

Script Suggestions and Communication Tips for Engaging Families

This document contains suggestions for engaging in outreach to students and caregivers to convey concern about attendance in a strength-based manner.

These suggested scripts do not have to be prescriptive as anyone, teacher, or other staff member, can modify the wording as needed to suit their purpose.

Just remember the idea is to make students and families feel supported in spite of the number of absences.

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# Tips When Engaging With Families

* **Gather information about the student** before making the call, when possible. (Example: Grade level, student’s parent/guardian information, additional siblings in the home, any extenuating circumstances/barriers for the family, additional names the student prefers to be called or student pronouns)
* **Provide families with a direct phone number** or specific name of a person they can speak with on the campus.
* **Have a community resource list** and/or district resource list available when engaging with families.
* **Use your “customer service” lens** when speaking to families. How can you help them?
* **Ask clarifying questions,** when necessary. Be conversational and approachable.

Check out the E3 Alliance ACE website at <https://ace.e3alliance.org> for more family engagement tools.

# Communicating via Text (emails, text, written)

## Scenario: Student has Several absences

Hello, I’m [**your name**].

I’m reaching out because I’m concerned about [**student name**]’s absences. It looks like [**student name**] is absent today, is [**student name**] okay?\* When they miss school they also miss valuable learning time and this can make them fall behind in their school work.

If you have already contacted the school attendance office, you can disregard this message. Thank you.

\*If they reply staying it’s due to a medical reason, route them directly to the nurse. If they reply stating it’s related to Mental Health or/and bullying make a counselor referral.

## Scenario: Student is Doing Well

Hello, I just wanted to say [**student name**] is doing great academically, as well as with their attendance! We are partners with you and we are here to support your child’s education. We appreciate your time, and we thank you for all that you do to support [**student name**]’s education. Have a great day!

# Communicating via Phone Call

**Tips:**

* **Give caregiver/family/guardian time to talk.** They may give you more information where you can assist to get their child to school.
* **Have an open discussion**. Depending on how the conversation is going and how open the caregiver is, the caller may want to add a comment about how we all face daily pressures and we want to help support you any way we can. Practice empathy and build a human connection. We all want the same thing: their child to be educated.

## Scenario: First Day of School Student(s) No Show

* Hello [**Caregiver/Parent/Guardian’s name**], I’m [**your name**] from [**school/district**]. We have started the 2022-2023 school year and are so excited to have our families back on campus.  We are looking forward to meeting [**student name**] and welcoming them to campus. Will [**student name**] be joining us at school tomorrow?
* Hi [**Caregiver/Parent/Guardian’s name**], my name is [**your name**] from [**school/district**]. We are calling our families who did not join us on the first day of school and wanted to see if there was anything our campus can do to better support your family? Does [**student name**]’s plan to return to [**campus/district**], this year?
* Hello [**Caregiver/Parent/Guardian’s name**], I am [**your name**] calling from [**school/district**], my role in/on [**school/district**] is [**your role**]. I am trying to reach the Parent or Guardian of [**student name**]. We are calling to check in with you and your family because we missed seeing everyone for the first day of school.  Will [**student name**] join us tomorrow at [**school start time**]?

## Scenario: Leaving a Voicemail - First Day of School Student(s) No Show

Hello [**Caregiver/Parent/Guardian’s name**], I’m [**your name**] from [**school/district**]. We have started the 2022-2023 school year and are so excited to have our families back on campus.  We are looking forward to meeting [**student name**] and welcoming them to campus. Please let us know if your family plans to return to our district/campus this year or if your educational plans have changed so we can ensure your child’s(rens) records are updated accurately. At your earliest convenience, please contact [**campus attendance Assistant Principal/Registrar name**] at [**contact phone number**]. Have a great day!

## Scenario: “My child missed the first day of school what do we need to do?”:

* We are so glad you called us today. Welcome back to a new school year with [**campus/district**]. We’re looking forward to meeting your student. School starts at [**class start time/tardy bell/doors open time**]. When your student arrives, staff will greet them at the doors and safely direct them to their classroom. Our campus is committed to your student’s learning. Are there any special accommodations the campus should to be aware of? Each day the teachers are working to keep students on track with learning so showing up on time keeps all students engaged with the activities/lessons. Please call the front desk if you have further questions.
* It is so good to hear from you! Thank you for calling us. We’re looking forward to seeing your student. This school year we are committed to ensuring all students feel safe on the campus. Our school day begins at [**class start time/tardy bell/doors open time**] and doors open at [**doors open time**].  We recommend your student(s) have the following items with them daily: [**List of Required Supplies**].

## Scenario: “We are new to the district/campus and just moved to the area. What do we need to do?”

* Thank you for reaching out to us. My name is [**your name**], and I am the [**your role**]. We are glad to have you join [**campus name**]. Welcome! If I could have a few more minutes of your time, I need to gather some more information to ensure I am guiding you in the right direction. Is that okay?
* Wonderful to have you and your family join us at [**campus name**]. We are excited about this school year! [**Principal/assistant principal name**] and staff look forward to meeting our new students. The day starts at [**school start time**]. Will your student join us tomorrow at school?

## Scenario: “My child is refusing to get on the bus to go to school because they are worried about getting sick. What do I do?”

* I am sorry to hear [**student name**] is struggling with coming back. We are aware a number of students and families who are worried. I am so glad you have reached out to us for assistance. We also understand this choice can be difficult to make. Let me connect you with our [**Campus Intervention Staff Name**], [**he/she/they**] is the [**staff title**]. They should be able to help. If they are not available, please leave a message with the best time to reach you and your contact number. My name is [**your name**] and I am the [**your role**]. If you should need anything further, please call me back.
* [**Parent/guardian name**], thank you for reaching out to [**campus name**] for support.  We are working with our families this year to ensure a safe and welcoming environment for all students. There are a few things I can share with you about our campus protocols. Do you have a few minutes? We understand our families are making challenging decisions right now and with your help we can work together to get [**student name**] more confident in showing up to our campus.

## Scenario: Multiple Absences - Initial Contact via phone call

* Hello [**Parent/guardian name**]. I’m [**your name**] from [**school name**]. How are you doing today? First, let me say it is a pleasure having [**student name**] as a part of our [**grade level**]. [or if caller knows student, include a comment about a quality the student has (e.g., [**student’s name**] has a wonderful smile, is always willing to help others, etc.)] I’m calling because, just like you, we want to do all we can to be sure [**student name**] is successful in school and one way we can help make this happen is to be sure [**she/he/they**] gets to school each day. When [**student name**] misses school [**she/he/they**] also misses valuable learning time and this can make [**her/him/them**] fall behind in [her/his/their] school work. Our attendance records show that [**student name**] has missed [**number**] days of school. Sometimes these absences add up before we know it so I thought I’d call to see if you might be able to help us out. How can we work together to get [**student name**] to school each day and on time? My staff and I are here to help and we look forward to working with you. Please don’t hesitate to let me know how we can be helpful to you and [**student name**] so [**she/he/they**] doesn’t miss more school. Thanks for taking time to talk today. I look forward to seeing [**student name**] soon!

# Check-in Script for Teachers

* Hi, this is [**your name**] from [**school name**] and I wanted to call and check in on [**student name**] and your family.  How are you all doing? Our goal is to support our [**school or district**] families and continue instruction for our students.  We are gathering information on our families’ needs so that we can offer the necessary support.