24 hours after the temperature has returned to normal. Likewise, a child who has had an upset stomach during the night should remain at home the next day.

Allergies:

Parents please keep the health room up to date on any allergies, especially to foods, that your child may have acquired. That way we have the proper emergency plan set up for your child at school.

Medications:

All medications required at school will need a medical order form filled out by a physician and the parent. These medical forms can be found on our website to download on our school website. Students should not transport medication to school; that includes cough drops. The medication should be collected directly from the parent. These are kept in the health room. Please contact the school if you have concerns or questions.

FRANKLIN PIERCE SCHOOL DISTRICT ELEMENTARY ATTENDANCE POLICY

PHILOSOPHY

A student's attendance is essential to learning- learning that includes not only factual subject matter, but also attendance habits, work habits, attitudes and ideals. Poor attendance interrupts the process of education. Students need to come to school every day and benefit from interaction, discussion, and teacher support available during class time. Every absence, excused or not, interrupts the student's understanding of the material and impacts their overall school success.

Research indicates a direct relationship between school attendance and achievement. Higher academic achievement generally occurs for students who regularly come to school, while excessive absences generally results in low achievement and failure. Students who have good attendance records generally achieve higher grades and enjoy school more.

It is normal for students to want to stay home. However, staying home from school can become a habit and kids begin to think that it's not a big deal to miss school. It is a big deal! Students cannot do their best when they are not at school. When children come just a few minutes late or leave a few minutes early, they also lose precious instructional time. It is important to develop good attendance habits. Here are a few things parents and guardians can do to encourage attendance: talk about the importance of school and being somewhere on time, set a good example, get organized for school the night before, and enforce a reasonable bedtime. If a student does not want to come to school, it is important to talk to the classroom teacher or school counselor. The cooperation of the student, parent and school is essential to achieve regular attendance.

We are privileged to work with children. We strive for excellence and have wonderful learning opportunities available at our schools. However, our students cannot take advantage of them when they are not here. We look forward to working with families to support regular attendance.

WASHINGTON STATE LAW ON ATTENDANCE:

A state law, 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 who 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. (RCW 28A.225.010)

The truancy laws require that schools must notify parents after one unexcused absence. After two unexcused absences, schools are required to respond with a parent conference and individualized interventions for the student and his/her family. A district *may* file a truancy petition with the courts after five unexcused absences in a month, but *must* file after seven unexcused absences in one month or 10 unexcused absences in a year. This requirement to file is sometimes referred to as the 7/10 rule.⁶ The district may also file a truancy petition against a parent or both the student and parent.⁷ In such cases, the parent is held responsible for the child's attendance and sanctions may be levied on the parent. (RCW 28A.225.020)

PROCEDURE TO REPORT AN ABSENCE

- A parent/guardian is to call the school office to report a school absence on the day of the absence.
- Voicemail on the school office phone is available 24 hours a day to report an absence. Calls prior to 9:00am are encouraged and appreciated.
- A call is needed EACH DAY a student is absent.

EXCUSED ABSENCES

Regular school attendance is necessary for mastery of the educational programs provided to students. Students at times may appropriately be absent. Excused Absences (FPSD policy No. 3122 students) are the following:

1. Illness or health condition
2. Religious observances
3. School-approved activities
4. Family emergencies
5. Disciplinary actions or short-term suspensions
6. Exceptional circumstances

* Absences will be excused according to the above criteria or at the discretion of the building administrator.

ILLNESS

According to the Tacoma/Pierce County Health Department, it is recommended to keep children home from school if he or she has:

- A fever: Temperature over 100 degrees F. along with behavior changes or other signs and symptoms of illness such as sore throat, rash, vomiting, diarrhea, earache, or irritability.
- Vomiting: 2 or more times within 24 hours
- Diarrhea: 3 or more watery stools within 24 hours.
- An open or oozing sore: Unless it is properly covered with a bandage that will not leak wound drainage while at school.

Please contact Health Services or your school's health office with questions.

HALF DAY ABSENCES, TARDIES AND EARLY RELEASES

Parents are encouraged to schedule their child's appointments during NON-SCHOOL HOURS or during early dismissal times. In the event that is not possible, the following guidelines apply:

- If a student misses more than TWO (2) hours of the school day, it will be counted as a half-day absence. This includes excused and unexcused absences.
- Early dismissal days count as a full day of school when calculating a student's attendance rate.
- Children who after school starts will be counted tardy. All tardy students are to be signed in by an adult in the school office.
- If a child is frequently tardy, further action will be taken.

GOOD ATTENDANCE: As a general guideline, missing 5 or fewer days in a school year would be considered good attendance.

DISRUPTIVE ATTENDANCE: Missing more than 5 days of school interferes with the learning process. Missing just one day a month results in 70 hours of missed learning.