

WHAT IS AN EXCUSED ABSENCE?

Texas Education Code

Sec. 25.087

Excused Absences

(a) A person required to attend school, including a person required to attend school under Section 25.085 (Compulsory School Attendance)(e), may be excused for temporary absence resulting from any cause acceptable to the teacher, principal, or superintendent of the school in which the person is enrolled.

(b) A school district shall excuse a student from attending school for:

(1) The following purposes, including travel for those purposes:

(A) Observing religious holy days;

(B) Attending a required court appearance;

(C) Appearing at a governmental office to complete paperwork required in connection with the student's application for United States citizenship;

(D) Taking part in a United States naturalization oath ceremony;

(E) Serving as an election clerk; or

(F) If the student is in the conservatorship of the Department of Family and Protective Services, participating, as determined and documented by the department, in an activity:

(i) Ordered by a court under Chapter 262 (Procedures in Suit by Governmental Entity to Protect Health and Safety of Child) or 263 (Review of Placement of Children Under Care of Department of Family and Protective Services), Family Code, provided that it is not practicable to schedule the participation outside of school hours; or

(ii) Required under a service plan under Subchapter B (Department to File Service Plan), Chapter 263 (Review of Placement of Children Under Care of Department of Family and Protective Services), Family Code; or

(2) A temporary absence resulting from an appointment with health care professionals for the student or the student's child if the student commences classes or returns to school on the same day of the appointment.

(b-1) A school district may adopt a policy excusing a student from attending school for service as a student early voting clerk in an election.

(b-2) A school district may excuse a student from attending school to visit an institution of higher education accredited by a generally recognized accrediting organization during the student's junior and senior years of high school for the purpose of determining the student's interest in attending the institution of higher education, provided that:

(1) The district may not excuse for this purpose more than two days during the student's junior year and two days during the student's senior year; and

(2) The district adopts:

(A) A policy to determine when an absence will be excused for this purpose; and

(B) A procedure to verify the student's visit at the institution of higher education.

(b-3) A temporary absence for purposes of Subsection (b)(2) includes the temporary absence of a student diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder on the day of the student's appointment with a health care practitioner, as described by Section 1355.015 (Required Coverage for Certain Enrollees)(b), Insurance Code, to receive a generally recognized service for persons with autism spectrum disorder, including applied behavioral analysis, speech therapy, and occupational therapy.

(b-4) A school district shall excuse a student whose parent, stepparent, or legal guardian is an active duty member of the uniformed services as defined by Section 162.002 (Execution of Compact) and has been called to duty for, is on leave from, or immediately returned from continuous deployment of at least four months outside the locality where the parent, stepparent, or guardian regularly resides, to visit with the student's parent, stepparent, or guardian. A school district may not excuse a student under this subsection more than five days in a school year. An excused absence under this subsection must be taken:

(1) Not earlier than the 60th day before the date of deployment; or

(2) Not later than the 30th day after the date of return from deployment.

(b-5) A school district shall excuse a student who is 17 years of age or older from attending school to pursue enlistment in a branch of the armed services of the United States or the Texas National Guard, provided that:

(1) The district may not excuse for this purpose more than four days of school during the period the student is enrolled in high school; and

(2) The district verifies the student's activities related to pursuing enlistment in a branch of the armed services or the Texas National Guard.

(b-6) Each school district shall adopt procedures to verify a student's activities as described by Subsection (b-5).

(c) A school district may excuse a student in grades 6 through 12 for the purpose of sounding "Taps" at a military honors funeral held in this state for a deceased veteran.

(d) A student whose absence is excused under Subsection (b), (b-1), (b-2), (b-4), (b-5), or (c) may not be penalized for that absence and shall be counted as if the student attended school for purposes of calculating the average daily attendance of students in the school district. A student whose absence is excused under Subsection (b), (b-1), (b-2), (b-4), (b-5), or (c) shall be allowed a reasonable time to make up school work missed on those days. If the student satisfactorily completes the school work, the day of absence shall be counted as a day of compulsory attendance.

(e) A school district may excuse a student for the purposes provided by Subsections (b)(1)(E) and (b-1) for a maximum of two days in a school year.