

Student Attendance and Chronic Absenteeism

Mapleton Public Schools maintains a staunch commitment to the critical role of consistent school attendance in fostering educational success and is dedicated to ensuring an environment that promotes and supports the presence of every student in the classroom.

Good attendance plays a crucial role in a student's educational journey, serving as a key predictor of academic achievement and social development. Students who consistently attend school are more likely to grasp complex concepts, participate actively in class discussions, and benefit from collaborative learning opportunities, thereby laying a solid foundation for lifelong success. In contrast, poor attendance can initiate a ripple effect of challenges: academic underperformance due to missed instruction, diminished engagement with the school community, and a higher risk of dropping out.

Chronic absenteeism is a complex issue with far-reaching consequences. It hinders student learning, disrupts the educational process, and can be an early warning sign for greater educational and social challenges. The negative impacts of chronic absenteeism are profound: academically, students who are not in attendance cannot benefit from the teachings provided, leading to gaps in knowledge and understanding that can impact their long-term educational journey. Socially, students who frequently miss school may struggle to form stable relationships with peers and teachers, which are essential for a supportive learning environment.

Therefore, it is the intention of Mapleton Public Schools to actively promote school attendance and combat chronic absenteeism through early detection, parent/guardian collaboration, strategic interventions, and a commitment to providing resources necessary to support regular attendance. It is through the collective effort of school personnel, families, and the community that students have the foundational element of success: presence in school.

This policy is established to affirm our unwavering commitment to this cause, and to provide a structured approach to achieving the highest possible attendance rates, thereby ensuring that all students have equitable access to the educational opportunities afforded to them.

Attendance Requirements

Mandatory Attendance: Colorado Compulsory Attendance Laws are limited to students ages 6 – 17. This policy applies to all students enrolled in Mapleton Public Schools regardless of age, Preschool -12th grade. All students are required to attend school daily, in accordance with this policy and to be present for all schedule classes.

Excused Absences are absences for which students have been granted permission to be out of school. They include, but are not limited to:

1. Illness or injury of the student.
2. Family emergencies or death in the family.
3. Medical or dental appointments that cannot be scheduled outside of school hours.
4. Religious observances.
5. Court appearances.
6. School-sponsored events or activities.
7. Other absences as approved by the school administration.

Unexcused Absences are absences not approved by the school administration. They include, but are not limited to:

1. Truancy or skipping school without valid cause.
2. Absences without notification from parents/guardians.
3. Absences that do not meet the criteria for an excused absence regardless of parent or guardian permission.
4. Vacation or travel

Truancy is defined as the accumulation of four unexcused absences within any calendar month during the school year or the accumulation of ten unexcused absences over the course of the entire school year, including both full-day and partial-day absences. This means even if a student is only absent for part of a day, this missed time still contributes to the truancy count just as much as a full-day absence would.

Chronic Absenteeism is defined as a student missing 10% or more of the school days (an average of 2 days per month or 17 days over the course of the academic year) for any reason, excused or unexcused.

Tardiness: Tardiness is defined as the act of being late to school or a class. Tardiness includes arriving a few minutes late as well as arriving significantly late to school or a school period. Depending on how late a student arrives to school or a class period, the time may be recorded as a partial-day absence and be included in the truancy count as calculated above.

Make-Up Work: Students with excused absences shall be allowed to make up work missed and shall receive full credit for the work completed, subject to reasonable deadlines. Students identified with chronic absenteeism may be required to repeat a course or entire academic year to learn content and/or earn credit.

Positive Attendance Strategies: The school district will implement attendance awareness programs to educate students and parents/guardians about the consequences of truancy. Each school will work collaboratively with parents/guardians to identify positive support for good attendance and address barriers to school attendance.

Monitoring and Interventions for Chronic Absenteeism and Truancy

The district will monitor attendance patterns to identify students at risk for truancy and/or chronic absenteeism.

Early Identification: Schools will promptly identify students who are at risk of becoming truant or are chronically absent. Teachers, counselors, and school administrators shall monitor attendance records and report concerns to the attendance designee.

Notification of Truancy: Parents/guardians will be notified in writing at the earliest sign of unexcused absences. Continued truancy and chronic absenteeism will prompt a mandatory meeting with the student, parent/guardian, and school officials to develop a plan to address attendance issues.

Interventions may include counseling, mentoring, student and family services referrals, and academic support. A personalized attendance plan may be developed for the student, which may include performance contracts, behavior modification plans, or other interventions deemed appropriate.

Legal Consequences: Continued chronic absenteeism may prompt actions in accordance with state truancy laws. The district will pursue all interventions prior to resorting to legal measures however, the district will comply with all state-mandated reporting requirements and procedures for students who are habitually truant or chronically absent.

Re-Engagement Plan: For students returning from truancy-related absences, including chronic absenteeism, a re-engagement plan will be developed to integrate the student back into the school environment. The plan will address academic and social-emotional needs to support the student's successful return.

Notification and Communication

At the beginning of each academic year, or upon enrollment, all parents/guardians will be notified in writing of the attendance policy, including the distinctions between excused and unexcused absences as well as the definition and consequences of chronic absenteeism.

Roles and Responsibilities

Parents/guardians are responsible for ensuring that their children attend school regularly. Additionally, parents/guardians are expected to communicate with the school regarding their child's absences and work with the school to resolve attendance issues.

Students are expected to attend all assigned classes each day unless excused for a valid reason as defined by this policy. They are also responsible for completing missed assignments due to absences.

School officials are responsible for tracking attendance, differentiating between excused and unexcused absences, and identifying students with chronic absenteeism.

Reporting and Accountability

Regular reports on attendance and chronic absenteeism will be provided to district administration. Schools failing to enforce this policy will be subject to district-level review and intervention.

Data Monitoring and Reporting

Schools shall regularly review attendance data to identify and support students at risk of chronic absenteeism.

The district shall report chronic absenteeism data to the Colorado Department of Education as required.

Adopted November 28, 2023, by the Board of Education for Mapleton Public Schools.

LEGAL REFERENCES:

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, and 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. 22-33-104 (*compulsory school attendance*)

C.R.S. 22-33-105 (*suspension/expulsion*)

C.R.S. § 22-33-105(3)(d)(III) (*opportunity to make up work during suspension*)

C.R.S. 22-33-107 (*enforcement of compulsory school attendance*)

C.R.S. § 22-33-108 (*judicial proceedings to enforce school attendance laws*)

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

1 CCR 301-67, Rule 2.01 (7) (*definition of “dropout” student*)

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

CROSS REFERENCES:

EBCE: Closing and Cancellations

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

IHBG: Home Schooling

JEA: Compulsory Attendance Ages

JFABE: Students in Foster Care

JFC: Student Withdrawal from School/Dropouts

JK: Student Discipline

JKD/JKE: Suspension/Expulsion of Students (and Other Disciplinary Interventions)

JLIB: Student Dismissal Precautions