Create a Social Media Campaign: A Guide for Teens

Attendance **Works** ©
Advancing Student Success By Reducing Chronic Absence

Welcome to the Attendance Champions Challenge!

Through this challenge, the U.S. Department of Education is inviting schools and 501(c)(3) community organizations to engage young people between the ages of 13 and 19 to identify new ways of understanding barriers to school attendance and to propose viable solutions that build on evidence-based strategies.

Educators can consider using the Attendance Champions Challenge for project based learning or youth-led participatory action research leading to course credit. The challenge could be a focus for a student club or as a project for the school's student council. Young people are also invited to directly submit their ideas to the challenge. The challenge closes on November 29th. For more information, visit https://www.challenge.gov/?challenge=attendance-champions

This guide has some tips for creating a social media campaign to raise awareness about the importance of school attendance and the chronic absence crisis. Written for educators and students, it offers tips on investigating the chronic absence situation in your school or district and creating a social media campaign that can have a positive impact in the school and surrounding community.

Once developed, the social media campaign could be shared on the school's platforms, posted to the school website or used on personal accounts.

Step 1: Engage Your Peers in Conversation!

Before you start, take time to consider your campaign purpose. Look for how you can engage your peers in a conversation about chronic absenteeism. Why are some students not attending school? What messaging might motivate them to get to school more regularly?

Step 2: What is Chronic Absenteeism?

Chronic absenteeism is defined as missing 10% of school days, for any reason. That works out to18 days of an 180-day school year, or roughly two days per month. Research shows that when a student misses this many days of school it negatively impacts their ability to learn and achieve and can hinder their social development. Chronic absenteeism in a school or class affects the other students too, and makes it difficult for teachers to teach.

It might be helpful to find out what the chronic absenteeism rate is in your school or district. To find out if your district or school has chronic absence data, ask your district superintendent, school attendance officer/clerk or principal. If that's not available you can find out the district's chronic absence rate for the 2021-22 school year using this interactive map created by Johns Hopkins University and Attendance Works.

You can also look into school climate trends and other data that can provide insight. This can be collected using school climate surveys, student-developed/led surveys, empathy interviews or focus groups. Here are a few examples of these types of qualitative data tools. If your school or district has led similar efforts, ask for available information and results.

It might be helpful to look into the attendance policy. You should be able to find this on your school or district website. If this is not publicly available, contact the district, your school attendance officer/clerk or principal.
A few questions to consider when reviewing the local attendance policy:
- How is chronic absence defined?
- How does the school or district respond when students are absent?
- How does the policy handle students who receive suspensions, including their ability to make up missed work?

Step. 3: Why Are Your Peers Chronically Absent?

There are many reasons students miss school. Here is a list of common reasons – often called root causes for absenteeism – collected by Attendance Works.

A few questions to consider when thinking this through:
- What are the top reasons students don't show up at your school?
- Has your school asked students about why students do or do not come to school?
- What strategies is your school using to keep kids engaged and attending school?
- Is there a way to adjust the approach that might result in more students coming to school every day?

Step 4: Which Platform?

Select the social media platforms where your peers are most active. Each platform has its strengths. Here are a few:
- **Instagram:** Great for visuals and stories
- **Twitter:** Perfect for quick updates and conversations
- **Facebook:** Good for detailed posts
- **TikTok:** Good for short-form videos & candid content
- **YouTube:** Good for longer-form videos
- **Others that you prefer**

Step 5: Time to Develop Your Message!

Write clear, concise and catchy messages about why being in school matters. Use relatable language that connects with your peers. When developing your messages, consider these questions:
- What are the benefits of regular school attendance to you, to your peers?
- What are the common reasons/barriers students in your school face that make coming to school challenging?
- What can you can say that would help your peers attend school every day?

Tips for crafting messages:
- Emphasize positive, not negative, messages. Offer encouraging and energizing comments.
- Take into consideration a variety of student groups (i.e., students with disabilities, students from different cultural and economic backgrounds).

Short messaging examples*

It's never too late to come back to school. #ShowingUpMatters, no matter how long you have been away.

The door to your education is always open, and there is no wrong door. #ShowingUpMatters #AttendTodayAchieveTomorrow

Attending school regularly helps students feel better about school and themselves. #ShowingUpMatters

Talk with your school principal and teachers about the kind of support that you and students in your school need to attend and be successful at school every day. #SpeakUpForAttendance!

- Key messages for the community developed by [Attendance Works](#)

Step 6: Create Engaging Content

Mix different types of content to keep your audience engaged. You can even collaborate with friends, schools, community organizations, influential figures, etc. Here are some ideas:

- **Posts and Tweets:** Share facts, quotes, and personal stories.
- **Photos and Graphics:** Use eye-catching images and infographics.
  - [Attendance Works Instagram](#)
- **Videos:** Create short videos explaining your campaign, sharing stories, or demonstrating solutions.
  - **Student Video:** [A Pep Talk to Students on School Attendance](#)
- **Challenges and Hashtags:** Start a challenge (e.g., #AttendToday, #SpeakUpForAttendance! #Commit2Attend!) to encourage participation and sharing.

Step 7: Engage and Share

Don't forget to share your campaign with Attendance Works and the Department of Education by tagging us!

Conclusion

Creating a social media campaign is a powerful way to raise awareness and drive change. Remember, your voice matters! Good luck and thank you for making a difference!

* Examples from Washington Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction and Sacramento City Unified School District

Learn more about chronic absenteeism and steps to help improve engagement and attendance on the Attendance Works website https://www.attendanceworks.org/