

STUDENTS

Excused and Unexcused Absences

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

1. Excused Absences

Regular school attendance is necessary for mastery of the educational program provided to students of the district. Students at times may appropriately be absent from class. The following principles shall govern the development and administration of attendance procedures within the district:

- A. The following are valid excuses for absences:
- a. Participation in a district or school approved activity or instructional program
  - b. Illness, health condition, or medical appointment (including, but not limited to, medical counseling, dental, or optometry);
  - c. Religious or cultural purpose including observance of a religious or cultural holiday or participation in religious or cultural instruction;
  - d. District or school-approved activities or instructional programs;
  - e. Family emergencies, including, but not limited to, a death or illness;
  - f. Court, judicial proceedings, or jury service;
  - g. Post-secondary, technical school, or apprenticeship program visitation, or scholarship interview;
  - h. State-recognized search and rescue activities consistent with state law;
  - i. Absence directly related to the student's homeless status;
  - j. Absence resulting from a disciplinary or corrective action;
  - k. Other activity as mutually agreed upon by an administrator, parent/guardian, or emancipated youth.

The principal or designee has the authority to determine if an absence meets one of the above criteria for an excused absence.

- B. If an absence is excused, the student shall be permitted to make up all missed assignments outside of class under reasonable conditions and time limits established by the appropriate teacher, except that in participation-type classes a student's grade may be affected because of the student's inability to make up the activities conducted during a class period.
- C. An excused absence shall be verified by the parent(s) or guardian(s), emancipated or appropriately aged student, or school authority responsible for the absence.

2. Unexcused Absences

- A. Any absence from school for the majority of hours or periods in an average school day is unexcused unless it meets one of the criteria above for excused absence.

- B. As a means of instilling values of responsibility and personal accountability, a student whose absence is not excused shall experience the consequences of his or her absence. A student's grade shall be affected if a graded activity or assignment occurs during the period of time when the student is absent. The school shall notify a student's parent(s) or guardian(s) in writing or by telephone whenever the student has failed to attend school after one (1) unexcused absence within any month during the current school year.
- C. A conference with the parent or guardian will be held after two unexcused absences within any month during the current school year. A student may be suspended or expelled for habitual truancy. Prior to suspension or expulsion, the parent(s) or guardian(s) shall be notified in writing in his or her primary language that the student has unexcused absences. A conference shall be scheduled to determine what corrective measures should be taken to ameliorate the cause for the student's absences from school. If the parent/guardian does not attend the conference, they will be notified of the steps the district has decided to take to reduce the student's absences.
- D. Not later than the student's fifth unexcused absence in a month, the district will enter into an agreement with the student and parents/guardian that establishes school attendance requirements, will refer the student to a community truancy board, or will file a petition and affidavit with the juvenile court alleging a violation of RCW 28A.224.010. If such action is not successful, the district shall file a petition with the juvenile court alleging a violation of RCW 28A.225.010 by the parent/guardian, student, or parent/guardian and student not later than the seventh (7<sup>th</sup>) unexcused absence by a student within any month during the current school year or upon the tenth (10<sup>th</sup>) unexcused absence during the current school year.

All suspensions and/or expulsions shall be reported in writing to the superintendent within 24 hours after imposition.

The superintendent shall enforce the district's attendance policies and procedures. Because the full knowledge and cooperation of students and parent(s) or guardian(s) are necessary for the success of the policies and procedures, procedures shall be disseminated broadly and made available to parent(s) or guardian(s) and students annually.

Cross References:	Board Policy 3320 Board Policy 3230	Suspensions or Expulsions Student Privacy
Legal References:	RCW 13.34.300 RCW 28A.225 WAC 180-16-215(4) WAC 392-400-235 WAC 392-400-260	Failure to cause juvenile to attend school as evidence under neglect petition Compulsory School Attendance Minimum 180 school day year Discipline – Conditions and limitations Long-term suspension – Conditions and limitations

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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.

- A. Participation in school-approved activity. To be excused this absence must be authorized by a staff member, and the affected teacher must be notified prior to the absence unless it is clearly impossible to do so.
- B. Absence due to illness, health condition, family emergency or religious purposes. When possible, the parent(s) or guardian(s) is expected to notify the school office on the morning of the absence or send a signed note of explanation with the student upon his or her return to school. A parent(s) or guardian(s) may request that a student be excused from attending school in observance of a religious holiday. In addition, a student, upon the request of his or her parent(s) or guardian(s), may be excused for a portion of the school day to participate in religious instruction provided such is not conducted on school property. A student shall be allowed one makeup day for each day of absence.
- C. Absence for parental-approved activities. This category of absence shall be counted as excused for the purposes agreed to by the principal and the parent(s) or guardian(s). An absence may not be approved if it causes a serious adverse effect on the student's educational progress. In participation-type classes (e.g., certain music and physical education classes) the student may not be able to achieve the objectives of the unit of instruction as a result of absence from class. In such a case, a parent(s) or guardian(s) –approved absence would have an adverse effect upon the student's educational progress which would ultimately be reflected in the grade for such a course. A student, upon the request of his or her parent(s) or guardian(s), may be excused for a portion of a school day to participate in religious instruction provided such is not conducted on school property or otherwise involves the school to any degree.
- D. 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.
- E. 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 or her schoolwork, or if

there are major requirements of a particular course which cannot be accomplished outside of class, the student may be required to take an incomplete or withdraw from the class without penalty.

- F. 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 or her parent(s) or guardian(s) 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. Staff shall be informed of the student's needs, though the confidentiality of medical information shall be respected at the request of the parent(s) or guardian(s).

Unexcused absences

Unexcused absences fall into two categories:

1. Submitting a signed excuse which does not constitute an excused absence as defined previously; or
  2. Failing to contact the school or submit any type of excuse statement signed by the parent(s) or guardian(s) or adult student. This type of absence is also defined as truancy.
- A. After each unexcused absence, the parent(s) or guardian(s) shall be notified by letter or by the telephone. Each notice shall be in writing in English or in the primary language of the parent(s) or guardian(s).
- B. After two (2) unexcused absences within any month, a conference shall be held between the parent(s) or guardian(s), student and principal or designee. At such conference the school representative, student and parent(s) or guardian(s) shall consider: adjusting the student's program; providing more individualized instruction; preparing the student for employment with specific vocational experience or both; transferring the student to another school; assisting the student to obtain supplementary services that might eliminate or ameliorate the causes of absence or, imposing other corrective actions that are deemed to be appropriate.
- C. If the above action fails to correct the attendance problem, the student shall be declared a habitual absentee. The principal shall interview the student and his or her family and prescribe corrective action, which may include suspension for the current semester and expulsion. Upon the fifth (5<sup>th</sup>) unexcused absence within any month during the current school year or upon the tenth (10<sup>th</sup>) unexcused absence during the current school year, the district shall file a petition with the juvenile court alleging a violation of RCW 28A.225.010 by the parent, student, or parent and student. The petition consists of written notification to the court alleging that:
1. The student has five (5) or more unexcused absences within any month during the current school year or ten (10) or more unexcused absences in the current school year;
  2. Actions taken by the school district have not been successful in substantially reducing the student's absences from school; and

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.

- D. A student may be declare a habitual truant and may at the recommendation of the principal be expelled or placed on long-term suspension for attendance violations. The student may petition the superintendent for reinstatement. Such petition may be granted upon indication by the student and parent(s) or guardian(s) that the student has made a commitment to attend school on a regular basis.
- E. Any student who presents false evidence, with or without the consent of his or her parent(s) or guardian(s), 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.

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(s) or guardian(s) conferencing or disciplinary action is ineffective in changing the student's attendance behavior, he or she may be suspended from the 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. (See policies 3330 through 3332.)