

FFB: Attendance & Absences

The Divide County School District #1 believes that regular school attendance is the joint responsibility of the student and their parent(s) or guardian(s), and it is essential for student success in school. The District shall abide with compulsory attendance requirements in state law for students ages seven through sixteen. In order to comply with and enforce these requirements, the Board establishes the following attendance policy.

Section 1: Definitions

For purposes of compulsory attendance reporting under NDCC 15.1-20-02.1 (1-2):

- *Excused absence* is an absence that the District will not use in determining if a compulsory attendance violation occurred. Any absence may be excused if it is supported by either a verbal or written excuse supplied by the student's parent, teacher, or school administrator.

Examples of an excused absence may include illness, injury, family emergency, religious observance or instruction, suspension, participation in a school-related activity, court appearances when subpoenaed, or other reasons deemed necessary and justifiable by the building principal or Superintendent.

- *Unexcused absence* is any absence not supported by the verbal or written excuse required for an excused absence and shall count in determining when a compulsory attendance violation occurred. If a student is absent for an unexcused reason, the parent/guardian is responsible for promptly calling the principal's office to explain the absence, and the student shall be subject to the consequences contained in the Absences section of this policy.

Examples of an unexcused absence may include, but are not limited to, truancy, oversleeping, routine errands, car trouble, haircuts, beauty shop appointments, car maintenance and repair, senior picture appointments, and any undeclared absences.

Documentation Requirements

School administration may require applicable documentation to verify an excused or approved absence, including, but not limited to:

1. Medical documentation from an appropriate licensed healthcare provider;
2. A copy of a court summons or subpoena;
3. An obituary for funeral leave;
4. Verification of planned or executed family travel (e.g., a boarding pass);

5. A request from an official at the student's place of worship;
6. A request for an absence due to a curricular or extracurricular event submitted by the student's teacher, coach, or extracurricular advisor.

Compulsory Attendance Violations

North Dakota law defines what constitutes a compulsory attendance violation. Suspected violations of the compulsory attendance law shall be reported to school administration and investigated in accordance with law. When a compulsory attendance violation is substantiated, the District shall comply with law enforcement reporting requirements under law.

Absences

The Board recognizes that prompt, regular attendance is extremely important. Absenteeism not only adversely affects the learning process of a student but also may impede their normal progression through the grades. The Board expects each student to attend all scheduled classes and daily activities except when a school administrator has excused a student.

The Superintendent or designee shall establish criteria for requesting and granting approved absences, make-up work requirements, and parental notification processes for students with accumulated absences.

Students shall be subject to academic or disciplinary sanctions due to unexcused absences. Accumulated absences determined and outlined in the District's attendance matrix.

Academic sanctions: Attendance shall be a factor used in computing students' grades. Students who are absent for unapproved reasons shall be subject to academic sanctions (which may include, but not be limited to, a point, percentage, or grade reduction) and/or intervention counseling in accordance with administrative regulations. The Superintendent or designee shall develop regulations on grade-appropriate academic sanctions and other intervention strategies for unapproved absences. These regulations shall contain provisions that allow students to remedy {some or} all of the adverse academic consequences associated with unapproved absences.

Disciplinary sanctions: The Board believes that unapproved absences are a form of misconduct and authorizes the Superintendent to establish grade-appropriate disciplinary consequences.

Students shall be afforded appropriate due process rights based on the severity of the disciplinary penalty that the District is considering imposing. Students shall be required to complete make-up work in accordance with administrative regulations or will receive no credit for incomplete work.

Dissemination

This policy shall be published in all student handbooks and distributed to parents annually.