

## STUDENTS

### Excused and Unexcused Absences

Students are expected to attend all assigned classes each day. Teachers shall keep an accurate record of absence and tardiness. Absences shall be verified in writing.

#### I. Excused Absences

The following are valid excuses for absences and tardiness. Missed work assignments and activities may be made up in the manner prescribed 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(s) must be notified prior to the absence unless it is clearly impossible to do so.

##### 1. Absence due to:

- a. Illness, health condition or medical appointment (including, but not limited to, medical, counseling, dental, optometry, pregnancy, and in-patient or out-patient treatment for chemical dependency or mental health) for the student or person for whom the student is legally responsible;
- b. Family emergency including, but not limited to, a death or illness in the family; religious purposes; court, judicial proceeding court-ordered activity, or serving on a jury;
- c. Post-secondary, technical school or apprenticeship program visitation, or scholarship interview;
- d. State recognized search and rescue activities consistent with [RCW 28A.225.055](#);
- e. Circumstances directly related to the student's homeless or foster care/dependency status;
- f. Circumstances related to deployment activities of a parent or legal guardian who is an active duty member consistent with [RCW 28A.705.010](#);
- g. Suspensions, expulsions or emergency expulsions imposed pursuant to [WAC 392-400](#) if the student is not receiving educational services and is not enrolled in qualifying "course of study" activities as defined in [WAC 392-121-107](#);
- h. Student safety concerns, including those related to threats, assaults, or bullying.
- i. Circumstances related to a student's migrant status;
- j. Circumstances related to COVID-19:
  - i. Student illness, health condition, or medical appointments;
  - ii. Caring for a family member;
  - iii. Student's employment or other family obligations during regularly scheduled school hours that are temporarily necessary due to COVID-19 until other arrangements can be made, including placement in a more flexible education program;

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- iv. Student's parent's work schedule or other obligations during regularly scheduled school hours, until other arrangements can be made;
  - v. Student's lack of necessary instructional tools, including internet broadband access or connectivity; or
  - vi. COVID-19 related circumstances as determined between school and parent or emancipated youth.
- B. Absence for parental-approved activities. This category of absence shall be counted as excused for purposes agreed upon by the principal and the parent/guardian prior to absence. 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 or guardian-approved absence would have an adverse effect on the student's educational progress which would ultimately be reflected in the grade for such a course. Students, upon the request of their parent/guardian, 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.
- C. 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, long-term suspension, or expulsion, shall have the right to make up assignments or exams missed during the time they were denied entry to the classroom. The school district will provide an opportunity for students to receive educational services during a suspension or expulsion defined in [WAC 392-400-610](#).
- D. Extended illness or health condition. If a student is confined to home or hospital for an extended period, the school will arrange for the accomplishment of assignments at the place of confinement whenever practicable. If the student is unable to do his/her school work, 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.
- E. Excused absence for chronic health condition. Students with a chronic health condition that interrupts regular attendance may qualify for placement in a limited attendance and participation program. Students and their parents/guardians 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 recommended limited program will be approved by the principal. Staff will be informed of the student's needs, though the confidentiality of medical information shall be respected at the parents' request.

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- F. Required Conference for Elementary School Students. If an elementary school student has five (5) or more excused absences in a single month during the current school year or ten (10) or more excused absences in the current school year, the district will schedule a conference with the student and their parent(s) at a reasonably convenient time. The conference is intended to identify barriers to the student's regular attendance and to identify supports and resources so the student may regularly attend school.

The conference must include at least one school district employee, preferably a nurse, counselor, social worker, teacher or community human service provider, and may occur on the same day as the scheduled parent-teacher conference, provided it takes place within thirty days of the absences. If the student has an Individualized Education Program (IEP) or a Section 504 Plan, the team that created that program must reconvene. A conference is not required if prior notice of the excused absences was provided to the district or if a doctor's note has been provided and a plan is in place to ensure the student will not fall behind in their coursework.

- G. Tiered Response System for Students Who are Absent from Remote Learning. Students who are marked absent from remote learning will receive interventions and services consistent with the tiered response system for student absences implemented by the District pursuant to [WAC 392-401A-045](#). Under the tiered response system, the District will:

1. Monitor daily attendance data for all students who are absent from remote learning, whether excused or unexcused;
2. Make multiple attempts to contact the families regarding student absences using multiple modalities and in the parent's home language;
3. Provide daily notification of absences to parents;
4. Provide outreach from the student's school to determine student needs, such as basic needs, connectivity and hardware, connection with health and social services as necessary;
5. Provide differentiated supports to students that address the barriers to attendance and participation, including universal supports for all students and tiered interventions for students at-risk of and experiencing chronic absence; and
6. When feasible and appropriate, transition students to full-time in-person learning or other program to accommodate the student's needs.

II. Unexcused Absences

An "unexcused absence" means that a student has failed to attend the majority of hours or periods in an average school day, has failed to comply with a more restrictive school district policy on absences, or has failed to comply with alternative learning experience program attendance requirements.

A. Unexcused absences fall into two categories:

1. The parent, guardian or adult student submits an excuse that does not meet the definition of an excused absence as defined above; or
2. The parent, guardian, or adult student fails to submit any type of excuse statement, whether by phone, e-mail or in writing, for an absence.

B. Each unexcused absence within any month of the current school year will be followed by a letter or phone call to the parent informing them of the consequences of additional unexcused absences. The school will make reasonable efforts to provide this information in a language in which that parent is fluent. A student's grade will not be affected if no graded activity is missed during such an absence.

C. After three unexcused absences within any month of the current school year, a conference will be held between the principal, student and parent to analyze the causes of the student's absenteeism. If a regularly scheduled parent-teacher conference is scheduled to take place within thirty days of the third unexcused absence, the school may schedule the attendance conference on the same day. If the parent/guardian does not attend the scheduled conference, the conference may be conducted with the student and principal. However, the parent will be notified of the steps to be taken to eliminate or reduce the student's absences.

D. At some point after the second and before the fifth (5) unexcused absence, the school will take data-informed steps to eliminate or reduce the student's absences. In middle school and high school, these steps will include a risk assessment by a designated district employee.

E. For any student with an existing Individualized Education Program (IEP) or Section 504 Plan, these steps will include convening the student's IEP team or Section 504 team, including a behavior specialist or mental health specialist where appropriate, to consider the reasons for the student's absences. If necessary, and if the student's parent gives consent, the district will conduct a functional behavior assessment and will complete a detailed behavior plan to explore the function of the absence behavior.

F. For any student who does not have an IEP or Section 504 Plan, but who is reasonably believed to have a mental or physical disability or impairment, these steps will

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include informing the student's parent/guardian of the right to obtain an appropriate evaluation at no cost to the parent to determine whether the student has a disability or impairment and needs accommodations, special education services, or related services. This includes students with suspected emotional or behavioral disabilities. If the school obtains consent to conduct an evaluation, time should be allowed for the evaluation to be completed, and if the student is found to be eligible for accommodations, special education services, or related services, a plan will be developed to address the student's needs.

G. If the above action fails to correct the attendance problem, the student shall be declared a habitual absentee. The principal or designee shall interview the student and his/her family and prescribe corrective action. No later than the seventh (7) unexcused absence within any month (equivalent of seven (7) school days) during the current school year or upon the tenth (10) unexcused absence during the current school year (equivalent of ten (10) school days) the district shall file a petition and affidavit with the juvenile court alleging a violation of RCW 28A.225.010 by the parent, student or parent and student. The petition to juvenile court will contain the following:

1. A statement that the student has unexcused absences in the current school year (petitions must be filed if the student has seven (7) or more unexcused absences (equivalent to seven (7) school days) within any month during the current school year or ten (10) or more unexcused absences (equivalent to ten (10) school days) in the current school year, but a petition may be filed earlier; also unexcused absences accumulated in another school or School District may be counted for all purposes in this procedure)
2. An attestation that actions taken by the school have not been successful in substantially reducing the student's absences from school; and
3. A statement that Court intervention and supervision are necessary to assist the school to reduce the student's absences.
4. A statement that [RCW 28A.225.010](#) has been violated by the parent, student or parent and student;
5. The student's name, date of birth, school, address, gender, race and ethnicity; and the names and addresses of the student's parents/guardians, whether the student and parent are fluent in English, whether there is an existing Individualized Education Program (IEP) and the student's current academic status in school;
6. A list of all interventions that have been attempted, a copy of any previous truancy assessment completed by the student's current School District, the history of approved best practices intervention or research-based intervention(s) previously provided to the student by the District, and a copy of the most recent

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truancy information document provided to the parent.

7. Facts that support the above allegations.
  8. Petitions may be served by certified mail, return receipt requested, but if such service is unsuccessful, personal service is required.
- H. At the District's choice, it may be represented by a person who is not an attorney at hearings related to truancy petitions.
- I. Any students who present false evidence, with or without the consent of their parents/guardians, in order to wrongfully qualify for an excused absence shall be subject to appropriate corrective action.
- J. If the allegations in the petition are established by a preponderance of the evidence, the court shall grant the petition and enter an order assuming jurisdiction to intervene for a period of time determined by the court, after considering the facts alleged in the petition and the circumstances of the student, to most likely cause the student to return to and remain in school while the student is subject to the court's jurisdiction.
- K. If the court assumes jurisdiction, the District will periodically report to the court any additional unexcused absences by the student, actions taken by the District, and an update on the student's academic status in school at a schedule specified by the court. The first report must be received no later than three (3) months from the date that the court assumes jurisdiction.
- L. A reasonable effort shall be made to acquire a written excuse for each absence or a written documentation by school personnel as to why the excuse was not obtained.
- M. All written excuses of each school year will be maintained and stored by the designated building official.
- III. Building Attendance Committees  
Each building shall have a Building Attendance Appeal Committee made up of 3-7 teachers, administrators, and classified personnel appointed by the Building Principal or designee.
- A. The Building Attendance Appeal Committee shall meet after the conclusion of each semester and after grades have been recorded to consider appeals from students and parents who have received a Denial of Class Credit notification.
  - B. The Building Attendance Appeal Committee shall consider student appeals using the following general framework:
    1. Building good attendance habits in students will help ensure success later in life.

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2. Students who can demonstrate improving attendance should get their credits restored.
3. Students may need assistance in changing some of their behaviors and conditions in order to improve their attendance.
4. The total number of absences in the class in question, and in other semester classes should be considered.
5. Patterns of absences in prior semesters should be considered.
6. Whether the non-school related absences were related to verified illness, emergencies within the family, and/or absences that have a significant family or educational related value
7. Whether the student, even with excessive absences, has earned an A, B, or C in the course
8. Whether the student has earned a D+ or D in the course
9. Whether the student has been voluntarily been involved in other mitigating factors developed by the high school.

IV. Tardies

Students are expected to be to class on time. When a student's tardiness becomes frequent or disruptive, the student shall be referred to the principal or counselor.

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.

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