

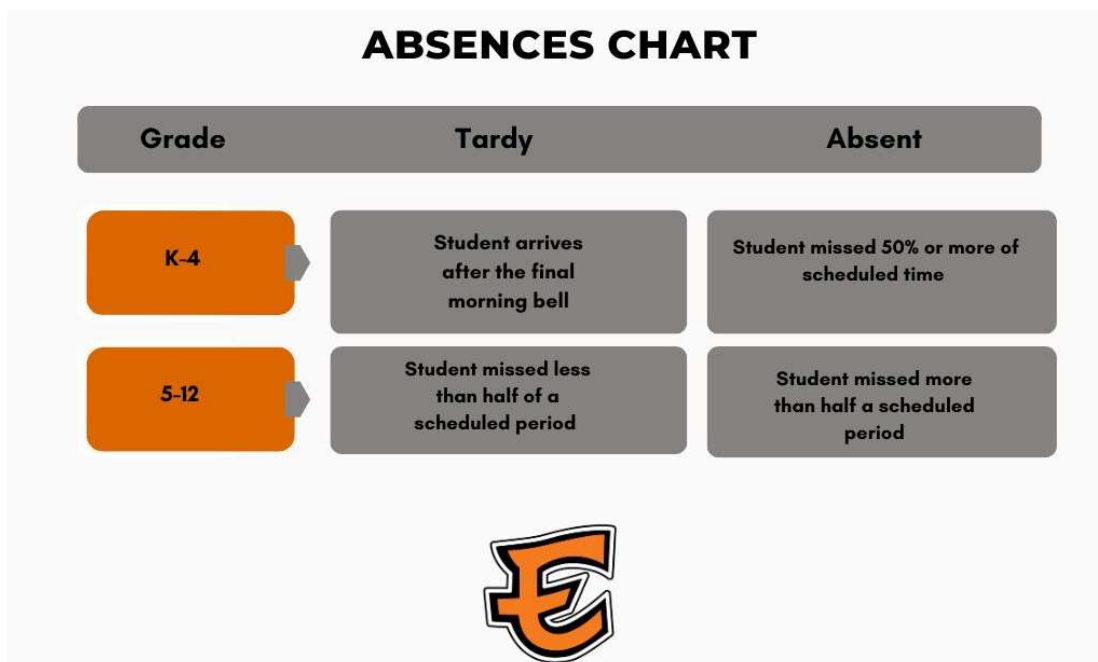
Excused and Unexcused Absences

Purpose

Students are expected to attend all assigned classes each day. Staff will keep a record of absences and tardies, including a call log and/or a record of excuse statements submitted by a parent/guardian, or in certain cases, a student.

Definitions

1. **Tardy:** A student is considered tardy when arriving to class after the designated start time for the class.
2. **Absence:** A student is considered absent when they have failed to attend a significant portion of the school day.
 - **Half-Day Absence:** Absence from 1.5 hours or more in either the morning or afternoon.
 - **Full-Day Absence:** Absence from 50% or more of the student's scheduled instructional time.
 - **In-Person Learning Absence:** Not physically present and not participating in any district- or school-approved instructional activity.
 - **Synchronous Absence:** Failure to log in or engage in real-time instruction as scheduled.
 - **Asynchronous Absence:** No evidence of participation in assigned asynchronous work.
3. **Regular Attendance:** Participating in instruction or instruction-related activities on school grounds or at an approved location during at least 90 percent of school days. (Missing less than 2 absences a month.)
4. **Chronic Absenteeism:** Missing 10 percent or more of school days for any reason-excused or unexcused. (Missing 2 or more days a month.)
5. **Truancy:** Missing 7 or more unexcused days in a month of 15 or more unexcused in a year.



Excused Absences

The following are valid excuses for absences and tardiness. The principal or designee has the authority to determine if an absence meets these criteria.

Acceptable excused absences include, but are not limited to:

- Illness, health condition, or medical appointment (including for the student or a person for whom the student is legally responsible).
- Family emergency, including a death or illness in the family.
- Religious or cultural purposes, including observance of a religious or cultural holiday or participation in religious instruction.
- Court, judicial proceeding, court-ordered activity, or jury service.
- Post-secondary, technical school, or apprenticeship program visitation, or scholarship interview.
- State-recognized search and rescue activities consistent with RCW 28A.225.055.
- Absence directly related to the student's homeless or foster care/dependency status.
- Absences related to deployment activities of a parent or legal guardian who is an active duty member consistent with RCW 28A.705.010.
- Absences due to suspensions, expulsions, or emergency expulsions if the student is not receiving educational services.
- Absences due to student safety concerns, including threats, assaults, or bullying.
- Absences due to a student's migrant status.
- Absences due to the student's lack of necessary instructional tools, including internet access or connectivity.
- Absence for parent-approved activities, if agreed to by the principal and parent/guardian.

Parent/Guardian Notification

Parents/guardians are expected to notify the school office and provide an excuse by phone, email, or written note on the morning of the absence. If no notification or excuse is provided, the parent/guardian must provide an excuse within 48 hours of the student's return to school. The principal or designee will consider excuses submitted after 48 hours but the absence may be marked as unexcused.

Make-Up Work

Students will be permitted to make up assignments or exams missed during an excused absence under reasonable conditions and time limits established by the teacher. Upon returning to school, students will have two (2) days to complete work for every one (1) day of excused absence. Students are encouraged to check in with their teacher(s) regarding missed learning and expectations. When feasible, students may request alternative assignments for participation-based activities.

Unexcused Absences

An absence is considered unexcused if:

- The parent, guardian, or adult student submits an excuse that does not meet the definition of an excused absence as defined above; or
- No valid excuse is submitted by the parent, guardian, or adult student within 48 hours of the student's return to school.

Students may lose credit for missed work during an unexcused absence.

Truancy and Tiered Response System

The district will implement a tiered response system to address student attendance, reduce chronic absenteeism, and prevent truancy.

Elementary School Absences

If an elementary student has:

- Five or more excused absences in a single month, or
- Ten or more excused absences in the current school year

The district will schedule a conference with the student and their parent(s) to identify barriers and supports. This requirement is waived if the school has received prior notice, a doctor's note, and an academic plan is in place.

Response Process for Unexcused Absences

- **After 1 unexcused absence:** The school will notify the parent/guardian by letter or phone call of the consequences of additional unexcused absences.
- **After 3 unexcused absences in a month:** A conference will be held with the student and parent to analyze the causes of the absenteeism.
- **Between the 2nd and 7th unexcused absence:** The district will take data-informed steps to eliminate or reduce the student's absences. In middle and high school, this includes the application of the Washington Assessment of the Risks and Needs of Students (WARNS) or another assessment by a designated employee. For students with an IEP or 504 plan, the team will be convened to consider the reasons for the absences.
- **No later than the 7th unexcused absence in a month:** The district will:
 - Enter into an agreement with the student and parent/guardian that establishes school attendance requirements.
 - Refer the student to a community truancy board.
 - File a petition to juvenile court.
- **After the 7th unexcused absence within any month, and not later than the 15th unexcused absence in the school year:** If attempts to reduce the absences have not been successful and the student is under 17, the district will file a petition with the juvenile court.

Extended Absence Agreement

The district, in collaboration with the parent/guardian and student, will create an Extended Absence Agreement to mitigate the risk of an adverse effect on the student's educational progress. An extended absence consists of a planned event (such as a family vacation or trip) that extends 3 school days or more.

Requirements for Parent/Guardian:

- The parent/guardian must notify the school office at least 72 hours in advance of a planned extended absence.

- This advance notice allows sufficient time for staff to organize and prepare academic work for the student.
- The student is responsible for completing all provided work by the agreed-upon deadline. Failure to do so upon their return to school may result in the absence being reclassified as unexcused.

Tiered Response System for Student Absences (WAC 392-401A-045)

The District will implement a multitiered system of support (MTSS) to address student attendance, reduce chronic absenteeism, and prevent truancy. These requirements ensure timely interventions, equity-based practices, and family engagement.

A multitiered system of support includes the following components:

1. Daily monitoring of attendance data for all students, whether the absence is excused or unexcused.
2. A process to verify and maintain current family contact information for each enrolled student, using multiple attempts and communication methods in the parent's home language.
3. Differentiated supports that address the specific barriers to attendance and participation. This includes:
 - Universal supports for all students
 - Tiered interventions for students at risk of or experiencing chronic absence
 - Activation of school or district attendance teams, engagement teams, or referrals to community-based supports and Community Engagement Boards.
4. A reengagement process for students withdrawn due to nonattendance, where there is no evidence that the student is enrolled elsewhere. This reengagement process must include:
 - a. A designated district or school point person to maintain and coordinate outreach lists.
 - b. Assigned staff to conduct outreach efforts and coordinate with community partners.
 - c. Use of multiple communication methods, including phone calls, texts, letters, and home visits in a language or mode of communication the parent understands.
 - d. Referral to community-based organizations for additional wraparound support.
 - e. Documented attempts to contact and reengage both the student and the parent/guardian.
 - f. Completion of a truancy screener, identification of root causes, and implementation of evidence-based or best-practice interventions—even if the student has been withdrawn.

The Tiered Response System will be integrated with other supports including behavior teams, MTSS structures, and student support services to ensure alignment across academic, behavioral, and attendance interventions.

Legal References and Cross References

- Legal References: RCW 28A.225 (Compulsory Attendance), WAC 392-401A (Definition of Absence), RCW 28A.705.010 (Military Deployment), WAC 392-121-107 (Course of Study), WAC 392-400 (Student Discipline), Section 504, Rehabilitation Act of 1973.
- Cross References: Policy 3120 (Enrollment), Policy 3240 (Student Conduct), Policy 3241 (Corrective Action), Policy 4218 (Language Access).

