Alameda Unified School District's Attendance Procedures

Students who are alert and ready to learn in school each day make the most of the learning opportunities offered. Regular attendance is important to student success in school and beyond. The following rules and regulations based on CA State Education Code and AUSD School Board policy are intended to help us work together to promote positive outcomes for all students.

Parent/Guardian's Legal Attendance Responsibilities:
Parent/Guardians are legally responsible for ensuring that each child between 6 and 18 years of age attends school during the entire school year. Parents of truant students may be held civilly and criminally accountable for their children's truancy. (State Education Code 48293, Penal Code 270.1)

- Students should attend school daily, arriving on time.
- Students should come to school prepared to actively participate in their education.
- Students should be in their seats and ready to work when the tardy bell sounds for every period. Parents/guardians are responsible for reporting any and all absences to the school's attendance office, not the classroom teacher.
- Parents/guardians are responsible for maintaining an awareness of their legal obligation to have their child attend school each day.

Absence Procedures and Communications:
When a child is absent from school, it is his or her parent/guardian's responsibility to call the school each day to validate the absence. Automated calls go out daily for absences that have not been reported. Absences that are not reported are considered unexcused after 48 hours.

Students absent for any reason are also required to submit a note to the Attendance Office upon return.
Parent calls, emails and notes for absences must include:

- The date(s) of the absence(s)
- The first and last name of the student
- The reason for the absence
- The parent/guardian's name/signature and date
- In addition, for medical/dental appointments a doctor's note must be provided

Unexcused reasons for absences and/or not following procedures will result in the student being credited with unexcused absences, which will contribute to their truancy.

Student Absences:
Absences are considered excused absences only if they meet the criteria established by the state of California. All other absences are considered unexcused. (Education Code Section 48205)

Absences From School Are Excused Only in the Following Cases (per Ed Code 48205):
(a) Notwithstanding Section 48200, a pupil 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, optometry, 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 or 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 days per incident.

(5) For the purpose of jury duty in the manner provided for by law.

(6) Due to the illness or medical appointment during school hours of a child of whom the pupil is the custodial parent, including absences to care for a sick child, for which the school shall not require a note from a doctor.

(7) 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 the pupil's religion, attendance at a religious retreat, 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 or a designated representative pursuant to uniform standards established by the governing board of the school district.

(8) For the purpose of serving as a member of a precinct board for an election pursuant to Section 12302 of the Elections Code.

(9) 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 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 paragraph shall be granted for a period of time to be determined at the discretion of the superintendent of the school district.

(10) For the purpose of attending the pupil's naturalization ceremony to become a United States citizen.

(11) For the purpose of participating in a cultural ceremony or event.

(12)

(A) For the purpose of a middle school or high school pupil engaging in a civic or political event, as provided in subparagraph (B), provided that the pupil notifies the school ahead of the absence.

(B)

i. A middle school or high school pupil who is absent pursuant to subparagraph (A) is required to be excused for only one school day-long absence per school year.

ii. A middle school or high school pupil who is absent pursuant to subparagraph (A) may be permitted additional excused absences in the discretion of a school administrator, as described in subdivision (c) of Section 48260.

(13)

(A) For any of the purposes described in clauses (i) to (iii), inclusive, if an immediate family member of the pupil, or a person that is determined by the pupil's parent or guardian to be in such close association with the pupil as to be considered the pupil's immediate family, has died, so long as the absence is not more than three days per incident.

i. To access services from a victim services organization or agency.

ii. To access grief support services.

iii. To participate in safety planning or to take other actions to increase the safety of the pupil or an immediate family member of the pupil, or a person that is determined by the pupil's parent or guardian to be in such close association with the pupil as to be considered the pupil's immediate family, including, but not limited to, temporary or permanent relocation.

(B) Any absences beyond three days for the reasons described in subparagraph (A) shall be subject to the discretion of the school administrator, or their designee, pursuant to Section 48260.

(14) Due to the pupil's participation in military entrance processing.
(15) Authorized at the discretion of a school administrator, as described in subdivision (c) of Section 48260.

(b) A pupil absent from school under this section 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 therefor. The teacher of the class from which a pupil is absent shall determine which tests and assignments shall be reasonably equivalent to, but not necessarily identical to, the tests and assignments that the pupil missed during the absence.
(c) For purposes of this section, attendance at religious retreats shall not exceed one school day per semester.
(d) Absences pursuant to this section are deemed to be absences in computing average daily attendance and shall not generate state apportionment payments.
(e) For purposes of this section, the following definitions apply:

(1) A "civic or political event" includes, but is not limited to, voting, poll working, strikes, public commenting, candidate speeches, political or civic forums, and town halls.
(2) "Cultural" means relating to the practices, habits, beliefs, and traditions of a certain group of people.
(3) "Immediate family" means the parent or guardian, brother or sister, grandparent, or any other relative living in the household of the pupil.
(4) "Victim services organization or agency" has the same meaning as defined in paragraph (7) of subdivision (g) of Section 230.1 of the Labor Code.

*When a student has had 14 verified absences within the school year due to illness (physical health or mental/behavioral health), any further absences must be verified by a physician or clinician for them to be excused as per this policy.

- Rationale: *Child Find* is a legal requirement for schools to identify children who have disabilities and need services. Excessive absences (more than 14 days per school year) could be symptomatic of a larger issue like anxiety or depression. Chronic absences combined with academic and/or social struggles *might* be a reason to suspect a disability. A student with excessive absences for documented medical appointments may warrant a closer look at the underlying medical issues, the related impact on the student's academic progress from missed instruction time, and the possible need for accommodations. We thank you in advance for this partnership to ensure students have equal access to their education.
- Medical notes to excuse extended absences must be renewed every 30 days. The notes do not need to list any information that may violate HIPAA privacy laws; however, they should indicate the necessity for the absence (ex. medication adjustment and management). Please work with your site administrator or counselor to develop a plan to support the student during the absence.

Absence-Related Make-Up Work:

The student is responsible for obtaining make-up work from the teachers upon returning to school and for following each teacher's make-up policy. Teachers are not required to give students make-up work for any unexcused absences. At the discretion of the teacher, the opportunity to make up schoolwork missed may be given. Students are encouraged to contact and may request homework by email or by contacting the office on the third consecutive day of absence. We strongly encourage students to set up a homework "buddy" to stay current with assignments.

Contracted Short-Term Independent Study:
(For students who will be gone between five to fifteen consecutive school days).

An option for students who must miss school for unavoidable reasons and will be absent for *at least* five (5) and *up to* fifteen (15) consecutive school days. This is typically due to an emergency, funeral, religious purposes, student safety issues, family vacation, etc. A student may not exceed more than fifteen (15) Short Term Contracted Independent Study days per school year. (Education Code Section 51747(h)(2)(i))

To be eligible, a student's parent/guardian must apply for Short Term Independent Study at their school's attendance office at least five days before the student's absence begins. A student must be in good standing in order for the contract to be awarded.

If the contract is granted, the school will collect work for your student to complete during your time away. All contract work MUST be submitted the day your student is expected to return to school. Late work will be considered invalid.

Arriving to School Late:
Students who arrive to class after the scheduled start time are considered tardy. Tardy students, especially at the secondary level, may be required to attend after school detention. Students who are 30 minutes late without a valid excuse three or more times are considered truant. Students who regularly arrive late to school may be excluded from extracurricular activities, including proms, athletics, and graduation ceremonies, and/or referred to the School Attendance Review Board (SARB).

Late (Tardy) Procedure:
Students who come to school after the bell has rung must report to the Attendance Office to get an admit slip before going to class. A note or telephone call is required from a parent or guardian every time a student is tardy to school.

Leaving School Early:
Whenever students must leave school early, whether they will return to school that day, they should bring a note regarding the early dismissal to the Attendance Office before school starts. The note must be signed by the parent and indicate the time the student is to be dismissed, the reason for the early dismissal, and the name of the person who will be picking the student up from the office. That person must be the parent or one of the adult designees on the student's emergency contacts list. At the early dismissal time, the adult must come to the office and sign the student out.

Note: Students leaving school early 30 minutes or more without a valid excuse will be marked as unexcused.

Truancy:
All absences for a full or partial day that have not been excused per Education Code 48205 and AUSD Board Policy within 48 hours will be considered unexcused. Unexcused absences lead to truancy. A student is considered truant once they have accumulated 3 or more unexcused full or partial day absences within a school year.

What Happens When a Student has Excessive Unexcused Absences?

Student Attendance Review Team (SART):
AUSD has determined the SART process may begin with:
* 6 or more unexcused all-day absences
* 6 or missing 30 minutes or more of school/period for an unexcused reason
* 6 or more period absences

SART is a School Site Team which includes the parent and the student, principal or designee, and other adults invested in the student's success. The goal of this team is to identify possible solutions to improve the student's attendance and/or behavior.

At this meeting, the student agrees to abide by the directions of the School Attendance Review Team (SART) as outlined below.

1. Attend school regularly and on time each day.
2. Abide by school rules and regulations.
3. Obey the directions of my teachers and administrators.
4. Complete any class assignments.
5. Develop a positive attitude about school.
6. Other

Parent(s) agree to abide by the directions of the School Attendance Review Team (SART) as outlined below.

1. Cooperate with school officials
2. Ensure student's compliance with SART directives
3. Comply with SART's assignments of specific parental responsibilities
4. Notify the attendance office if student violates agreement. Obtain medical notes when student is absent for more than one day.
5. Attend classes with student after next incidence of truancy/misbehavior.
6. Pick up, or plan to have student's homework picked up if they will be out of school more than two days
7. Bring student to school daily and on time
8. Talk with student in positive terms about school
9. Other

The School Attendance Review Team (SART) is a school-site intervention designed to resolve absence and/or behavioral patterns. It takes place before the SARB meeting, which is a District-level intervention. Failure to abide by the intervention plan developed in SART will result in a referral to the SARB process.

The SART contract will be monitored for 15, 30, and 45 days. SARB Hearings are held at the Alameda Unified School District office (2060 Challenger Dr, Alameda)

School Attendance/Behavior Review Board (SARB):
The SARB process begins when the school site identifies an attendance and/or behavioral concern. A series of intervention/support steps will take place concluding with the district level SARB Meeting or, in some cases, a referral to Alameda County Office of Education for county-level interventions/supports.

At the SARB Hearing:

- The school principal or assistant principal and/or counselor share the attendance record.

- SARB members ask the student and parent to explain why the student is not attending school.
- SARB members make recommendations to assist the family and student.
- The student and parent sign a SARB attendance contract.

What does the SARB contract mean?

- The contract is a promise that the student will attend school every day and be on time
- The student/parent will either provide a doctor's note or have the student checked by the school nurse for illness related absences
- The student/parent also promise to follow all other conditions on the contract, which could include obeying school rules, participating in a parenting class, attending counseling sessions or other conditions
- Violation of the contract could result in a referral to the Alameda County Office of Education for additional interventions/supports.

What can SARB recommend for students?

- Counseling programs for the student and/or family
- Parenting classes to support parents
- A student transfer to an alternative school or program
- Assistance from other agencies and programs like Alameda Family Services, housing programs, food banks, etc.
- After-school tutoring
- Coordinated health care support between the doctor and the school nursing staff

Specific laws related to school attendance:

- **Education Code 48200** - Students between the ages of 6 and 18 years must attend school.
- **Education Code 48260** - A student is a truant when they are absent from school without a valid excuse for three full days in one school year or tardy for more than any 30-minute period during the school day three times.
- **Education Code 48263** - Truant students may be referred to SARB.
- **Education Code 48293 and Penal Code 272** - Parents are responsible for sending their children to school or they will face charges in court.
- **Education Code 48293 (a)** - A parent or guardian may be held responsible if a student does not follow the SARB contract.
- **Vehicle Code 13202.7** - The court may revoke or delay a driver's license of a student between the ages of 13 and 18 if they are a habitual truant.