

STUDENTS

Excused and Unexcused Absences

Students are expected to attend all assigned classes each day. School staff will keep a record of absence and tardiness, including a call log and/or a record of excuse statements submitted by a parent/guardian or, in certain cases, students, to document a student's excused absences.

Excused Absences

The reasons for which an absence may be excused are outlined in Policy 3122. A school principal or designee has the authority to determine if an absence meets the criteria outlined for an excused absence.

Parental Notification.

When possible, the parent/guardian is expected to notify the school office on the morning of the absence by phone, email, or written or other electronic note to provide the excuse for the absence. If no excuse is provided with the notification, or no notification is provided, the parent/guardian will submit an excuse via phone, email, or written or other electronic note upon the student's return to school. Adult students (those over the age of 18) and emancipated students (those over the age of 16 who have been emancipated by court action) will notify the school office of their absences with a note of explanation.

A parent/guardian 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/her parents, may be excused for a portion of a school day to participate in religious instruction provided such is not conducted on school property. A student will be allowed one makeup day for each day of absence.

Absence of parental-approved activities.

This category of absence will be counted as excused for purposes agreed upon by the principal and the parent/guardian. An absence may not be approved as excused if it causes a serious adverse effect on the student's educational progress, as 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.

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

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students to receive educational services during a suspension or expulsion defined in [WAC 392-400-610](#).

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 practical. If the student is unable to do his/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.

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 will be respected at the parent's request.

Conference for Elementary School Students.

If an elementary school student has five (5) or more excused absences in a single month (30-day period of time) 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.

Tiered Response System for Students Who are Absent from Online Learning.

Students who are marked absent from online learning will receive interventions and

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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 online 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, and 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 programs to accommodate the student's needs.

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.

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, email, or in writing or other electronic note, for an absence.

Each unexcused absence within any month (30-day period) 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.

After three unexcused absences within any month (30-day period) of the current school

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year, the school will hold a conference with 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.

At some point, after the second and before the seventh (7) unexcused absences, 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 the application of the Washington Assessment of the Risks and Needs of Students (WARNS) or other District approved risk assessments. The District will designate a staff member to apply the WARNS and, where appropriate, provide the student with best practice or research-based interventions consistent with WARNS. As appropriate, the District will also consider adjusting the student's course assignments;

- Providing the student more individualized instruction;
- Providing appropriate vocational courses or work experience;
- Requiring the student to attend an alternative school or program;
- Assisting the parent or student to obtain supplementary services; or
- Referring the student to a community engagement board.

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.

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 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.

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No, later than a student's seventh unexcused absence in a month (30-day period), the District will:

1. Enter into an agreement with the student and the parents/guardians that establishes school attendance requirements;
2. Refer the student to a community engagement board; or
3. File a petition to juvenile court (see below).

Community Engagement Board.

A "community engagement board" means a board established pursuant to a memorandum of understanding (MOU) between a juvenile court and the school district and composed of members of the local community in which the student attends school. The District will enter into an MOU with the juvenile court in Benton County to establish a community engagement board.

The District will designate and identify to the juvenile court (and update as necessary) and to the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction a staff member to coordinate District efforts to address excessive absenteeism and truancy, including outreach and conferences, coordinating the MOU, establishing protocols and procedures with the court, coordinating trainings, sharing evidence-based and culturally appropriate promising practices. The District will also identify a person within each school to serve as a contact regarding excessive absenteeism and truancy and assisting in the recruitment of community engagement board members.

After the student's seventh unexcused absence within any month during the current school year and not later than the fifteenth unexcused absence during the current school year, if the District's attempts to substantially reduce a student's absences have not been successful and if the student is under the age of seventeen, the District will file a petition and supporting affidavit for a civil action in juvenile court.

Petition to Juvenile Court.

The petition 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 fifteen (15) or more unexcused absences (equivalent to fifteen (15) 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

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- substantially reducing the student's absences from school; and
3. A statement that Court intervention and supervision are necessary to assist the school in reducing the student's absences from school.
 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 truancy information document provided to the parent.
 7. Facts that support the above allegations.

Petitions may be served by certified mail, return receipt requested, but if such service is unsuccessful, personal service is required. At the District's choice, it may be represented by a person who is not an attorney at hearings related to truancy petitions.

If the court assumes jurisdiction to intervene for a period of time, 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.

Building Attendance System

Each building shall have a system to address individual students who experience attendance issues to identify needs and barriers and determine appropriate interventions to remove the barriers to non-attendance.

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 appropriate school staff to assess student needs and appropriate interventions.

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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