

**RANCHO SANTA FE SCHOOL DISTRICT**

**Board Policy No. 5005:      ABSENCES AND EXCUSES**

- A.      Absence from school shall be allowed only for health reasons, family emergencies and justifiable personal reasons, as permitted by law. Parents or guardians shall be notified of their pupil's absences. Such notification shall be on the day of each absence.
  
- B.      When pupils who have been absent return to school, the Board requires that they present a satisfactory explanation from their parent/guardian, verifying the reason for the absence. The parent/guardian may explain the absence in person, by telephone, or in a written, signed note. Absences for confidential medical appointments shall be exempt from this requirement and may be verified by the pupil or his/her physician.
  
- C.      Any of the following methods may be used to verify absences due to illness, quarantine, medical, dental, religious reasons, optometrical services or death in the immediate family. The following methods shall be used to verify all absences except absences due to confidential medical services.
  - 1.      Conversation, in person or by telephone, between the verifying employee and the pupil's parent, guardian, or parent-representative. A subsequent written record of the conversation will include the following:
    - a.      Name of pupil.
    - b.      Name of parent, guardian, or parent-representative,
    - c.      Name of verifying employee.
    - d.      Date or dates of absence.
    - e.      Reason for absence.
  - 2.      Written note from parent, guardian, or parent-representative.
  - 3.      Visit to the pupil's home by the verifying employee.
  - 4.      Any other reasonable method which establishes the fact that the pupil was actually absent for the reasons stated. A written record shall be made, including information outlined above.
  
- D.      Pupils shall be excused from school when the absence is:
  - 1.      Due to the pupil's illness, including an absence for the benefit of the pupil's mental or behavioral health.

2. Due to quarantine under the direction of a county or city health officer;
3. For the purpose of having medical, dental, optometrical, or chiropractic services rendered;
4. For the purpose of attending the funeral services or grieving the death of either a member of the pupil's immediate family, or of a person that is determined by the pupil's parent/guardian to be in such close association with the pupil as to be considered the pupil's immediate family, so long as the absence is not more than five (5) school days per incident;
5. For the purpose of accessing the following services if grieving the death of either a member of the pupil's immediate family or of a person that is determined by the pupil's parent/guardian to be in such close association with the pupil as to be considered the pupil's immediate family, so long as the absence is not more than three school (3) days:
  - i. Accessing services from a victim services organization;
  - ii. Accessing grief support services; or
  - iii. Participating in safety planning to increase the safety of the pupil, an immediate family member of the pupil, a person that is determined by the pupil's parent/guardian to be in such close association with the pupil as to be considered the pupil's immediate family

Any absences beyond three (3) school days shall be subject to the discretion of the Principal or designee pursuant to Education Code section 48260.

6. For justifiable personal reasons, including, but not limited to, an attendance or appearance in court, attendance at a funeral service, observance of a holiday or ceremony of his or her religion, attendance at religious retreats, attendance at an employment conference, or attendance at an educational conference on the legislative or judicial process offered by a nonprofit organization when the pupil's absence is requested in writing by the parent or guardian and approved by the principal. Attendance at religious retreats shall not exceed one (1) school day per semester.
7. For the purpose of spending time with a member of the pupil's immediate family, who is an active duty member of the uniformed services, as defined in Education Code section 49701, and has been called to duty for, is on leave from, or has immediately returned from, deployment to a combat zone, or combat support position. Absences granted pursuant to this subparagraph shall be granted for a period of time to be determined at the discretion of the Superintendent.
8. For the purpose of attending the pupil's naturalization ceremony to become a United States citizen.

9. For the purpose of a medical appointment or illness of a pupil's child including absences to care for a sick child. The District shall not require a note from a doctor for these absences. Pregnant and parenting pupils are entitled to accommodations set forth in Education Code section 46015, including 8 weeks of parental leave, or more if deemed medically necessary by the pupil's physician.
  10. For the purpose of participating in a cultural ceremony or event. "Cultural" means relating to the habits, practices, beliefs, and traditions of a certain group of people.
  11. For middle school pupils, for the purpose of participating in a civic or political event provided that the pupil notifies the school ahead of the absence. A middle school pupil who is absent to attend a civic or political event will only be excused for one schoolday-long absence per school year. Additional excused absences to participate in a civil or political event may be permitted in the discretion of a school administrator. For purposes of this policy, a "civic or political event" includes voting, poll working, strikes, public commenting, candidate speeches, political or civic forums, and town halls.
- E. Pupils absent from school for the reasons set forth in paragraph D above shall be allowed to complete all assignments and tests missed during the absence that can be reasonably provided and, upon satisfactory completion within a reasonable period of time, shall be given full credit therefore. The teacher of any class from which a pupil is absent shall determine the tests and assignments which shall be reasonably equivalent to, but not necessarily identical to, the tests and assignments that the pupil missed during the absence.

F. Absences for Confidential Medical Services

Education Code section 46010.1 requires a school district to notify the parents or guardians of seventh or eighth grade students that it may be excusing them for the purpose of procuring confidential medical services. When excusing pupils for confidential medical services or verifying such appointments, District staff shall not ask the purpose of such appointments but may contact a doctor or medical office in order to verify the time and date of the appointment only. Parents and pupils shall be asked to schedule medical appointments during non-school hours.

Legal Reference:

Education Code sections 46010.1, 48205, 48260, 48260.5, 48261, 49701

Date Policy Adopted By The Board: September 6, 1990

Dates Policy Revised by the Board: October 15, 1997; January 13, 2005; June 5, 2008, March 1, 2012; June 22, 2017; July 11, 2019; October 14, 2022; August 3, 2023; November 19, 2024