

## **Alameda Unified School District's Attendance Procedures (revised Aug 2021)**

Students who are alert and ready to learn in school each day make the most of the learning opportunities offered. Regular attendance is important to student success in school and beyond. Student attendance also contributes to school resources because each school's budget is based on its students' average daily attendance. The following rules and regulations based on State Ed Code and AUSD School Board policy are intended to help us work together to promote positive outcomes for all students.

### **Parent/Guardian's Legal Attendance Responsibilities:**

Parent/Guardians are legally responsible for ensuring that each child between 6 and 18 years of age attends school during the entire school year. Parents of truant students may be held civilly and criminally accountable for their children's truancy. (State Education Code 48293, Penal Code 270.1)

- Students should attend school daily, arriving on time.
- Students should come to school prepared to actively participate in their education.
- Students should be in their seats and ready to work when the tardy bell sounds for every period.
- Parents/guardians are responsible for reporting any and all absences to the school office, not the classroom teacher.
- Parents/guardians are responsible for maintaining an awareness of their legal obligation to have their child attend school each day.
- Parents/guardians have the right to call the Alameda Police Department if their child refuses to attend school.

### **Absence Procedures and Communications:**

When a child is absent from school, it is his or her parent/guardian's responsibility to call the school each day to validate the absence. Automated calls go out daily for absences that have not been reported. Absences that are not reported are considered unexcused after 48 hours.

Students absent for any reason are also required to submit a note to the Attendance Office upon return. Parent/Guardian calls, emails and notes for absences must include:

- The date(s) of the absence(s)
- The first and last name of the student
- The reason for the absence
- The parent/guardian's name/signature and date
- In addition, for medical/dental appointments a doctor's note must be provided

Unexcused reasons for absences and/or not following the above procedures will result in the student being credited with unexcused absences.

### **Student Absences:**

Absences are considered excused absences only if they meet the criteria established by the state of California. All other absences are considered unexcused. (Education Code Section 48205)

## **Absences From School Are Excused Only in the Following Cases:**

- Due to an illness related to the student's physical or mental health\*\*
- Quarantine under the direction of the county or city health officer
- Medical appointments – Doctor’s note must be provided upon return to school
- For the purpose of jury duty in the manner provided for by law
- Attending funeral services for an immediate family\* member. Limited to one day if the service is conducted in California or three days if the service is out of state.
- Spending time with an immediate family\* member who is an active duty service member
- When the student is the custodial parent of a child who is ill or has a medical appointment during school hours
- Under the law, students may obtain certain confidential medical services without the consent of their parent or guardian. School authorities may excuse students from school for the purpose of obtaining those confidential medical services. In such cases, because of the confidentiality of such appointments, school authorities may not disclose the nature of the absence to parents or guardians. (Education Code Section 46010.1)
- Certain legitimate justifiable personal reasons listed below

\*Immediate family shall be defined as mother, father, grandmother, grandfather, spouse, son/son-in-law, daughter/daughter-in-law, brother, sister, or any relative living in the student’s immediate household. (Education Code 45194, 48205)

\*\*When a student has had 14 verified absences within the school year due to illness, any further absences must be verified by a physician.

## **Legitimate Justifiable Personal Reasons:**

Upon advance written request by the parent/guardian and approval by the principal or designee, the following reasons may be excused:

- Appearance in court
- Attendance at funeral service
- Attendance at events sponsored by certain organizations or groups
- Other exceptional circumstances which may include an observance of a religious holiday, ceremony of his or her religion, attendance at religious retreats, or an employment conference. Under this policy, attendance at religious retreats shall not exceed four hours per semester.

## **Absence-Related Make-Up Work:**

The student is responsible for obtaining make-up work from the teachers upon returning to school and for following each teacher’s make-up policy. Teachers are not required to give students make-up work for any unexcused absences. At the discretion of the teacher, the opportunity to make up schoolwork missed may be given. Students are encouraged to contact and may request homework by email or by contacting the office on the third consecutive day of absence. We strongly encourage students to set up a homework “buddy” to stay current with assignments.

## **Contracted Study/Short Term Independent Study:**

*(For students who will be gone between five to fifteen days consecutively)*

An option for students who have to miss school for unavoidable reasons and will be absent for *at least* five (5) and *up to* fifteen (15) consecutive days. This is typically due to emergency, funeral, religious purposes, student safety issues, family vacation, etc.

To be eligible, a student's parent/guardian must apply for Short Term Independent Study at their school's attendance office at least five days before the student absence begins. A student must be in good standing in order for the contract to be awarded.

If the contract is granted, the school will collect work for your student to complete during your time away. All contract work MUST be submitted the day your student is expected to return to school. Late work will be considered invalid.

### **Arriving to School Late:**

Students who arrive to class after the scheduled time are considered tardy. Tardy students, especially at the secondary level, may be required to attend afterschool or weekend detention. Students who are 30 minutes late without a valid excuse three or more times are considered truant. Students who regularly arrive late to school may be excluded from extracurricular activities, including proms, athletics, and graduation ceremonies, and/or referred to the School Attendance Review Board (SARB).

### **Late (Tardy) Procedure:**

Students who come to school after the bell has rung must report to the Attendance Office to get an admit slip before going to class. A note or telephone call is required from a parent or guardian every time a student is tardy to school.

### **Leaving School Early:**

Whenever students must leave school early, whether or not they will return to school that day, they should bring a note regarding the early dismissal to the Attendance Office before school starts. The note must be signed by the parent and indicate the time the student is to be dismissed, the reason for the early dismissal, and the name of the person who will be picking the student up from the office. That person must be the parent or one of the adult designees on the student's emergency contacts list. At the early dismissal time, the adult must come to the office and sign the student out.

Note: Students leaving school early 30 minutes or more without a valid excuse will be marked unexcused absent, which counts towards truancy.

### **Truancy:**

All absences for a full or partial day that have not been excused per Education Code 48205 and AUSD Board Policy within 48 hours will be considered unexcused. Unexcused absences lead to truancy. A student is considered truant once they have accumulated 3 or more unexcused full or partial day absences within a school year.

### **What Happens When a Student is Excessively Absent or Tardy?**

#### **Student Attendance Review Team (SART):**

AUSD has determined the SART process may begin with:

- \* 6 or more unexcused all day absences
- \* 6 or missing 30 minutes or more of school/period for an unexcused reason
- \* 6 or more period tardies

SART is a School Site Team which includes the parent and the student, principal or designee, and the School Attendance Review Board Chairperson. The goal of this team is to identify possible solutions to improving the student's attendance and/or behavior. At this meeting the student agrees to abide by the directions of the School Attendance Review Team (SART) as outlined below.

1. Attend school regularly and on time each day
2. Abide by school rules and regulations
3. Obey the directions of my teachers and administrators
4. Complete any class assignments
5. Develop a positive attitude about school
6. Other

Parent(s) agree to abide by the directions of the School Attendance Review Team (SART) as outlined below.

1. Cooperate with school officials
2. Ensure son/daughter's compliance with SART directives
3. Comply with SART's assignments of specific parental responsibilities
4. Notify the attendance office when son/daughter violates agreement
5. Obtain medical notes when son/daughter is absent for more than one day
6. Attend classes with son/daughter after next incidence of truancy/misbehavior
7. Pick up, or make arrangements to have picked up, son/daughter's homework if he/she will be out of school more than two days
8. Bring son/daughter to school daily and on time
9. Talk with son/daughter in positive terms about school
10. Other

The School Attendance Review Team (SART) process begins at the school site to resolve absence and/or behavioral patterns. It takes place before the SARB. Failure to abide by the intervention plan developed here will result in a referral to the SARB process.

If the student's attendance does not improve after these steps are taken, the student is referred to SARB. The SART contract will be monitored for 15, 30, and 45 days. SARB Hearings are held the third Wednesday of each month at the Alameda Unified School District offices.

### **School Attendance/Behavior Review Board (SARB):**

The SARB process begins when the school site identifies an attendance and/or behavioral concern. A series of intervention steps will take place concluding with the district level SARB Meeting or in some cases referral and/or prosecution by the Alameda County District Attorney's Office.

At the SARB Hearing:

- The school principal or assistant principal and/or counselor share the attendance record.
- SARB members ask the student and parent to explain why the student is not attending school.
- SARB members make recommendations to assist the family and student.
- The student and parent sign a SARB attendance contract.

What does the contract mean?

- The contract is a promise that the student will attend school every day and be on time
- The student/parent will either provide a doctor's note or have the student checked by the school nurse for illness related absences
- The student/parent also promise to follow all other conditions on the contract, which could include obeying school rules, participating in a parenting class, attending counseling sessions or other conditions
- Violation of the contract could result in a referral to the Alameda County District Attorney for prosecution

What can SARB recommend for students?

- Counseling programs for the student and/or family
- Parenting classes to support parents
- A student transfer to an alternative school or program
- Assistance from other agencies and programs like Probation, Sheriff's Department, counseling, and mental health services
- After-school tutoring
- Coordinated health care support between the doctor and the school nursing staff

How can I get help from SARB?

- Call your school to ask the principal or counselor for a referral to SARB.

**Specific laws related to school attendance:**

- **Education Code 48200** – Students between the ages of 6 and 18 years must attend school.
- **Education Code 48260** – A student is a truant when he/she is absent from school without a valid excuse three full days in one school year or tardy for more than any 30 minute period during the school day three times.
- **Education Code 48263** – Truant students may be referred to SARB.
- **Education Code 48293 and Penal Code 272** – Parents are responsible to send their children to school or they will face charges in court.
- **Education Code 48293 (a)** – A parent or guardian may be held responsible if a student does not follow the SARB contract.
- **Vehicle Code 13202.7** – The court may revoke or delay a driver's license of a student between the ages of 13 and 18 if he/she is a habitual truant.
- **Truancy Ordinance** – A county ordinance which allows law enforcement to cite students who are not in school.