

ATTENDANCE

School board policies and all building rules relating to attendance shall be printed and made available to all students and parents in each school. Each school shall implement a system designed to maintain accurate student attendance records and to periodically report attendance information to parents. Each school shall institute a system designed to motivate students toward good attendance.

The responsibility for the development and maintenance of regular school attendance rests with the parents, students, teachers, and administration. Their duties and responsibilities are as follows:

PARENTS:

1. Are responsible for sending their children to school as required by RCW 28A.225.010.
2. Have a responsibility to make sure their children are in school on time each day.
3. Have a responsibility to encourage their children to come to school with a mental attitude that fosters learning.
4. Have a responsibility to call the school, before the beginning of the student day, each and any day that their child is going to be absent.
5. Provide school officials with a written excuse for each school absence within two school days of the student returning to school.

STUDENTS:

1. Are responsible for attending school regularly and remaining in school until they are officially excused.
2. Are responsible not only for being in school but for maintaining a positive attitude toward learning so they will be able to take advantage of the academic and extracurricular opportunities offered at school.

TEACHERS:

1. Are responsible for reporting and maintaining accurate records of student attendance.
2. Are responsible for requiring a written excuse from a parent or guardian or an admittance slip from the school office for all cases of student absence from the school or class.
3. Are responsible for bringing to the attention of parents, students, counselors, and administrators attendance patterns that may adversely affect a student's academic growth.

ADMINISTRATORS:

1. Are responsible for developing and administering procedures appropriate and necessary to ensure that board policy will be carried out.
2. Are responsible for bringing to parents' attention poor attendance patterns of their children and for working with parents to improve such attendance patterns.

Excused and Unexcused Absences

Students are expected to attend all assigned classes each day. Teachers shall keep a record of absence and tardiness.

Excused Absences

The following are valid excuses for absences and tardiness. Assignments and/or activities not completed because of an excused absence or tardiness may be made up in the manner provided by the teacher. When possible, the parent is expected to notify the school office on the morning of the absence. The parent shall send a signed note of explanation with the student upon his/her return to school, but no later than two school days after returning to school. Adult students (those over 18), emancipated students (those over 16 who have been emancipated by court action) shall notify the school office of their absences with a signed note of explanation.

1. Participation in school-approved activity.
2. Absence due to illness, health condition, or family emergency.
3. Absence resulting from disciplinary actions or short-term suspension. As required by law, students who are removed from a class or classes as a disciplinary measure or students who have been placed on short-term suspension shall have the right to make up assignments or exams missed during the time they were denied entry to the classroom if the effect of the missed assignments shall be a substantial lowering of the course grade.
4. Extended illness or health condition. If a student is confined to home or hospital for an extended period, the school shall arrange for the accomplishment of assignments at the place of confinement whenever practical. If the student is unable to do his/her schoolwork or if there are major requirements of a particular course that cannot be accomplished outside of class, the student may be required to take an incomplete or withdraw from the class without penalty.
5. Excused absence for chronic health condition. Students with a chronic health condition which interrupts regular attendance may qualify for placement in a limited attendance and participation program. The student and his/her parent shall apply to the principal or counselor, and a limited program shall be written following the advice and recommendations of the student's medical advisor. The principal shall approve the recommended limited program. Staff shall be informed of the student's needs, though the confidentiality of medical information shall be respected at the parent's request.
6. Military Deployment and Reunion Leave: A student shall be excused, at parent request, for up to one day on each occasion of a parent is being deployed for military duty for an extended period. A student shall be excused, at parent request, for up to one day on each occasion of a parent returning from an extended military deployment.
7. Other excused absences. Situations may arise where a parent would like to remove their child from school for an activity or circumstance not listed above. In such cases, the absence will be excused if the student gains prior approval by the principal or designee. The principal or designee shall not excuse an absence that has a serious adverse effect on the student's educational progress.

Unexcused Absences

Unexcused absences fall into two categories:

- Submitting a signed excuse, which does not constitute an excused absence as defined previously; or
 - Failing to submit any type of excuse statement signed by the parent, guardian, or adult student, within 2 school days of returning to school. This type of absence is also defined as truancy. Elementary and middle school principals may waive this requirement, on a case-by-case basis, if other satisfactory and acceptable proof of an excusable absence is provided in a timely fashion. All excuses shall be documented.
1. A telephone call or warning letter to the parent shall follow each unexcused absence of the student. School officials shall inform the parents of the potential consequences of additional unexcused absences.
 2. After two unexcused absences within any month, a conference shall be held between the parent, the student, and the principal. At such a conference, the principal, student, and parent shall consider: adjusting the student's program, providing more individualized instruction, transferring the student to another school, assisting the student in obtaining supplementary services that might eliminate or ameliorate the causes of absence, or imposing other corrective actions that are deemed appropriate. If a regularly scheduled parent-teacher conference is to take place within 30 days of the second unexcused absence, then the school district may schedule this conference on this day.

Not later than the student's fifth unexcused absence in a month, the district shall enter into an agreement with the student and the parents that establishes school attendance requirements, refer the student to a community truancy board, or file a petition and affidavit with the juvenile court alleging a violation of RCW 28A.225.010.

3. If the above action fails to correct the attendance problem, the student shall be declared a habitual absentee. No later than the seventh unexcused absence within any month during the current school year or upon the tenth unexcused absence during the current school year, the district shall file a petition and affidavit with the juvenile court alleging a violation of RCW 28A.225.010 by the parent, the student, or the parent and student. The petition consists of written notification to the court alleging that:
 - 3.1 The student has unexcused absences in the current school year (petitions must be filed if the student has seven or more unexcused absences within any month during the current school year or ten or more unexcused absences in the current school year, but a petition may be filed earlier; also, unexcused absences accumulated in another school or school district shall be counted for all purposes in this procedure).
 - 3.2 Actions taken by the school district have not been successful in reducing the student's absences from school; and
 - 3.3 Court intervention and supervision are necessary to assist the school district to reduce the student's absences from school.

Additionally, the petition shall include the student's name, age, school, and residence and the names and residences of the student's parents. The petition must include facts that support the allegations made in the petition, must generally request relief available under the statute, and must describe what the court might order. Petitions may be served by certified mail with return receipt requested, but if such service is unsuccessful, personal service is required.

At the district's choice, a person who is not an attorney at hearings related to truancy petitions may represent the district.

4. A student who has been expelled for attendance violations may petition the superintendent for reinstatement. Such petition may be granted upon presentation of a firm and unequivocal commitment to maintain regular attendance.
5. Any student who presents false evidence, with or without parental consent, in order to wrongfully qualify for an excused absence, shall be subject to the same corrective action that would have occurred had the false excuse not been used.
6. Students who are six or seven years of age that are enrolled in the district are required to attend school and their parents are responsible for ensuring that they attend. Parents who wish to withdraw their children before the children are eight years old and against whom no truancy petition has been filed may withdraw the students from school. When a six or seven year old student has unexcused absences, the district shall do the following:
 - 6.1 Notify the parent or guardian in writing or by telephone after one unexcused absence in any month.
 - 6.2 Request a conference with the parent or guardian and child to analyze the causes of the student's absences after two unexcused absences in any month (a regularly scheduled teacher-parent conference held within 30 days may substitute).
 - 6.3 Take steps to eliminate or reduce the student's absences, including: adjusting the school program, the school, the course assignments or providing more individualized or remedial instruction, offering enrollment in alternative schools or programs, or assisting in obtaining supplementary services.
 - 6.4 After seven unexcused absences in a month or ten in a school year, the district shall file a truancy petition.

Students are expected to be in class on time. When a student's tardiness becomes frequent or disruptive, the student shall be referred to the principal or counselor. If counseling, parent conferencing, or disciplinary action is ineffective in changing the student's attendance behavior, he/she may be suspended from class.

All sanctions imposed for failure to comply with the attendance policies and procedures shall be implemented in conformance with state and district regulations regarding corrective action or punishment.

Administrative Procedure
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