

Communication PRinciples for Principals

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PREPARING PARENTS, STUDENTS, AND TEACHERS FOR WINTER BREAK



IDEA

Encourage parents to come up with fun and exciting activities based on what their child enjoys. Even a walk outside can be a fun adventure if parents make it an educational activity.

Winter break is a few weeks away and students and teachers are excited for some time off and a chance to spend the holidays with family and friends. Unfortunately, winter break is also an extended amount of time where children are not learning in the traditional sense. This can be detrimental to a child's learning, particularly if they do not exercise skills learned in the classroom while they are on break.

It is important to remember that just because school is out does not mean that children have to stop learning.

In this edition of PR for Principals you will find helpful tips that you can include in a newsletter to parents and families on keeping students engaged in the learning process during the winter break, as well as some safe reminders that parents, teachers and students will find helpful during icy and snowy weather conditions.

Keeping Students Engaged in Learning Even When School is Out

While students are out of school there are a number of things parents and students can do to encourage learning even when school is out. Taking advantage of the many learning opportunities students will have during the break is important. Parents are always teaching their children, but learning done at home can have more of an impact if parents and children recognize the opportunity to learn something new in whatever they do.

Traveling, visiting family, going to special events, or just working and relaxing around the house can turn into an exciting adventure if parents seize the opportunity to learn with their child.

Parents can plan a trip to the library, check out books, and read to younger children. If children are older, encourage them to read a book



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and have a discussion on what they read.

Even if families watch family-friendly television together, this process can encourage children to use higher-level thinking skills as parents ask questions and have children discuss what they are viewing.

Have your staff support some websites that may be helpful to students and parents to help keep them engaged. Some examples are:

- » Apples4theteacher.com is a site targeted at teachers or homeschooling parents that offers a wide array of activities for younger children. The site features helpful coloring worksheets, word games, puzzles, reading activities and some information about winter around the world.
- » A-to-Z Teacher Stuff also has a number of winter-themed activities for each grade level. Worksheets and crafts as well as science. Find worksheets and crafts, as well as science activities and cold-weather safety lessons.

By engaging in interactive and thought provoking activities over the winter break, you can ensure that students are continuing the learning process even when they are not in the classroom.

TIPS



It is important to be creative, think outside the box, and involve children in planning and the learning event to make the experience fun. Children need a break from school but that doesn't mean that learning has to stop in the meantime.

Tips to Help you and your school before and after winter break

Winter weather can pose many dangers: including slips, falls, frostbite, and hypothermia. You can avoid accident or injury by ensuring that your school, students, and staff are prepared for the winter months.

Information

Advise parents/teachers of the inclement weather policy and be sure that they know where they can go to find out this information.

Closure/Early Dismissal

Ensure that parents and school staff know of the procedures for severe ice, extreme cold or unsafe road conditions. Frequent reminds are helpful!

School Grounds

Driveways, walkways, and parking lots have to be cleared of snow and ice so that students can safely return to school. Coordinate early with contractors or installation support services to make sure you are ready.

Mats should be placed inside doorways to reduce the amount of snow and moisture students and staff track inside the building.

Outdoor Activities

Establish guidelines regarding outdoor activities like recess and physical education. If temperatures and/or wind chills drop below designated numbers, these activities should be held indoors.

Bus Drivers

All bus drivers will receive guidance on driving during snow storms, but parents should also know that pick-up times for their child(ren) may vary during inclement weather. It's important to remind parts of this fact.

Safety Education

Children should also learn the basics of winter weather safety-- including walking in snowy or icy conditions, how to react if they see someone slip or fall, or what to do if someone is suffering from frostbite or hypothermia.

Remembering and sharing these simple tips will help keep your students and their families safe this holiday season.

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