

STUDENT ABSENCES AND ATTENDANCE

ANNUAL NOTIFICATION OF ATTENDANCE POLICY TO PARENTS/GUARDIANS 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 truancy and chronic absenteeism.

I. NOTIFICATION OF ABSENCES:

A. Notification by Parent/Guardian to School: Regular attendance is crucial for academic success, and timely communication about absences facilitates better understanding and management of each student's educational needs. This section outlines the process for notification of absences, ensuring that all parties are informed and can respond appropriately to the student's needs.

1. Parents/guardians must notify the school of an absence on the day of or before it.

If the parent/guardian must be out of town, he or she is responsible for notifying the school before leaving as to who will have the authority to excuse student absences.

2. An explanation for absences must be provided within two school days after the student's return, or they will be recorded as unexcused.

B. Notification by School to Parent

1. School staff will communicate with parents/guardians about unexcused or excessive excused absences.

When an elementary student is absent from school and no contact has been received from parent/guardian, the school will make reasonable efforts to promptly inform parents of the absence.

At the secondary level, the school will make a reasonable effort to contact the home after unexcused absences. Appropriate additional attendance information will be made available upon request by the parent or guardian.

II. RESPONSIBILITIES AND EXPECTATIONS: Clear roles and expectations for staff, students, and parents/guardians are essential for a supportive and effective learning environment. This section defines these roles to ensure that each group understands their part in promoting regular attendance and addressing absenteeism.

A. Staff Responsibilities

1. Accurately record absences within the first 10 minutes *of each course period*, and consistently monitor student attendance.
2. Initiate interventions for chronic absenteeism.
3. Maintain regular communication with parents/guardians and document all interactions.
4. Implement attendance plans for habitually truant / chronically absent students.

B. Student Expectations

1. Attend school regularly and be punctual.
2. Inform teachers about absences in advance, if possible.
3. Complete and submit make-up work within the stipulated time.

C. Parent/Guardian Expectations

1. Ensure their child attends school regularly and on time.
2. Notify the school of their child's absence with a valid reason.
3. Participate in meetings and interventions if their child is chronically absent.
4. Support their child in completing any make-up work due to absences.

III. READMISSION AFTER ABSENCES: Readmission after absences is a critical step in ensuring that students return to school safely and support their educational journey. This section outlines the necessary procedures to facilitate a smooth transition back to school.

1. Staff must verify readmission requirements, including receiving explanations or physician's statements.

IV. PRE-ARRANGED ABSENCES: Recognizing that certain absences are inevitable and sometimes necessary; this section provides a framework for pre-arranging such absences. This ensures that students' educational needs are met while accommodating important out-of-school activities. Not all pre-arranged absences will be "excused," however.

1. Staff will process these absences as per policy, ensuring proper documentation.
2. Such absences that are not pre-arranged will not be excused. Pre-arranged absences may necessitate a parent conference. Circumstances that may prompt a pre-arranged absence include but are not limited to:
 - Interviews with college admissions officials
 - Interviews with career employer representatives
 - Extenuating circumstances determined by the School Director

V. IN-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES: In-school activities are an integral part of the educational experience. This section clarifies how absences due to these activities are handled, ensuring students are not penalized for participating in essential school-related events.

1. School activities causing absence will be recorded accurately by staff.

VI. ATTENDANCE PLAN FOR HABITUALLY TRUANT / CHRONICALLY ABSENT

STUDENTS: Developing a tailored attendance plan for habitually truant students is crucial in addressing the root causes of chronic absenteeism. This section emphasizes the importance of a collaborative approach in supporting these students.

- 1. An attendance plan will be developed and implemented for habitually truant / chronically absent students with the goal of assisting the child to remain in school. When practicable, the student's parent, guardian, or legal custodian shall participate with district personnel during the development of the plan.***

VII. MISSED WORK DUE TO ABSENCES: Ensuring that students can make up missed work is key to maintaining their academic progress. This section outlines the responsibilities for managing and completing missed work due to absences.

- 1. Teachers:** Teachers are responsible for providing make-up work and monitoring its completion. The teacher shall make appropriate provisions for the completion of missed class work or make-up work.

Students: Within two school days after their return to class following an absence, the student or their parent/guardian must arrange to make up work missed with the teacher(s).

2. Make-up work may be allowed following an unexcused absence or following a student's suspension from school with the goal of providing the student with 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 a building administrator.

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

High School: In addition to the above, the following applies to high school students:

1. Nine (9) unexcused absences in a class within an 18-week period (semester) and/or six (6) unexcused absences within a 9-week period (quarter) may result in a loss of credit (NC) for that class.
2. Students over 17 years of age may be removed from class if their cumulative average of class work results in a failing grade. Because students under age 17 must fulfill the requirements of the compulsory attendance law, they will remain in the class regardless of the number of unexcused absences. Students with chronic absenteeism may be placed on a flexible schedule and/or referred to an alternative program. Where extenuating circumstances exist, the school director (or designee) may extend partial/full credit providing that specific conditions established by the school are met.

VIII. CONSEQUENCES AND REMEDIATION: Addressing the consequences of absences and implementing remediation strategies are vital for supporting students' educational outcomes. This section highlights the collaborative efforts required from staff, students, and parents/guardians in this process.

1. Staff, students, and parents/guardians will work together to address the educational impacts of absences.
2. Parents/guardians may request a conference with the building administration to discuss a decision related to the attendance policy. The conference must be requested within one week of notification.
3. Withdrawal for Non-Attendance: Students who are seventeen (17) years of age or older may legally drop out of school. Such students should not be formally withdrawn until the school administration has attempted to contact parents or guardians by phone and in writing to discuss educational options that may be available, or until otherwise approved by a District administrator.
 - Before withdrawing a student for non-attendance, the following requirements must be met:

1. The student has missed 10 consecutive days of school and those absences have been unexcused;
 2. Reasonable attempts have been made to all phone numbers and addresses listed in the student records database, including non-household relationships and emergency contacts known to the District;
 3. District officials have checked state-wide student records for any updates;
 4. District officials have initiated a home visit or welfare check on the student; and
 5. All attempts to locate the student must be documented in the student's record.
- In rare situations, it may be appropriate for a non-expelled high school student who is under the age of seventeen (17) to temporarily withdraw from school until the beginning of the next grading period. Such withdrawals may only occur by joint approval of the school director and the student's parent(s)/guardian(s), and with written permission of District administration.

In such cases, a "Temporary Withdrawal with Intent to Return" contract must be developed which must specify, at minimum, the student's intended date of return and the educational or vocational activities planned during the period of withdrawal.

Students withdrawn for non-attendance are not permitted on District property without administrative approval.

4. Eligibility for Homeschooling (Home-Based Education) Students with a history of chronic absenteeism within the last six (6) months of enrollment are not eligible to withdraw from school for the purpose of homeschooling until the parent(s)/guardian(s) have fully satisfied application and planning requirements described JH-R Page 4 of 4 in the District's homeschool policy and State law.
 - Eligibility for Homebound or Out-of-School Support Services
Parent(s)/guardian(s) of a student who is anticipated to be absent for more than fifteen (15) school days due to a physical, mental, or emotional disability, or a recovery period from an illness or injury, may request an assessment by the District to consider whether homebound instruction or other out-of-school education support services may be appropriate. Specific

documentation and appropriate confidentiality waivers allowing physicians treating the child to communicate with District officials are required for a student to be considered for out-of-school educational support services.

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