



# What is the “BECCA Bill”?

- ▶ The BECCA laws were created in response to the murder of 12-year-old truant and runaway Becca Hedman. The Becca Laws are Washington’s procedures for serving truant students, at-risk youth, and children in need of services. The Becca laws also require schools to take proactive steps to keep children in school and to file truancy petitions if the school’s interventions fail.

# Everett School District Attendance Policy

- ▶ Per Everett Public Schools Policy 3122P, absences are excused only in the cases of participation in district or school-approved activities, illnesses and health conditions including but not limited to medical, counseling and dental appointments, family emergencies, religious observances, court/judicial proceedings, post-secondary, technical school or apprenticeship program visitation or scholarship interviews, state-recognized search and rescue activities consistent with RCW 28A.225.055, absences directly related to the student's homeless status, absences resulting from a disciplinary/corrective action, and absences upon which the school administration and the parent/guardian have mutually agreed. Furthermore, per Policy 3122P, "The Principal (or designee) has the authority to determine if an absence meets the above criteria for an excused absence."

# Gateway Absence Procedure

- ▶ When students are absent from school, in order to be considered “excused” we expect a call from a parent/guardian as soon as possible on the morning of the absence to verify the reason for the absence. Please use the 24-hour attendance reporting telephone line 425.385.6605 or the attendance email [GatewayMSAttendance@everettsd.org](mailto:GatewayMSAttendance@everettsd.org) and leave a brief message including the following: student name, student number, date of absence, reason for absence, and who is calling with the relation to the student. Calling or emailing the school prior to 8:30am on the day of the absence prevents the school from calling the parent/guardian at home or work to verify the absence. If a parent/guardian receives a phone call reporting an unexcused absence or tardy please call the attendance line as soon as possible to provide the reason for the absence. If we do not receive a phone call, students may provide a note from a parent/guardian within twenty-four hours of returning to school. Per district policy noted earlier, an administrator will determine if the absence is excused.
- ▶ When students are absent three or more days due to illness they are expected to return to school with a note from a doctor in order for the absences to be excused.

# Excused vs. Unexcused Absences

- ▶ **Excused Absence:** Absences for which there is parent/guardian documentation excusing the absences for one of the school/district-approved reasons or is authorized as school-related. For example: medical appointments, religious observations, illness, funeral, etc. A medical note is required for three or more days of absence in order for it to be considered excused.
- ▶ **Unexcused Absence:** No parent/guardian or medical documentation authorizing the absence OR an absence not meeting school/district criteria of excused. For example: family trips/vacations, unexplained “family emergencies”, sports activities, etc. Pre-notified unexcused absences may not fall under the required BECCA court filing.

# The BECCA bill requires that schools and school districts take the following actions:

- ▶ 1. **One (1) unexcused absence.** The school must inform the parent when there is one unexcused absence. This is done by a phone call home.
- ▶ 2. **Two (2) unexcused absences within 30 days .** After the second unexcused absence, the school is required to schedule a meeting with the parent/legal guardian and student to discuss the causes of the unexcused absences and find solutions to prevent further absences.
- ▶ 3. **Five (5) unexcused absences within 30 days.** The school must enter into a written truancy agreement with the family, where the parent, student and school agree on the necessary steps to resolve the student's attendance problem.
- ▶ 4. **Seven (7) unexcused absences during a month or at the tenth (10th) unexcused absence within a school year.** The school district will file a petition in juvenile court to order the student to attend school. If this court order is violated, the court will call for a Contempt Hearing and the student could be ordered to do community service or spend time in juvenile detention. The parent may be fined up to \$25.00 for each day of unexcused absence.

# What are some ways to help improve my attendance?

- ▶ Use school transportation to make sure I get to school on time
- ▶ Talk to my counselor
- ▶ Ask teachers for help
- ▶ Ask my administrators for help
- ▶ Sign an attendance contract
- ▶ Get connected with sports or clubs at school
- ▶ Stay on top of my grades & attendance using LMS
- ▶ Go to study club and MASH
- ▶ Ask for a wake up call

# At-Risk Youth (ARY)

**Purpose:** To obtain assistance and support from the juvenile court in maintaining the care, custody and control of the child and to assist in the resolution of family conflict, after alternatives to court intervention have been attempted.

**Definition:** An at-risk youth is defined by statute as a child under the age of 18 who meets at least one of the following three requirements:

1. Is absent from home for at least 72 consecutive hours without parental consent;  
or
2. Is beyond parental control such that his/her behavior endangers the health, safety, or welfare of the child or any other person; or
3. Has a substance abuse problem for which there are no pending criminal charges relating to the substance abuse.

**Who May File:** Only the parent of the child may file the ARY petition. "Parent" is defined as the person(s) having legal right to custody of the child and includes custodian or guardian.



# Child in Need of Services (CHINS)

**Purpose:** To obtain a court order mandating temporary placement (for up to six months) of the child in a residence other than the home of his/her parent because: a serious conflict exists between the parent and child that cannot be resolved by delivery of services to the family during continued placement of the child in the parental home, and reasonable efforts have been made to prevent the need for removal of the child from the parental home.

**Definition:** A child in need of services is defined by statute as a child under the age of 18 who meets at least one of the following three requirements:

1. Is beyond parental control such that the child's behavior endangers the health, safety, or welfare of the child or other person; OR
2. Has been reported to law enforcement as absent without consent for at least 24 consecutive hours from the parent's home, a crisis residential center, an out-of-home placement, or a court-ordered placement on two or more separate occasions and has exhibited a serious substance abuse problem or behaviors that create a serious risk of harm to the health, safety, or welfare of the child or any other person; OR
3. Is in need of necessary services, including food, shelter health care, clothing, educational, or services designed to maintain or reunite the family and lacks access to or has declined to utilize these services, and whose parents have evidenced continuing but unsuccessful efforts to maintain the family structure or are unable or unwilling to continue efforts to maintain the family structure.

**Who May File:** A child, parent, or DSHS may file a CHINS petition. A "parent" is defined as the person(s) having legal right to custody of the child and includes custodian or guardian.

# Commonly Asked Questions:

- ▶ **What are the costs?** Parent/Guardians are financially responsible for any and all costs associated with the support, treatment, and confinement of their children.
- ▶ Detention and attorney fees may be assessed.
- ▶ Fines may be assessed against the parents for noncompliance or inaction.
  
- ▶ **For Further Information Contact:**
- ▶ Snohomish County Juvenile Court
- ▶ 425/388-7800

# Gateway Middle School Contact Information

- ▶ Assistant Principal
  - ▶ Kalle Spear
- ▶ Attendance Secretary
  - ▶ Hilary Talt (425) 385-6603
- ▶ Gateway Middle School 24 hour attendance line
  - ▶ (425) 385-6605
- ▶ Gateway Middle School 24 hour attendance email
  - ▶ [GatewayMSAttendance@everettsd.org](mailto:GatewayMSAttendance@everettsd.org)
- ▶ Counselors
  - ▶ Jessen Schilaty - 8<sup>th</sup> grade - (425) 385-6624
  - ▶ Jocelyn Smith - 7<sup>th</sup> grade - (425) 385-6626
  - ▶ Ryan Miller - 6<sup>th</sup> grade - (425) 385-6612