March 29, 2017

Fax: (773) 534-5077

Dear Peterson Families,

Phone: (773) 534-5070

The 2016-2017 school year has gone quickly, and soon there will only be a quarter remaining in the school year. Throughout the year, Peterson educators have had high expectations for the learning of your child, and those expectations will continue into the future. As parents, I know that you also are committed to the success of your child in school and well beyond it.

In order to make sure that all students are successful at Peterson and throughout their lives, I am asking for all families to stay committed to daily attendance and to share the importance of daily, prompt attendance with your children.

Why does attendance matter?

The evidence is clear: students with good attendance are far more likely to be successful in school. High attendance rates are linked to high student achievement, and this is true for elementary, middle, and high school students.

Missing school causes children to fall behind academically. A study in California looked at kids who were chronically absent in both kindergarten and first grade. By the end of third grade, only one in six were proficient readers. Of the kids who missed less than five percent (5%) of school days, two-thirds were proficient readers. As another example, a Rhode Island study looked at kids who were chronically absent in kindergarten. In later grades, they scored twenty (20) percent lower than their peers in reading and mathematics. By middle school and high school, chronic absence is a leading warning sign that a student will drop out of school. Please note that it does not matter if absences are excused or unexcused, as they all represent lost time in the classroom and a lost opportunity to learn.

Additionally, attendance matters for Peterson as a whole as well. Attendance accounts for twenty percent (20%) of the rating of the school under Chicago Public Schools' School Quality Rating Policy (SQRP). Furthermore, while attendance is not directly linked to funding, the rating a school such as Peterson receives, such as 1+, 1, 2+, or 2, attracts families to the school, and the school receives a specific amount of money for every child enrolled. Student based budgeting, or

receiving funds based on enrollment, is the largest source of funding for schools. Therefore, attendance matters not only for individual students and their well-being, but it also matters for the welfare of Peterson Elementary as well.

How does Peterson support attendance for all students?

As a school, Peterson Elementary encourages all students to be in school on time, every day in several positive ways. The goal of the incentives is to recognize good attendance and to positively motivate all students. Here are all ways Peterson encourages good attendance:

- Each week, any homeroom with 98% attendance or greater receives recognition over the loudspeaker and an attendance trophy.
- Homerooms with 97% attendance or greater receive recognition over the loudspeaker.
- Each quarter, homerooms with 97% attendance or better earn snack and story time or a pizza party depending on the grade level of the homeroom.
- Students with perfect attendance for the quarter (no absences and no tardies) receive recognition and a perfect attendance ribbon at the quarterly award ceremony.

When should I keep my child home from school?

While the decision to send a child to school or keep a child home from school should ultimately be made by parents in consultation with a doctor, **the American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that parents consider three key questions when determining to keep their sick child out of school.** The two more important things to consider are:

1) Does the child's illness keep him or her from comfortably taking part in activities?

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2) Does the sick child need more care than the staff can give without affecting the health and safety of other children?

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If the answer to either of these questions is yes, then the child should **NOT go to school.** If the child is sent to school, then the school may call home and have the parents pick-up the child.

A third question to ask is:

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3) Could the other children get sick from being near your child?

However, it is important to note that according to the American Academy of Pediatrics, most common illnesses, like a cold, are not really harmful, and other children can catch illnesses before, during, or after your child is sick. Please note that according to the American Academy of Pediatrics, the following conditions or symptoms DO NOT REQUIRE EXCLUSION from school: common colds; a cough not associated with an infectious disease; a fever (Temperature Above 101 F Taken Orally); without any signs or symptoms of illness; or a rash without fever and behavioral changes. For a more comprehensive list of guidelines for when to include and exclude a child from care, please see: http://cfoc.nrckids.org/StandardView/3.6.1.1.

What do I do if my child is absent?

While the importance of daily attendance cannot be overstated, Chicago Public Schools has a policy in place if your child ultimately has to miss a day of school.

If your child is sick, please call the school at 773-534-5070 Ext. 18428 before 8:30am if you know your child will be absent. You may leave a message if no one answers. *Please include your child's first and last name, room number or teacher's name, and reason for absence*. Otherwise, we will need to call you regarding the absence. You will also receive an automated call from CPS regarding the absence.

You must send the "Reason for Absence Note" to your child's teacher regarding any absence or early dismissal upon their return to class. The "Reason for Absence Note" is attached and will be available at Peterson.cps.edu on the "Attendance" page.

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Please note that, according to CPS policy, an excused absence shall be due to:

- o your child's illness;
- your observance of a religious holiday;
- o death in the immediate family;
- o family emergency (explanation of emergency must be provided); or
- o circumstances or situations as deemed applicable by the principal.

You can find more information on attendance on the Peterson website at Peterson.cps.edu. Additionally, if you have any questions please do not hesitate to call the school at 773-534-5070 and speak with Ms. Hindaileh, Ms. Martino, Mr. Coleman, Mr. Topel, Ms. Gomez, or me.

Thank you for all you do to support the success and well-being of your child and Peterson. I look forward to continuing to work with you and having your child learn and grow at Peterson Elementary.

Respectfully,

Phone: (773) 534-5070

Kate Kane, Principal, Peterson Elementary

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