



**OLATHE DISTRICT SCHOOLS  
Extended Absence Services  
Policy & Procedures Manual**

**PROGRAM DESCRIPTION**

**Purpose:**

Olathe Public Schools Extended Absence services provides temporary educational services designed for students who due to health conditions make it impossible for the student to attend school and for incarcerated youth housed in facilities within the district boundaries. Services are provided to meet the student’s educational needs to remain current with class requirements by completing assignments and learning activities, to continue to emphasize the importance of education, and to maintain the student’s enrollment and success as a student, and to assist in their reintegration back to the school setting.

Extended Absence Services instruction is not intended to replace school services, and is by design, temporary. It is also not designed to assist students in making up for previously missed assignments or work.

**Eligibility:**

- Extended Absence services may be provided to any student enrolled in an Olathe Public School with an existing medical or mental health condition preventing them from participating in classroom instruction.
- Verification of a medical diagnosis is required to be provided by a qualified medical or mental health professional who has knowledge of the student’s condition and who has determined that the student is unable to attend school for an extended length of time.
- Length of absence that makes a student eligible for EA services varies per grade level as indicated below.
- A letter from a medical or mental health professional does not guarantee EA services will be provided.
- Approval for EA services is determined by the school team on the basis of documented need for service, taking into consideration less restrictive educational options and a student’s participation in extracurricular or employment activities

**ELIGIBILITY FOR STUDENTS WITH AN IEP OR 504 PLAN:**

Extended absence services may be provided to a student with an IEP or 504 plan who is unable to attend their regular school setting due to a physician-documented physical or emotional condition. Eligibility for services is determined by input from the EA office along with the student’s IEP team or Student Section 504 Team, taking into consideration the required medical verification form as well as any information provided by the physician, school staff, and parents, or guardians. Upon determination of eligibility, the IEP or 504 will be modified to reflect the related service.

**ELIGIBILITY FOR STUDENTS WITHOUT AN IEP OR 504 PLAN:**

Extended absence services may be provided to a student without an IEP or 504 plan who is or will experience extended absences as a result of a medical condition, mental health condition, or birth of a child. Eligibility for services is at the discretion of the district, and will be determined by the Support and

Intervention Teams at the building levels. Extended Absence Services may be recommended if absences will reach the following lengths:

4 weeks or more for grades 1-4

3 weeks or more for grades 5-8

2 weeks with evidence of possible prolonged absence past the initial two weeks for grades 9-12

Many students with chronic illness will often miss multiple days intermittently, and these absences can accumulate and impact student learning. Please contact the EAS team with any questions regarding extended intermittent absences. All cases will be reviewed on an individual basis.

While Extended Absence services are not directly provided for Kindergarten aged students who do not have an IEP or 504 Plan, the EA team will work with the home school to arrange appropriate supports for the student and family. All cases are evaluated on an individual basis.

## Referral Process

The student or parent/guardian, through the school counselor, may request the need for additional support due to a medical condition, mental health condition, or childbirth. The school will then work with that family to consider a number of options or accommodations that may be provided in the school setting. If EAS services will be considered for the student, the school will contact the EA office to start a referral for services.

If the student's needs exceed what can be provided from the school, or if the student is anticipated to miss more than 4 weeks, the counselor will contact the EAS office, and meet with the school SIT team. The team may consider evaluation for special education services, eligibility under Section 504, and/or an individual health plan, and they may discuss eligibility for Extended Absence Services. If the student in question currently has an IEP, this referral process may be initiated through the student's special education case manager in cooperation with the school counselor. In determining whether Extended Absence services are appropriate, the school team should consider the following:

- Reasons that school attendance is impossible
- An estimate of how long school attendance will be interrupted
- Recommendations for reintegration to full school attendance
- A review of the intervention measures taken to maximize school attendance including but not limited to such strategies as modifying assignment expectations or developing a flexible schedule
- Review of attendance patterns
- Review of class performance (grades, participation, assignment completion, etc.)
- Student participation in extracurricular or employment activities
- Least restrictive environment.

Students with IEP's or under the age of sixteen who are incarcerated in the Adult Detention Center are also eligible for tutoring and/or liaison services. The contact is usually initiated by their school psychologist or other involved professionals.

In the case of a referral for a medical need, a parent must provide verification with a medical eligibility form completed by a licensed physician or mental health professional.

A Medical Eligibility Form must be completed by the physician, by a psychiatrist, by a state-licensed social worker (LSCSW), state-licensed clinical professional counselor (LPC or LCPC) or clinical psychologist in the case of a mental health condition. A medical eligibility form may be given to the

parent or guardian, and they are responsible for getting it completed by a physician or mental health professional. Obtaining the Eligibility form does not solely determine that services will be provided; however, the referral process will not continue until parents have provided the completed medical eligibility document.

#### RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE SCHOOL COUNSELOR INCLUDE:

- Contact EAS office.
- Provide parents/guardians with Extended Absence information including the Medical Eligibility form.
- Assist parents/guardians with documenting the student's need for Extended Absence services on the referral form.
- Encourage parents/guardian to obtain assignments and class materials while awaiting approval for Extended Absence Services.
- If applicable, alert the student's case manager of the possible need for a 504 or IEP meeting.

#### RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE EXTENDED ABSENCE REFERRAL TEAM:

- Review each referral, obtain the Medical Eligibility Form and review.
- Determine if there is a need for Extended Absence Services.
- Meet with the parent/guardian, student, and school team to complete the Extended Absence Services Plan and Reintegration Plan (4-9 weeks). This plan will outline services to be received through Extended Absence, determination of the student's least restrictive environment, and outline their return to least restrictive environment following the Extended Absence Services. During this meeting, supported classes will also be determined. Extended Absence Services cannot support all classes that the student may be currently taking, and is by no means a replacement of the classroom experience. Contact time with Extended Absence teachers will vary depended on the services determined by the school team.

For students served by Special Education, The IEP case manager will schedule an IEP team meeting to consider Extended Absence services as a change of placement. In order to begin services in a timely manner, a signed waiver may be necessary to hold the IEP meeting sooner than with 10 days' notice. When Extended Absence services are determined by the team to be the least restrictive environment, the IEP must reflect the change in service delivery. Please see the Synergy Special Education instructions for documenting EAS or Homebound on an IEP. A member of the Extended Absence Referral Team should participate in the IEP meeting.

#### REVIEW PROCESS:

As each target exit date approaches, the EA team will gather all relevant information to assess student progress toward reintegration into their school setting. A meeting will be scheduled with the parent/guardian and home school. During the review, the following will occur:

- Review student progress and grades.
- Review of reintegration plan.
- Determine if the student is ready for reintegration or if there is a need for continued EA services.
- If it is determined that EA services continue to be needed, an updated Medical Eligibility form **MUST** be acquired, and the EA Contract and Reintegration Plan must be revised and agreed upon by the team.

- If it is determined that the student is ready for reintegration, then a transition date will be decided at this time.

***The Extended Absence program is the most restrictive service delivery model available for students in our district. Therefore, it should be implemented over an extended period only when no other options are viable.***

## PROGRAM DESIGN

Students may require instruction in a variety of settings and circumstances. Olathe District Schools Extended Absence services can be provided through varying tiers of instruction:

- Mill Creek Campus (MCC): teacher supported classroom environment where students can benefit from small group direct instruction or individualized support.
- Direct Instruction: our most restrictive resource where one-on-one teaching is provided to students medically unable to leave their home or treatment facility.
- Liaison services for students receiving inpatient care at medical or mental health facilities will be handled on an individual basis.

EAS support for students can be designed around classroom work provided by their homeschool instructors, or in many cases, supported online learning courses can be utilized to provide students with parallel curriculum during their temporary absence.

### **Liaison Services:**

Some hospitals have their own education program and provide a teacher during the student's stay. Direct instruction by an EA teacher from Olathe is therefore not necessary and in many cases not feasible because of the student's hospital treatment schedule. If the hospital offers tutoring then the counselor from the student's home school will arrange to pick up assignments and transport them to the hospital. Due to the complex nature of inpatient hospitalization, any service arrangements for students receiving inpatient care at hospitals or mental health facilities will be handled on a case by case basis.

### **Millcreek Learning Center Classroom:**

The EAS classroom on Mill Creek Campus is a teacher-supported environment where students can work on classroom assignments or online-learning courses. The MCC environment is less restrictive than Direct Instruction services provided in the home or treatment setting, and provides a variety of student benefits:

- Students can have interaction with other peers and also take part in small group instruction.
- The MCC environment assists students in maintaining their connection to school and provides a safe step toward reintegration with their home school setting.
- MCC offers flexible scheduling for students who may have many appointments or limitations related to their medical or mental health condition.
- The teacher supported lab at MCC is open by appointment when school is in session in accordance with the Olathe Public Schools calendar, and evening hours are sometimes available by special arrangement for some classes. Hours are from 8 AM to 4 PM, Monday through Thursday and 8 AM to 3:30 PM on Fridays.

For students attending the EAS classroom at MCC, their school work and progress will be monitored by certified teachers who oversee the lab in accordance with each student's Extended Absence Services Plan.

Any assignments provided by the home school classroom teacher will be returned to the sending teacher upon completion. The homeschool teacher is responsible for the grading of any assignment they provide. Students who are completing work through online supported classes will have grades and progress sent to their teacher at required grade reporting dates, at the end of their Extended Absence services, or anytime upon teacher or parent/guardian request.

### **Direct Instruction Services:**

A certified teacher, or para working with a certified special education teacher, will provide educational services to students who are receiving instruction at home due to severe medical conditions that inhibit the student's ability to attend MCC. The teacher will facilitate instructional services as determined by the school team and in accordance with the EAS Plan and Reintegration Plan. The direct instruction teacher will monitor student progress for the school counselor, the student's parents, and the EAS team.

### **Place of instruction:**

Instruction may occur in the home or an alternative setting as determined by the building level team. When instruction is provided in the home, a responsible adult must be present. All direct instruction services will be provided within the boundaries of the Olathe School District and only when school is actively in session. Instruction times will be determined on a case by case basis depending on the needs of the student and the availability of certified contracted instructors. Instructors and other related service providers will take into consideration parent requests for specific days and times for direct instruction, however, the schedule will ultimately be determined by the instructor or related service provider based on their current schedule and availability. Instruction and/or related service days and times are subject to change.

### **Amount of instruction time provided:**

Instructional time will be provided at the following increments for students in need of direct instruction (unless otherwise determined by the student's IEP or Section 504 team):

Kindergarten: EAS services are not directly provided for Kindergarten students not receiving special education services. Arrangements may be made for assessment of student skills or for meeting their home school teacher. The EAS team can also work with the home school and parents to come up with a plan to support the family and student through the period of the student's absence. Each student situation is evaluated on an individual basis.

- Grades 1-4: A maximum of 2 hours per week.
- Grades 5-8: A maximum of 4 hours per week.
- Grades 9-12: 1 hour per core subject (science, language arts, math, social studies) not exceeding 6 hours per week.

### **Responsibilities of Homebound Teachers Providing Direct Instruction:**

Within 24 hours of accepting the assigned student, the EA teacher will contact the family to schedule the first instructional session and will discuss plans for future sessions as well. The first meeting with the student should occur, whenever possible, within 3 days of the initial contact.

Student work and instruction will be provided as determined on the Extended Absence Services Plan and the Reintegration Plan. The EA teacher is responsible for providing sufficient instruction so that the student will know what he/she is to do on a given assignment and will be given adequate instruction to complete assignments independently.

The EA teacher is not responsible for work assigned prior to the student's being approved for EA services. If the student has make-up work from the initial absences that qualified the student for

EA services, the teacher may aid in completing these assignments or assist the student's school counselor in devising a plan for the student to complete the work as independently as possible with parent involvement.

### **Parent Responsibilities:**

- Communicate with the school about extended absences.
- Contact the student's counselor to collect homework when there is an extended absence.
- Monitor the student's progress on assignments.
- Return assignments to school.
- Provide a signed Medical Eligibility Form if there is a referral for EAS.
- Attend the EAS team meeting at the school to help make a plan for EAS.
- Provide adult supervision if receiving home services.
- Provide a proper setting for learning.
- Provide a teaching area that is clean, well-lighted, free from cigarette smoke and free from distractions such as telephone, TV, radio, small children, noise, pets, etc.
- Have the student ready for work when the teacher arrives.
- Monitor homework assignments that the tutor has left.
- Call the teacher in advance of the student's designated time to have class if the student is unable to have class, or if anyone in the home has a contagious or infectious illness.
- Provide transportation to MCC if student will receive services there.
- Make and keep appointments for attending MCC, or call to change appointments.
- Provide snacks or a lunch to students who may stay for several hours.

### **Student Responsibilities:**

- Be rested and ready to start work.
- Have homework completed.
- Have books and supplies organized and at hand.
- Avoid interruptions such as TV, radio, stereo, friends, telephone, family or pets during class.
- Communicate with the teacher in advance if unable to have the appointment.
- Be responsible for completing work independently when a tutor is not with you.

## **OTHER CONSIDERATIONS**

1. Extended Absence services will not be provided to a student who is employed and able to work.
2. If a student is placed in an out-of-district facility, parents will be responsible for picking up assignments and delivering the work to the student and for returning completed work to the school. The student's counselor will inform the EA office of such placements via phone, email, or personal contact.

3. Extended Absence services are considered the most restrictive option on the continuum of services and are a temporary service. Extended Absence Services are not intended to replicate full school attendance.
4. Extended Absence teachers are not responsible for duplicating activities, lectures, labs, or special projects being presented in the student's classroom. Some school assignments or activities may need to be modified or made up when the student returns to school.
5. The Extended Absence model cannot provide access to all aspects of the curriculum. Students will generally be unable to secure all credits for graduation from high school through EA services. If a student is struggling to meet traditional graduation requirements, teams may need to consider other appropriate options.
6. Failure of the student or parent/guardian to meet expectations agreed upon in the Extended Absence Services Plan and the Reintegration Plan may result in termination of services. If appointments are repeatedly canceled, or student does not participate in instruction, the student may be referred back to their home school and risk being filed for truancy.
7. Student violations of the Olathe Public Schools Code of Conduct may result in termination of Extended Absence services.