# STUDENT ABSENCES AND EXCUSES

Code **JH-R** Revised **11/25**

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The board of trustees designates the principal of the school to promptly approve or disapprove any student's absence of more than 10 days in a school year.

Unlawful absences

A student ages 6 to 17 years who has three consecutive unlawful absences or a total of five unlawful absences is considered truant as defined by state board of education regulation.

***Habitual Truant***
A student ages 12 to 17 years who fails to comply with the school's intervention plan and accumulates two or more additional unlawful absences is considered a habitual truant.

***Chronic Truant***
A student ages 12 to 17 years who has been through the school intervention process, has reached the level of a habitual truant, has been referred to family court and placed on an order to attend school and continues to accumulate unlawful absences is considered a chronic truant.

Intervention

In order to encourage and assist students in attending school regularly, the administration will administer the following intervention procedures.

Once a student is determined to be truant, school officials will make every reasonable effort to meet with the parent/legal guardian to identify the reasons for the student's continued absence, including telephone calls, home visits, written messages and e-mails.

A written intervention plan will be developed by school administrators in conjunction with the student and the parent/legal guardian. The intervention plan must include, but is not limited to, the following:

- a designated person to lead the intervention team (may be someone from another agency)
- reasons for the unlawful absences
- actions the parent/legal guardian and student will take to resolve the causes of the unlawful absences
- documentation of referrals to appropriate service providers and, if available, alternative school and community-based programs
- actions to be taken by intervention team members
- actions to be taken in the event unlawful absences continue
- signature of parent/legal guardian or evidence that attempts were made to include them
- documentation of involvement of team members

- guidelines for making revisions to the plan

School officials may utilize a team intervention approach to include representatives from social services, community mental health, substance abuse and preventions, and other person deemed appropriate in formulating the intervention plans.

**Referrals and judicial intervention**

The district will not refer a child ages 6 to 17 years to the family court to be placed on an order to attend school prior to the written intervention plan being completed by the school with the parent/legal guardian. The district will not use a consent order from any local school or district as an intervention plan.

Refusal by the parent/legal guardian to cooperate with school intervention planning can result in a referral of the student to family court and the filing of a report against the parent/legal guardian with social services in accordance with law.

The district will inform the parent/legal guardian and/or the student of their right to have legal representation and their right to a trial at this time.

If the absences continue to the point the student is classified as a habitual truant, school officials may file a petition for a school attendance order. Once a school attendance order has been issued by the family court and the student continues to accumulate absences to the point of becoming a chronic truant, school officials may refer the case back to family court. The school and district will exhaust all reasonable alternatives prior to petitioning the family court to hold the student and/or parent/legal guardian in contempt of court.

**Transfer to another school**

If a student transfers to another public school in the state, the district will forward the student's intervention plan to the receiving school.

Approval of Absences for Career and Technical Student Organization Experiences

Students may be excused from school, not to exceed ten days per school year, to participate in a Career and Technical Student Organization experience in accordance with policy JHE.

Approval of Absences in Excess of 10 days

After 10 lawful or unlawful absences or a combination thereof, the principal of the school will approve or disapprove each succeeding absence.

### *Excuses*

Students will be expected to present a written excuse, signed by a parent/legal guardian or certified medical practitioner, in all cases of absence. If a student fails to bring a valid excuse to school for an absence, the student will receive an unlawful absence. A valid excuse must list the date of the absence, the date of the excuse, the reason for absence, and the telephone number and signature of the parent/legal guardian or certified medical practitioner. The school will keep the content of an excuse confidential to the extent appropriate.

Any student who fails to submit a valid excuse, according to school policy, will automatically receive an unexcused and unlawful absence. Principals will have discretion to accept medical excuses beyond the defined school policy.
False or forged excuses will be referred to the school administration for appropriate disciplinary action and the absence may be considered unlawful.

Middle and High School Credit Bearing Courses
Absences and attendance related to Carnegie course credit

Seat time is mandatory to receive Carnegie credit. Attendance at the middle and high school is counted by period. Students may not have more than 10 non-medical absences in a year-long course and 5 in a quarter or semester course. A medical excuse is defined as a note signed and dated by a physician. To be considered present, students must be in attendance three-fourths of the designated period. The Board empowers the school principal to grant approval of excessive absences in accordance with state and local board policy. Excessive absences are defined as the number of days that would prevent students from receiving credit for a course.

Elementary and Middle School
Absences and attendance related to grade promotion

Students must attend 170 days in order to be promoted to the next grade. A student in elementary or middle school must be in attendance at least one-half of the day to be counted as “present”. The Board empowers the school principal to grant approval of excessive absences in accordance with state and local board policy. Excessive absences are defined as the number of days that would prevent a student from being promoted to the next grade.

If students in grades K through eight accumulate 10 days of unexcused absences, the principal will use the student’s academic achievement, attendance history, and other pertinent student records to determine if the student is a candidate for promotion or retention.

### Make-up work

Students whose absences are approved should be allowed to make up any work missed as defined by the school policy.

School principals will exert every realistic effort to provide assurance that this administrative rule is adhered to in a fair and consistent manner. Principals will place special emphasis on coordinating implementation affecting students within the same family.

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