

Student Absences and Excuses

One criteria of a student's success in school is regular and punctual attendance. Frequent absences may lead to poor academic work, lack of social development and possible academic failure. Regular attendance is of utmost importance for school interest, social adjustment, and scholastic achievement. No single factor may interfere with a student's progress more quickly than frequent tardiness or absence.

According to state law, it is the obligation of every parent/guardian to ensure that every child under their care and supervision receives adequate education and training and, if of compulsory attendance age, attends school.

Continuity in the learning process and social adaptation is seriously disrupted by excessive absences. In most situations, the work missed cannot be made up adequately. Students who have good attendance generally achieve higher grades, enjoy school more and are more employable after leaving school. For at least these reasons, the Board believes that a student must satisfy two basic requirements in order to earn full class credit: (1) satisfy all academic requirements; and (2) exhibit good attendance habits as stated in this policy.

Excused absences

The following will be considered excused absences:

1. A student who is temporarily ill or injured or whose absence is approved by the building administrator on a prearranged basis. Prearranged absences will be approved for appointments or circumstances of a *serious nature only*, which cannot be taken care of outside of school hours.
2. A student who is absent for an extended period due to a physical disability or a mental or emotional behavioral health disorder with medical documentation.
3. A student who is engaged in work-based learning opportunities under the supervision of the school.
4. A student who is attending any school-sponsored activity or activities of an educational nature with advance approval of the administration.
5. Military connected students whose parents are experiencing a deployment or redeployment may be granted up to five days of excused absences. The conditions under which the schools may approve excused absences are: (1) the absence is preapproved; (2) the student is in good standing; (3) the student has a prior record of good attendance; (4) missed work is completed and turned in within the school's allotted time period; and (5) the absence is not during standardized testing dates.
6. A student who is suspended or expelled.

As applicable, the district may require suitable proof regarding the above exceptions, including written statements from medical sources.

If a student is in out-of-home placement (as that term is defined by C.R.S. 22-32138(1)(e)), absences due to court appearances and participation in court-ordered activities will be excused. The student's assigned social worker must verify the student's absence was for a court appearance or court-ordered activity.

Unexcused absences

An unexcused absence is defined as an absence that is not covered by one of the foregoing exceptions. Each unexcused absence will be entered on the student's record. The parents/guardians of the student receiving an unexcused absence will be notified by the district of the unexcused absence.

In accordance with law, the district may impose appropriate penalties that relate directly to classes missed while unexcused. Penalties may include a warning, school detention, or in-school suspension. Academic penalties, out-of-school suspensions, or expulsion will not be imposed for any unexcused absence.

Students and parents/guardians may petition the Board of Education for exceptions to this policy or the accompanying regulations provided that no exception will be sustained if the student fails to abide by all requirements imposed by the Board as conditions for granting any such exception.

The maximum number of unexcused absences a student may incur before judicial proceedings are initiated to enforce compulsory attendance is 10 days during any calendar or school year.

Chronic absenteeism

When a student has an excessive number of absences, these absences negatively impact the student's academic success. For this reason, a student who has 17 total absences in a school year, whether the absences are excused or unexcused, may be identified as "chronically absent" by the principal or designee. Absences due to suspension or expulsion will not be counted in the total number of absences considered for purposes of identifying a student as "chronically absent."

Note: Research indicates that an absenteeism rate of 10 percent results in an increased likelihood that the student will struggle academically and potentially drop out of school. Accordingly, the Board may choose to set the "chronic absenteeism" rate at 10 percent or 16 days total (i.e., 10 percent of 160 days, per C.R.S. 22-32-109 (1)(n)(l)).

If a student is identified as "chronically absent," the principal or designee will develop a plan to improve the student's attendance. The plan will include best practices and research-based strategies to address the reasons for the student's chronic absenteeism, including but not limited to providing students and parents/guardians with education regarding the importance of regular attendance, establishing and maintaining positive behavior cultures in classrooms and throughout the school setting, providing support staff who are available to assist students with school-related social/emotional concerns and encouraging parent involvement in the

student's education. When practicable, the student's parent/guardian will participate in the development of the plan.

Nothing herein will require the principal or designee to identify a student as "chronically absent" prior to declaring the student as the "habitual truant" and pursuing court proceedings against the student and his or her parents/guardians to compel the student's attendance in accordance with state law.

Make-up work

Make-up work will be provided for any class in which a student has an excused absence unless otherwise determined by the building administrator. It is the responsibility of the student to pick up any make-up assignments permitted on the day returning to class. There will be one day allowed for make-up work for each day of absence.

Make-up work will be allowed following an unexcused absence with the goal of providing the student an opportunity to keep up with the class and an incentive to attend school. This work may receive full or partial credit to the extent possible as determined by the building administrator.

Unless otherwise permitted by the building administrator, make-up work will not be provided during a student's expulsion. Rather, the district will offer alternative education services to the expelled student in accordance with state law. The district will determine the amount of credit the expelled student will receive for work completed during any alternative education program.

Tardiness

Tardiness is defined as the appearance of a student without proper excuse after the scheduled time that a class or school day begins. Because of the disruptive nature of tardiness and the detrimental effect upon the rights of the non-tardy student to uninterrupted learning, penalties may be imposed for excessive tardiness. Parents/guardians may be notified of all penalties regarding tardiness.

In an unavoidable situation, a student detained by another teacher or administrator will not be considered tardy provided that the teacher or administrator gives the student a pass to enter the next class. Teachers will honor passes presented in accordance with this policy. The provisions of this policy are applicable to all students in the district, including those above and below the age for compulsory attendance as required by law.

Recording of Attendance/Absences

In calculating the number of absences for purposes of determining whether a child is "chronically absent" or "habitually truant," the following guidelines apply:

Elementary:

- Attendance is recorded for the morning (AM) session and the afternoon (PM) session. Each session is considered a one-half day of attendance/absence. Two one-half days of absence equal one full day of absence.

Secondary:

- Attendance is recorded for each class period. The number of class periods per day varies among the schools. Seven total periods of excused or unexcused absences that a student accumulates at any time will equal one day of absences. For example, if a student is absent from three periods one day and four periods on another day, all seven missed class periods equal one day absence.

Adopted: September 25, 1979

Revised: February 26, 1991

Revised: September 2000

Revised: July 31, 2007

Revised: July 21, 2011

Revised: October 26, 2011

Revised: June 20, 2012

Revised: August 29, 2012

Revised: August 28, 2013

Revised: September 21, 2016

Revised: April 4, 2018

Revised: August 19, 2020

Revised: September 27, 2023

LEGAL REFS.: C.R.S. 22-14-101 *et seq.* (dropout prevention and student re-engagement)

C.R.S. 22-32-109 (1)(n) (length of school year, instruction & contact time)

C.R.S. 22-32-109.1 (2)(a) (conduct and discipline code)

C.R.S. 22-32-138 (6) (excused absence requirements for students in out-of-home placements)

C.R.S. 22-33-101 *et seq.* (School Attendance Law of 1963) C.R.S. 22-33-105 (3)(d)(III) (opportunity to make up work during suspension)

C.R.S. 22-33-203 (educational alternatives for expelled students and determination of credit)

1 CCR 301-78 Rules 1.00 *et seq.* (standardized calculation for counting student attendance and truancy)

CROSS REFS.: EBCE, Closings, Cancellations, Delayed Starts, and Remote Learning Days

IC/ICA, School Year/School Calendar, Instruction Time

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JFABE, Students in Foster Care

JHB, Truancy

JK, Student Discipline

JKD/JKE, Suspension/Expulsion of Students

Fountain-Fort Carson School District #8, Fountain, Colorado