

## STUDENT ABSENCES AND EXCUSES

### ABSENCES

#### A. Excused Absences

Excused absences are exceptions to compulsory attendance. They include the following (asterisked items are specified in Colorado Compulsory School Attendance Law (22-33-104, (2)):

1. A student who is temporarily ill or injured or whose absence is approved by the administrator of the school of attendance.\*
2. A student who is absent for an extended period due to physical, mental, or emotional disability.\*
3. A student who is pursuing a work-study program under the supervision of a public school.\*
4. A student who is participating in any school-sponsored activity, or a student who has advance approval by the administration to attend an activity of an educational nature.
5. A student whose presence in school, on a doctor's written advice, may constitute a danger to their health or will seriously expose other students to a health hazard (such as a student under quarantine).
6. A student who has a death in their immediate family.
7. A student whose presence is required in court.
8. A student who is in the custody of a court or custody of law enforcement authorities.\*
9. A student who is being instructed at home by a certified teacher or under a system of home-bound study pursuant to state law and State Board of Education rules.\*
10. A student who has the written approval of the building principal based on special family circumstances.
11. A student to whom a current age and school certificate or work permit has been issued pursuant to state law.\*
12. A student who is participating in an observance of their religion.
13. A student who has been suspended from school.

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. 22-32-138(1)(e)), absences due to court appearances and participation in court-ordered activities shall be excused. The student's assigned social worker shall verify the student's absence was for a court appearance or court-ordered activity.

#### B. Unexcused Absences

Any absence not covered by one of the abovementioned situations is an unexcused absence. These include the following:

1. Expulsion
2. Leaving school or a class without permission of the teacher or administrator in charge.

3. Not reporting to school or a class unless the absence is excused in accordance with the school's policy.
4. Any absence that is not excused within 48 hours.

The maximum number of unexcused absences a student may incur before judicial proceedings are initiated to enforce compulsory attendance is four school days in one month and/or 10 school days during a school year.

### C. Medical Absences

The school, in its discretion, may require that a student absent for medical reasons provide a doctor's note. Failure to provide the required documentation shall result in the student being marked absent without excuse.

## **RESPONSIBILITIES FOR SCHOOL ATTENDANCE**

### A. Student Responsibility for School Attendance

1. To attend school on all days of the established school calendar.
2. To appear in class on time, prepared to learn.
3. To contact teachers immediately upon return from absences and arrange for completion of make-up work.
4. To complete work as assigned by the teacher when a pre-authorized absence has been requested.
5. To check the absence list regularly and take steps to correct errors in attendance recording.

### B. Parent/Guardian Responsibility for School Attendance

1. To encourage the student to develop good attendance habits and communicate that any absence or tardiness, regardless of cause, could hinder academic achievement.
2. To be familiar with the school's attendance policies and procedures and adhere to them accordingly.
3. To contact the school regarding absences, in accordance with the school's policies, providing the school with documentation within 48 hours as necessary.
4. To furnish the school with a telephone number or other means of contacting the parent/guardian during the school day.

### C. Teacher Responsibility for School Attendance

1. To inform parents/guardians and students at the beginning of each year, semester or term about classroom attendance expectations and any penalties that may be imposed for tardies or absences.
2. To take attendance daily and maintain accurate attendance records according to school policy and regulations.
3. To apply the attendance policy consistently to all students.
4. To notify students of tardies, absences, and academic penalties through procedures specified by the school.

5. To notify parents/guardians of attendance concerns.
6. To provide quality learning experiences that encourage regular attendance.

#### D. Principal Responsibility for School Attendance

1. To supervise the implementation of attendance policy and procedures.
2. To provide parents/guardians with information about the school's attendance procedures and their child's attendance records.
3. To inform parents/guardians of absences.
4. To facilitate the use of available resources for students who exhibit attendance problems.

The school shall establish a system of monitoring individual absences, both excused and unexcused. When a student fails to report on a regularly scheduled school day and school employees have received no indication that the student's parent/guardian is aware of the absence, school employees or volunteers under the direction of school employees shall make a reasonable effort to notify the parent/guardian.

### **TARDINESS**

A tardy student is a student who is not in the classroom at the time class begins. A student detained by another teacher or staff member shall not be considered tardy provided the staff member gives the student a pass to enter the next class.

Schools with elementary students will consider students tardy when students arrive more than five minutes after class has started.

Schools with secondary students will determine their definitions and consequences for tardiness. Penalties for tardiness will be equated with penalties for unexcused absences. All schools with secondary students across the district should be in alignment with their tardy policy.

The classroom teacher, counselors, and/or administrators will work with tardy students and their parent/guardian to discuss the seriousness of tardiness, explore the reasons for the tardies, work mutually with the student and the parent/guardian to identify how to avoid future tardies. Tardiness may be excused if a parent/guardian, legal custodian, or school staff member communicates with the teacher about the tardiness within 24 hours.

### **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 is absent 10% or more of the days they are enrolled during the school year, whether the absences are excused or unexcused, will be identified as "chronically absent" per Colorado Department of Education guidelines. All absences are included - unexcused, excused, and suspended.

Upon identifying a student as "chronically absent," the principal or designee shall develop a plan aimed

at improving the student's attendance, incorporating best practices, and research-based strategies to address the root causes of absenteeism. Whenever possible, the student's parent/guardian shall participate in the development of the attendance plan.

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

### **TRUANCY/HABITUAL TRUANCY**

If a student is absent without a parent/guardian excuse or if the student leaves school or class without permission of the teacher or administrator in charge, the student shall be considered truant. A "habitually truant" student shall be defined as a student of compulsory attendance age who has four unexcused absences from school or class in any one month and/or 10 absences in one school year. Absences due to suspension or expulsion shall not be counted in determining whether a student is a habitually truant.

When a student is declared habitually truant, the school shall, in cooperation with the student and parent/guardian, develop a plan to assist the child to remain in school.

In order to reduce the incidence of truancy, parents/guardians of all students shall be notified in writing at the beginning of each school year of their obligation to ensure that all children of compulsory attendance age attend school.

### **DROPOUT**

Any student who has been absent from class for six consecutive weeks or more in any one school year, except for reasons of expulsion or excused long-term absences, is considered to be a "dropout" and shall be reported as such to the Department of Education. However, any student in attendance at the end of the school year, enrolled in another school district, homeschooled, or enrolled in a full-time on-line program, will not be considered a dropout and shall not be reported as such.

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