

# WHAT'S *New*

IN THE METROPOLITAN POLICE DEPARTMENT

*A weekly update for residents, visitors, and workers in the District of Columbia*



*Friday, February 17, 2012*

## DISTRICT LAUNCHES NEW AD CAMPAIGN PROMOTING SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

On Thursday, February 9, 2012, Mayor Vincent C. Gray, Deputy Mayor for Education De'Shawn Wright, Deputy Mayor for Health and Human Services Beatriz "BB" Otero and the Honorable Zoe Bush, Associate Judge, D.C. Superior Court unveiled a new citywide ad campaign that reinforces the link between consistent school attendance and academic success. Research shows that missing even one day of school every few weeks can prevent a student from graduating on time. The campaign features motivational stories of five District students who, in some cases, reversed failing grades and chronic truancy to get back on track.

Attending school every day and on time significantly increases your child's chances of succeeding in school and graduating from high school. Every day counts!

### Parents and Caregivers of Elementary School Students

It's important to start talking with your children about the importance getting to school on time every day. Here's why being at school every day counts.

- » Starting in kindergarten, too many absences (PDF) can cause students to fall behind in school.
- » Missing 10 percent (or about 18 days) can make it harder to learn to read.
- » Students can still fall behind if they miss just a day or two days every few weeks.

### Parents and Caregivers of Middle and High School Students

Even as children grow up and become more independent, it is still important to reinforce the importance of being at school on time every day and attending every class. Here's why being at school every day counts.

- » Sixth-grade students who are chronically absent are less likely to graduate.
- » A ninth grader who misses more than nine days per semester is less likely to graduate.
- » A high school graduate earns at least \$9,000 per year more than a high school dropout.

- » For more information and to find out what you can do to help your child, go to: <http://dcps.dc.gov>
- » For more information about the campaign, send a message to [dme@dc.gov](mailto:dme@dc.gov).



**Help Your Child Succeed in School:  
Build the Habit of Good Attendance Early**  
School success goes hand in hand with good attendance!

#### DID YOU KNOW?

- Starting in kindergarten, too many absences can cause children to fall behind in school.
- Missing 10 percent (or about 18 days) can make it harder to learn to read.
- Students can still fall behind if they miss just a day or two days every few weeks.
- Being late to school may lead to poor attendance.
- Absences can affect the whole classroom if the teacher has to slow down learning to help children catch up.

Attending school regularly helps children feel better about school—and themselves. Start building this habit in preschool so they learn right away that going to school on time, every day is important. Good attendance will help children do well in high school, college, and at work.

#### WHAT YOU CAN DO

- Set a regular bed time and morning routine.
- Lay out clothes and pack backpacks the night before.
- Find out what day school starts and make sure your child has the required shots.
- Introduce your child to her teachers and classmates before school starts to help her transition.
- Don't let your child stay home unless she is truly sick. Keep in mind complaints of a stomach ache or headache can be a sign of anxiety and not a reason to stay home.
- If your child seems anxious about going to school, talk to teachers, school counselors, or other parents for advice on how to make her feel comfortable and excited about learning.
- Develop back-up plans for getting to school if something comes up. Call on a family member, a neighbor, or another parent.
- Avoid medical appointments and extended trips when school is in session.

#### When Do Absences Become a Problem?



**CHRONIC ABSENCE**  
18 or more days

**WARNING SIGNS**  
10 to 17 days

**GOOD ATTENDANCE**  
9 or fewer absences

Note: These numbers assume a 180-day school year.

For more on school readiness, visit [attendanceworks.org](http://attendanceworks.org) and [reachoutandread.org](http://reachoutandread.org)

©2011 Reach Out and Read, Inc. All rights reserved. ATTIPS\_0011

## HYPOTHERMIA SEASON RUNS THROUGH MARCH 31

The weather forecasters say it might get cold enough for snow on Sunday night. As the temperature drops, the concern for hypothermia increases. The Department of Human Services' Hypothermia Watch Partner Program is designed to prevent hypothermia deaths among the homeless by providing District citizens with a hotline number they can call to have homeless persons who are outside in freezing temperatures picked up by a van and transported to a local shelter. For more information, call the shelter hotline 1 (800) 535-7252.

The hypothermia season runs through March 31. The hours of operation for the hypothermia alert are 7pm to 7am, but will be extended until the temperature or wind chill factor rises above 32 degrees. Those who do not come in from the cold when hypothermia alerts are issued put themselves in life-threatening positions. The body enters into a hypothermia state when its temperature is below 95 degrees.

**Signs and Symptoms.** Hypothermia usually comes on gradually. As the body temperature of a cold-exposed person decreases, impaired consciousness, confusion, or disorientation may occur. Often, people aren't aware that they need medical attention. Common signs to look for are uncontrollable shivering, which is your body's attempt to generate heat through muscle activity, and the "-umbles" — stumbles, mumbles, fumbles and grumbles. These behaviors may be a result of changes in consciousness and motor coordination caused by hypothermia.

Seek immediate medical care for any person who has been exposed to cold air or water and who is shivering, appears disoriented, and shows a lack of coordination, has cold and pale skin, appears tired, and is slurring speech. Try to keep the person warm and dry, preferably indoors or at least out of the wind, until help arrives.

**Risk factors.** Being in extreme cold, wearing wet clothes — especially in the presence of wind — and being in cold water can all play a part in increasing your chances of hypothermia. People who are elderly, very young, mentally impaired, intoxicated or who have certain health issues are especially vulnerable. In addition, a variety of medications, principally sedative-hypnotics, may predispose users to hypothermia; ethanol and neuroleptic medications particularly increase susceptibility to cold.

**Prevention.** Avoid alcohol consumption and the use of illegal substances, because these may increase your risk of hypothermia. Before you or your children step out into cold air, remember the advice that follows with the simple acronym COLD:

- » **C** for cover. Wear a hat to prevent body heat from escaping.
- » **O** for overexertion. Avoid activities that would cause you to sweat a lot.
- » **L** for layers. Wear loose fitting, layered, lightweight clothing.
- » **D** for dry. Stay as dry as possible.

» For more information on the signs and symptoms of hypothermia and ways to prevent hypothermia, see "Winter Plan" on the Department of Human Services Website at: <http://dhs.dc.gov/>

» The Department of Human Services' Hypothermia Watch Partner Program is designed to prevent hypothermia deaths among the homeless. For more information, call the shelter hotline at: 1 (800) 535-7252.

DATA BOX	
<b>Homicides</b>	as of 2/17/12
2012: 10	
2011: 12	
% Change: -16.7%	
Closure Rate: 50.0% (5 closures)	
<b>Firearm Recoveries</b>	as of 2/13/12
February: 68	
2012 Total: 275	
<b>Traffic Fatalities</b>	as of 2/17/12
2012: 3	
2011: 5	
% Change: -40.0%	

### NEWS & NOTES

#### Also Noteworthy

**Join the MPD Reserve Corps.** The MPD Reserve Corps, a volunteer policing program is seeking new members. Applications are now being accepted at <http://dcpolice.jobs>.

**Preventing terrorism is everybody's business.** If you SEE something, SAY something. Call the MPD at (202) 727-9099 to report suspicious activity that has already occurred. Call 911 to report in-progress threats or emergencies. Learn how you can help fight terrorism at <http://mpdc.dc.gov/operationTIPP>.

**Report Crimes Against Children through the CyberTipline.** The CyberTipline is a Congressionally-mandated means for reporting crimes against children. Report crimes 24-hours a day, 7 days a week by calling 1-800-843-5678 or reporting crimes online at <http://www.cybertipline.com>.

#### Information, ideas, or comments about this service?

Send an e-mail to **KAYLIN CASTELLI**, Manager of Internet Communications, at [kaylin.castelli@dc.gov](mailto:kaylin.castelli@dc.gov)

#### Would you like *What's New in the MPD* emailed to you each week?

Register with DC.Gov at <http://dc.gov/DC/Subscribe/Email+Alerts>

LEARN MORE AT  
**mpdc.dc.gov**