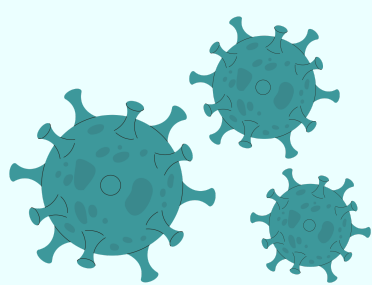
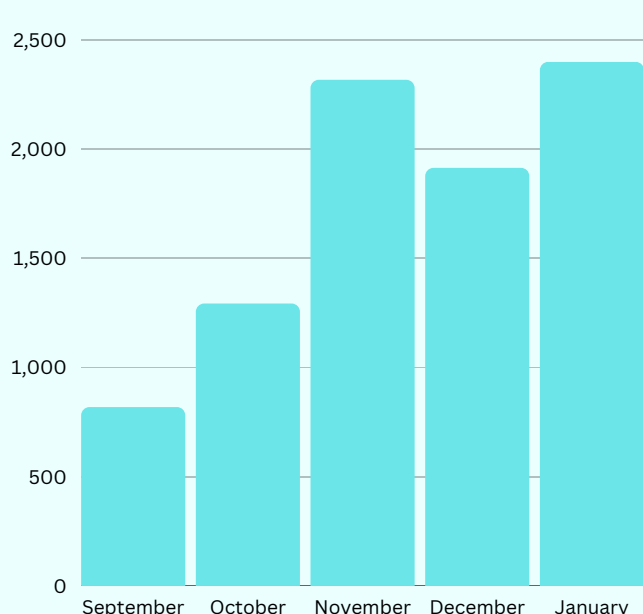


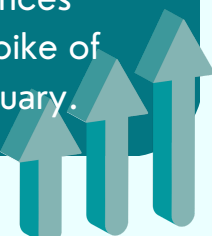
WHY ARE SO MANY STUDENTS ABSENT?



On January 18th, data was collected on the amount of student absences at PHS from September to January of 2022-2023. Interestingly, the trends in this data were quite unexpected, as absences seemed to be high in only certain months in the fall and winter. So, let's look at the data and try to determine why that is, and absences' impact on students.



After observing the row chart, we can see how there was a 1,024 spike of absences from October to November, and a spike of 485 absences from December to January.



+44.2% in November
+20.2% in January

Is it sickness?

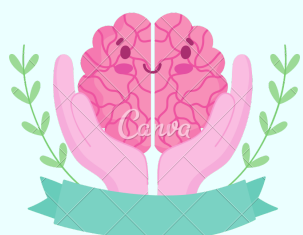
According to the [CDC guidelines](#), flu season in the U.S.A. usually occurs in the fall and winter seasons. While influenza viruses spread year-round, usually flu activity peaks between December and February. Because of this factor, it's possible that the spikes in November and January could be linked to the when seasonal flu peaks the most.



In an interview with Donna Zimmerman, Anthony building nurse, she also points out that those months are the main targets for the flu and other viruses, and by being back in school, they can spread faster since we are close together.

"...We're inside, we're sharing our germs, we stay home sick..."
— Ms. Zimmerman

Or is it something else?



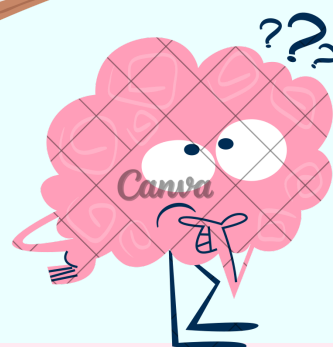
Mental health break

- Some students need to take a mental health break to relax their mind, and responsibilities. That way they can regroup, and collect their thoughts. Mental health days are great to have when you are stressed out and feel like you're overworking yourself.



Medical issues

- A student may also miss school because of a their physical or mental health. Whether it be an injury, asthma, depression, doctors appointment, etc.



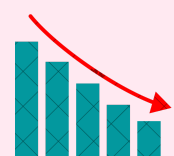
Family needs

- There are times when things happen in the family and someone may need to leave school to tend to those issues, or take time out of school to visit that family if they need to.

In an interview with assistant principal, Dr. Cetta, she talks about the big difference she has seen in students with excessive unexcused vs excused absences.



"You have to be in school in order to perform at your best level...So a student with excessive absences may perform negatively in their academics...In my 6 years as an assistant principal, that's a consistent trend. That's why we take absences so seriously... and when I say absences, I mean unexcused absences. Cause there's a little bit of a difference," said Dr. Cetta.



"If we have documentation for absences and they're acceptable according to board policy, those absences count as excused. And I have seen students with high numbers of excused absences be able to maintain their academic performance, and a lot of times that's because those students go on home instruction," she added.



Here are some facts about attendance from [Attendance works](#):

- Absenteeism in the first month of school can predict poor attendance throughout the school year. Half the students who miss 2-4 days in September go on to miss nearly a month of school.
- Research shows that missing 10 percent of the school, or about 18 days in most school districts, negatively affects a student's academic performance. That's just two days a month and that's known as chronic absence.
- Over 8 million U.S. students miss nearly a month of school each year.

Likewise, [American University: School of Education Online](#) says...

- Approximately 800 school districts reported more than 30 percent of their students missed at least three weeks of school.
- Chronic absenteeism rates are highest in high schools, where about one in five students is chronically absent.
- Every state had schools that reported 10 percent or more of students as chronically absent.

After going through and doing an analysis with what we could, it's possible to conclude that yes, it's okay to take a break from school, but absences, especially repetitive unexcused absences, can have a big impact on students because you have to make up for all the time you lost when you were out.

"Each person deserves a day away in which no problems are confronted, no solutions searched for. Each one of us needs to withdraw from cares which will not withdraw from us."
— Maya Angelou

BUT Absences add up!