STUDENTS

Excused and Unexcused Absences Procedures

Students are expected to attend all assigned classes each day. School staff will keep a record of absences and tardiness, including a call log and/or records of excused statement submitted by a parent/guardian or, in certain cases, students, to document a student's excused absences.

Excused Absence

The following procedures govern certain excused absences defined in Policy 3122.

1. **Notice of Absence:**

   To obtain and excused absence for one of the approved reasons set forth in Policy 3122, when possible, the parent/guardian is expected to notify the school office on the morning of the absence by phone, email, or written note, and to provide the excuse for the absence. If no excuse is provided with the notification, the parent / guardian will submit an excuse via phone, email or written note upon the student's return to school. Adult students (those over eighteen) and emancipated students (those over sixteen who have been emancipated by court action) will notify the school office of their absences with a note of explanation. Students fourteen (14) years old or older who are absent from school due to testing or treatment for sexually transmitted disease must notify the school of their absence with a signed note of explanation, which will be kept confidential. Students thirteen (13) years and older may do the same for mental health, drug or alcohol treatment; and all students have that right for family planning and abortion.

2. **Absence for parental-approved activities**. This category of absence will be counted as excused for purposes agreed to by the principal or designee and the parent/guardian. An absence may not be approved if it causes a serious adverse effect on the student's educational progress. The student may not be able to achieve the objectives of the unit of instruction as a result of absence from the class. In such a case, a parent/guardian approved absence would have an adverse effect on the student's educational progress, including the grade for the course.

3. **Pre-Arranged Absences**. Student attendance is critical for academic success. Pre-arranged absences must meet the excused absence requirements in Policy 3122 and 3122P to be considered excused. For planned extended absences (3 or more days), a Prearranged Absence Request Form 3122F1 (Secondary) or 3122F2 (Elementary) should be completed for their students' school to review at least one week prior to the anticipated absence. A school principal or designee will determine if an absence meets the criteria for an excused absence. By submitting a prearranged absence form, families acknowledge that instructional time will be missed and should have a plan indicating how the student will maintain sufficient educational progress. Students are responsible for connecting with teachers to review missed material and content, along with completing any required missing assignments upon returning to school. Teachers may determine an appropriate time to review missed content and

material with students as needed. Assignments or instructional materials may not be provided in advance of a prearranged absence. Extended or reoccurring absences may prompt additional communication or a formal meeting to address attendance concerns. If a student is absent for twenty (20) consecutive days, the student will be placed in inactive status. Upon returning to school, the family can re-enroll the student in school. There is no guarantee that the student will be placed in the same class(es)/schedule or have the same teacher(s).

4. **Absence Resulting from Disciplinary Action.** As required by law, students who are removed from a class or classes as a disciplinary measure or students who have been suspended or expelled will have the opportunity to make up assignments or exams missed during the time they were removed from class, suspended, or expelled.

5. **Extended Illness or Physical Disability**. If a student is unable to attend school for an estimated period of at least four (4) weeks due to an illness or disability, the district will provide the student with home or hospital instruction. To receive such services, the parent/guardian must request the services and provide a written statement to the district from a qualified medical practitioner that states the student will not be able to attend school for an estimated period of at least four (4) weeks.

6. **Excused Absence for Chronic Health Condition**. Students with a chronic health condition which interrupts regular attendance may qualify for placement in a limited attendance and participation program. The student and the student's parent or guardian will apply to the principal or counselor, and a limited program will be written following the advice and recommendations of the student's medical advisor. The recommended limited program will be approved by the principal. Staff will be informed of the students' needs, though the confidentiality of medical information will be respected at the parent's/guardian's request.

Required conference for elementary school students

If an elementary school student has five (5) or more excused absences in a single month during the current school year or ten (10) or more excused absences in the current school year, the district will schedule a conference with the student and their parent/guardian at a reasonable convenient time. The conference is intended to identify barriers to the student's regular attendance and to identify supports and resources to the student is able to regularly attend school.

The conference must include at least one school district employee, preferably a nurse, counselor, social worker, teacher or community human service provider, and may occur on the same day as the scheduled parent-teacher conference, provided it takes place within thirty (30) days of the absences. If the student has an Individualized Education Program or a Section 504 Plan, the team that created the program must reconvene. A conference is not required if prior notice of the excused absences was provided to the district or if a doctor's note has been provided and a plan is in place to ensure the student will not fall behind in their coursework.

Unexcused Absences

As used in this procedure, a "unexcused absence" means that a student has failed to attend the majority of hours or periods in an average school day, has failed to comply with a more restrictive school district policy on absences, or has failed to comply with alternative learning experience program attendance requirements. Unexcused absences occur when:

1. The parent/guardian or adult student submits an excuse that does not meet the definition of an excused absence as defined above; or

2. The parent/guardian, or adult student fails to submit any type of excuse statement, whether by phone, e-mail, or in writing, for an absence.

Each unexcused absence within any month will be followed by a letter or phone call to the parent/guardian informing them of the potential consequences of additional unexcused absences. If the parent/guardian is not fluent in English, the school will make reasonable efforts to provide this information in a language in which that parent or guardian is fluent. A student's grade will not be affected if no graded activity is missed during such an absence.

After three (3) unexcused absences within any month , the school will hold a conference with the principal/designee, student and parent/guardian to identify the causes of the student's absenteeism. If a regularly scheduled parent-teacher conference is scheduled to take place within thirty (30) days of the third (3rd) unexcused absence, the district may schedule the attendance conference on the same day. If the student's parent/guardian does not attend the scheduled conference, the school may hold the conference with the student and principal/designee. However, the school will notify the parent/guardian of the steps to eliminate or reduce the student's absences.

At some point after the second (2nd) and before the seventh (7th) unexcused absence, the district will take data-informed steps to eliminate or reduce the student's absences. In middle and high school, these steps will include application of the Washington Assessment of Risks and Needs of Students (WARNS) or other assessment by the district's designated employee.

The data informed steps will include:

a. Providing the student with an available approved best practice or researched-based interventions consistent with the WARNS profile or other truancy assessment, if given;
b. Adjusting the student's school program or course assignment;
c. Providing the student more individualized or remedial instruction;
d. Providing appropriate vocational courses or work experience;
e. Requiring the student to attend an alternative school or program;
f. Assisting the parent/guardian or student to obtain supplementary services that might eliminate or ameliorate the causes for the absence from school; or
g. Referring the student to a community engagement board.

A "community engagement board" means a board established pursuant to a memorandum of understanding (MOU) between a juvenile court and the district and composed of members of the local community in which the student attends school.

For any student with an existing Individualized Education Program (IEP) or Section 504 Plan, these steps will include convening the student's IEP team or Section 504 team, including a behavior specialist or mental health specialist where appropriate, to consider the reasons for the student's absences. If necessary, and if the parent/guardian provides consent, a functional behavior assessment to explore the function of the absence behavior will be conducted and a detailed behavior plan completed. Time should be allowed for the behavior plan to be initiated and data tracked to determine progress.

For any student who does not have an IEP or Section 504 Plan, but who is reasonably believed to have a mental or physical disability or impairment, these steps will include informing the student's parent/guardian of the right to obtain an appropriate evaluation at no cost to the parent/guardian to determine whether the student has a disability or impairment and needs accommodations, special education services, or related services. This includes students with suspected emotional or behavioral disabilities. If the school obtains consent to conduct an evaluation, time should be allowed for the evaluation to be completed, and if the student is found to be eligible for accommodations, special education services, or related services, a plan will be developed to address the student's needs.

Not later than a student's seventh (7th) unexcused absence in a month, the district will:

a. Enter into an agreement with the student and parent/guardian that establishes school attendance requirements;
b. Refer the student to a community engagement board; or
c. File a petition to juvenile court (see below).

Not later than a student's seventh (7th) unexcused absence within any month during the current school year, or fifteenth (15th) unexcused absence during the current school year, if the district's attempts to substantially reduce a student's absences have not been successful and if the student is under the age of seventeen (17), the district will file a petition and supporting affidavit for a civil action in juvenile court.

The petition will contain the following:

1. A statement that the student has unexcused absences in the current school year. Unexcused absences accumulated in another school or school will be counted when preparing the petition;

2. An attestation that actions taken by the school district have not been successful in substantially reducing the student's absences from school;

3. A statement that court intervention and supervision are necessary to assist the school district to reduce the student's absences from school; and

4. All other required components set forth in RCW 28A.225.030 and 035 .

Petitions may be served by certified mail, return receipt requested, but if such service is unsuccessful or the return receipt is not signed by the addressee, personal service is required. The petition may be filed by a school district employee who is not an attorney.

Transfers

In the case of a student who transfers from one district to another during the school year, the sending district will provide to the receiving district the unexcused absences accumulated at the sending district, together with a copy of any WARNS or other truancy assessment, history of any best practices or research-based interventions previously provided to the student, and a copy of the most recent truancy information for that student. The information will include the online or written acknowledgment by the parent/guardian and student. The sending district will use the standard choice transfer form for releasing a student to a nonresidential school district for the purposes of accessing an Alternative Learning Experience program.

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