



Community Corner



Vacation Time vs. School Time

As you plan your vacation for next school year, here is something to consider...the debate between whether or not ANY excuse for a missed day from school is ok should have little to do with whether it is deemed legal or not and more to do with the impact that absence will have on the student.



Research indicates in the early grades, [missing too much school](#) can contribute to trouble reading. That being said we do understand that there is value in a family vacation, both the enrichment that children experience in new places as well as the special time spent with family.

However, psychologist [Sara Dimerman](#) suggests considering the acronym **FLAG** when contemplating whether to take a child out of school to travel as well as determining the duration of the trip:

Frequency. Is this absence a rare treat or a regular annual event?

Length. How long will your child be out of school? A few days may be reasonable for some children, but for others, the loss of those same days could set them up for long-term struggle. Per District Policy 5200.1, students are permitted up to 5 excused absences for personal or family vacation per academic year on top of already established seasonal breaks.

Ability. Will your child be overwhelmed by the missed instruction or collaboration with classmates? Does your child tend to get anxious or upset by situations like this? Take your child's temperament and ability into account.

Grade. The higher the grade, the harder it becomes to recover from missed days of school. Additionally, research is clearly indicating the consequences of chronic absenteeism for early reading and math skills (<https://www.attendanceworks.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/Attendance-in-the-Early-Grades.pdf>).



For more information on chronic absenteeism and/or attendance, feel free to contact me. You can reach me by phone at (402) 715-8774 or e-mail me at rlmcintosh@mpsomaha.org.

Respectfully,
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