



AMPHI ACADEMY ONLINE  
DONALDSON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Andrew F. Szczepaniak  
Principal

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Dear AAO Families:

I'm writing to you today to ask you to partner with me and our teachers and staff to improve attendance this year. Our school, like most across the nation, has seen a drop in attendance over the past few years. Studies show that missing school can have significant negative impacts on children's learning and social growth. To best serve your children, we need them here every day, though we understand that sometimes they will need to stay home. Here is some important information that I want to share regarding absences.

### Excused absences

The Arizona Department of Education defines excused absences as absences related to illness, bereavement, other family emergencies, vacations, and observance of religious holidays of the family's faith.

Please note that even excused absences can have an effect on students' progress. We urge you to schedule absences for appointments or vacations for days that schools are closed for holidays and breaks whenever possible. You can find the District calendar at [amphi.com](http://amphi.com).

**Though students will be allowed to turn in assignments and make up exams according to teacher policies when an absence is excused, missing class time can make it harder for students to keep up.**

### Procedures for excusing absences

Parents must follow the procedure for excusing absences that is outlined in the District's Code of Conduct. This states:

*When a student is or will be absent, the parent must call the school on or before the day of the absence in order to advise the school of the absence and the reason for the absence. If no authorization is received by the end of the missed school day, the absence will be considered unexcused. For absences greater than one (1) day in length, the school should be notified in advance or on each day of the absence. If a parent does not have access to a phone, either at home or at work, a note will be accepted for verification purposes.*

**After 18 days of absences (excused or unexcused), all absences are considered by the District to be unexcused.** This means that students may find they are not allowed to make up work for absences in excess of this threshold. If your child has circumstances that you think should be considered, please contact me to discuss them.

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## **Unexcused absences**

Please note that unexcused absences are treated differently than excused absences. Unexcused absences may result in zeros for assignments and class activities.

Additionally, the Code of Conduct states: ***If your child is absent on an unexcused basis for ten (10) consecutive school days: state law mandates that your child be automatically withdrawn from enrollment in order to stop state funding. You may then be required to fill out new enrollment documentation upon returning from an absence of such length.***

*Excessive absences may also affect a student's eligibility to participate in field trips, extracurricular activities, and sports. In addition, absences can result in discipline and may be considered by a teacher in determining a student's grade or promoting a student; a student can fail a class or be retained in a grade level due to excessive absences. It is the teacher's discretion whether to award credit (points) for work given during an unexcused absence.*

## **Tardies**

In addition to asking for your help with absences, I also need your assistance with helping your child get to school on time. Tardies also have a negative impact on learning – for the student who is late and for their classmates. Please help our entire school community by helping your children get to school every day, on time.

If you have questions about District attendance and tardy policies, or if you have special circumstances you would like to discuss, please reach out to me.

By working together as a team – parents/guardians, students, teachers, support staff and administrators, we can ensure we are doing everything we can to improve attendance and make sure Every Day Matters.

Thank you,

Andrew F. Szczepaniak

Principal