

“We can’t teach you if you’re not here!”

Dear Parents and Sponsors,

20 September 2012

Attendance is a serious issue for children, parents and schools. Simply, if students are not here, they cannot be taught. In 2011, the Director of Department of Defense Education Activity, Ms Fitzgerald, implemented a new Tardy and Attendance Regulation/Policy for all Department of Defense Dependents Schools called **Be Here!** We are implementing this Regulation to the letter at MC Perry Elementary School, beginning **1 October 2012**. The link for the entire Regulation is provided below, but I would like to share 5 Key components of the regulation that will have an immediate change and/or impact on parents and sponsors, concerning absenteeism.

Regulation numbers follow the components. The Regulation can be found at the link below.

1. “School, attendance is mandatory. Students are required to attend school for 180 instructional days. (page 1, 4b)
2. A **Student Educational Monitoring Plan** must be created and approved, with your child’s teacher before any non-emergency extended Leave/family vacation is taken. Assignments will be given with the expectation of them being **completed** with parental assistance if necessary and returned to the teacher. (page 6, 5e)
3. Without a **Student Educational Monitoring Plan**, absences for family vacations will be unexcused. This plan is to lessen the negative effect of extended absences (page 2, 2).
4. Referral of students with 5 days of unexcused absences (per semester) will be sent to the Student Support Team to review student progress and the impact of accumulated absences on student progress. (page 9, 7c)
5. Referral of students with 7 days of absences (per semester) may be sent to the local Command for appropriate intervention and support. (page 10, 5d)

Prior to (non-emergency) Extended Leave, the parent should meet with his/her child’s teacher to discuss the impact and risk to the student’s academic standing, and outline a **Student Educational Monitoring Plan** and assignments for the student during the absence. If the **Plan** is not **pre-**approved, the extended absence will be considered unexcused. Unexcused absences may jeopardize student placement to the next grade level; students “at-risk” due to excessive absences may be referred for Command assistance to help the parent ensure school attendance for his/her children.

In all cases, the **Student Educational Monitoring Plan** will require interventions by the parent while the student is out of school. This Plan is part of DoDEA’s initiative to vanguard student attendance. The Regulation can be found at <http://www.dodea.edu/attendance/> and <http://www.dodea.edu/attendance/upload/AttendancePolicy.pdf>

Reminders of existing MC PES policies:

- **Illnesses**-A doctor’s note is required if a student has been absent for 3 or more consecutive days.
- **Tardy**- If a student comes in after 7:50, he/she is tardy. A parent must sign the student in.
- **Excessive Tardies**-After 5 cumulative tardies (excused or unexcused) in a semester, the administration shall conference with the student and his/her parent or sponsor. Command assistance may be necessary to diminish the student’s excessive tardiness.
- **Detention**-After 5 cumulative unexcused tardies in a semester, the student will serve lunch detention.

Further reading from US military media concerning Attendance:

<http://www.stripes.com/news/pacific/dodea-implements-system-wide-attendance-policy-1.153932#>

<http://www.usafe.af.mil/news/story.asp?id=123273500>

*Parents, thank you for your cooperation! Students, please return **this portion** to the office after you and your parents have signed.*

I have read this new initiative and understand the importance of punctual, daily attendance at school.

Parents’ signature: _____

Student’s signature: _____

Comments, questions? _____

You can also email. Principal.perryes@pac.dodea.edu