

NEW SHOREHAM SCHOOL DISTRICT
BLOCK ISLAND SCHOOL

The Block Island School realizes that periodic absences are to be expected and cannot be avoided in cases of necessity. We also expect that students should not be kept home due to student or family convenience. To ensure a quality education for our students, the Block Island School requests that parents/guardians not schedule school vacations or other nonessential activities during the posted school day. Because of our unique environment and school population, the time spent in class is of the utmost importance for a complete understanding of course materials and for the continuity of the entire class.

Good school attendance has a direct relationship to success in school. Expectation of regular and punctual attendance is necessary for students to develop self-discipline, achieve proper success, and enjoy the school community. When students are absent, the benefits of regular classroom instruction are lost and cannot be entirely regained. Parents have a responsibility to see that students are in school.

Learning is experiential. Each elementary grade relies heavily on a series of thematic units and lessons that include performance based curriculum objectives. These lessons cannot be replicated outside of the classroom. While attendance is fundamental to success in all subject areas, it is particularly crucial for performance-based classes. When a student misses a class in these areas, he or she is denied the benefit of a distinct group learning experience.

Students who are not actively participating in the classroom experience are missing some vitally important aspects of the learning process such as collaboration and socialization. It is often difficult for these students to transition back into the classroom after extended absences.

In addition to the concerns of faculty and staff for the well-being and best possible education for all students, the Compulsory Education Act of 1965 mandates student attendance in school. State law indicates that students who miss more than 30 days of a given school year may be retained in their current grade. In addition, schools who do not meet the requirement of 90 percent overall student attendance are in jeopardy of losing funding.

Absences up to Five Consecutive Days:

Prior to any planned absence of up to five (5) days, a parent-teacher conference is mandatory. The teacher(s) will articulate clear expectations pertaining to the quality of returned assignments. Parents will accept the responsibility of collecting assignments/lessons from all of the student's teachers. Elementary students benefit most from the immediate feedback of having their work corrected daily. Therefore, all corrected work must be submitted to teachers upon the child's return to school. Accountability for the work will be on the part of the parents. If assignments are not satisfactorily completed and corrected, a conference with the school principal and/or superintendent will be arranged.

Extended Absences – More than Five Consecutive Days:

Parents who intend to take their child out of school for more than five consecutive days must commit to an established home schooling program and must apply to the School Committee for approval. Please note that this process may take up to two months. By doing so, *parents* accept the responsibility for their child's educational program. Evidence of the completion of work and the corresponding grades must be submitted to the school administration upon the student's re-enrollment to the Block Island School.

Student Support Services

Special consideration must be given for any student who receives support services. Often these services include professional consultants from the mainland whose schedules cannot be altered. These services typically cannot be replicated outside of a school setting. If services will be unavailable during the absence, the parent(s) needs to confer with the profession consultants about the impact of missing multiple sessions, and the affect on the child's progress.