



2026-2027 HIGH SCHOOL HANDBOOK

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Attendance

Student Absences and Excuses

As directed by the board, the following procedures will be used to implement the district's attendance policy.

Definitions

Attendance – A student is considered to be in attendance if the student is physically present in a class; participating in a district-sponsored or district-approved activity; participating in a class through alternative methods or media as allowed by board policy; receiving homebound services; or receiving services at another location pursuant to law or by arrangement of the district.

Parent – A parent, guardian, or person acting as a parent in the absence of the parent or guardian if the student is under 18. If the student is 18 or otherwise emancipated, the student will serve as the parent for the purposes of this procedure.

Tardy – A student is tardy if the student arrives after the expected time of class or school begins, as determined by the district. Tardiness will be counted as an absence in situations where the student arrives too late to have meaningful participation in the class, lesson, or activity.

Truancy – A student is truant if the student is absent from class or school without the knowledge and consent of the parents and the administration. A student is also considered truant if the student leaves school without the consent of the principal or accumulates excessive unjustifiable absences, even with parental consent. Truancy is a type of unexcused absence.

Attendance Standards

The following absences will be excused. Documentation must be provided as indicated.

1. Illness or injury of the student, with written excuse from parent.
2. Illness or injury of a member of the student's family when the student's presence is necessary or expected, with written excuse from parent.

3. Medical appointments, with written appointment confirmation by medical provider.
4. Funeral, with written excuse from parents. The principal may require a program or other evidence of attendance as additional verification.
5. Religious observances, with written excuse from parent.
6. Other appointments that cannot be scheduled outside attendance hours, such as court appearances, with written excuse from parent.
7. Out-of-School suspension.
8. Absence of a student in foster care due to a decision by a court or child-placing agency to change the student's placement or due to a verified court appearance or related court-ordered activity.
9. Absence due to mental or behavioral health concerns, with written documentation from a licensed mental health professional stating that the student is not able to attend school due to such concerns.
10. Visits with a parent or legal guardian who is an active-duty member of the military who has been called to duty for, is on leave from, or is immediately returned from deployment to a combat zone or combat support posting, with permission of the superintendent or designee.
11. Complying with a subpoena to testify in a criminal proceeding, attending a criminal proceeding, or participating in the preparation of a criminal proceeding.

All other absences and any absence for which required documentation is not provided are unexcused.

Consequences for Violations

Students are responsible for completing all assignments missed due to an absence, regardless of whether the absence is excused or unexcused.

Teachers may establish reasonable timelines for completing missed work and lessons. All missing assignments must be completed by the end of the instructional unit in which the work was assigned unless otherwise approved by the teacher, principal, or through an accommodation plan. Failure to complete required work by the end of the unit may result in a grade of zero for the assignment.

Students are responsible for obtaining and completing all assignments, assessments, and instructional activities missed during an absence.

Students with attendance below 90 percent or more than one failing grade will be required to schedule make up sessions with individual teachers to complete missing work and/or lessons.

Course make-up sessions may occur:

- Before school, from 7:00 a.m. to 7:20 a.m.
- After school from 2:40 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.
- At another time designated by the teacher

Unverified Absences

An absence that is not verified through the district's approved attendance procedures will be considered an unverified absence.

Students with an unverified absence will be required to attend a mandatory course make-up session scheduled by the principal, teacher, or designee outside of regular instructional time.

Course Make-Up Sessions

Students who maintain at least 90 percent attendance and have no more than one failing grade will be considered in good standing and will not be required to attend course make-up sessions.

Purpose of Make-Up Sessions

Make-up sessions are intended to:

- Provide academic support
- Assist students in completing missing assignments
- Improve student engagement
- Improve attendance

Students who fail to attend a required course make-up session may be subject to additional interventions and supports as outlined in district policy and administrative procedures.

Students with Disabilities and Protected Absences

Nothing in this policy shall limit the district's obligation to provide accommodations, modifications, or services required by federal or state law, including Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), foster care provisions, or other applicable laws.

Attendance-related interventions and requirements will be implemented in a manner consistent with a student's documented educational or medical needs.

Referral to Outside Agencies

The district will contact the Children's Division of the Department of Social Services or the local prosecutor when the district has reasonable cause to suspect that a student's lack of attendance constitutes educational neglect or that a parent or guardian is in violation of compulsory attendance laws.

No such action will be taken unless other strategies and interventions have been implemented and proven ineffective.

Notice and Due Process

A summary of the board-adopted attendance policy and related procedures will be published in student and other handbooks and posted on the district's website. In addition, students and their parents will be notified prior to the imposition of any consequence and given the opportunity to appeal to the superintendent. On appeal, students and their parents may present evidence that the student has missed fewer days than the district records show, or that

an absence recorded as unexcused should have been recorded as excused. An appeal will not be taken based on whether the reason for the absence justifies an exception to this rule.

Intervention and Engagement Strategies

The district will utilize the following intervention and engagement strategies as part of the district's overall approach to improve student attendance and achievement. The superintendent or designee will:

1. Conduct community-wide public relations efforts that stress the importance of school attendance.
2. Collaborate with community groups and other organizations that engage youth in activities to create a consistent message about the importance of education

Building-level administrators and staff will:

Contact the family any time a student is absent.

Assign truant students to academic support, detention, or in-school suspension rather than out-of-school suspension.

Assign students who are frequently absent to a staff mentor or participation in a group advisory program.

Assign students to tutoring outside of the regular academic day.

Provide access to behavioral counseling, including information about community resources.

Facilitate family counseling sessions focusing on the power of the family to provide solutions.

Conduct in-home visits.

Post attendance numbers and percentages each day to make students and staff aware of the attendance rate. Create friendly competition by posting attendance rates by grade level or class. Individual student attendance information will not be publicly posted.

Evaluation

Principals, with the assistance of building staff, will conduct annual evaluations of all strategies used to improve student attendance. The evaluations will include:

1. A summary of which strategies are being implemented.
2. The number of participants.
3. Records of targeted interventions for particular students.
4. Changes in overall attendance rates.
5. Changes in attendance rates and academic achievement of students participating in the various strategies.
6. Changes in attendance rates and academic achievement of individual students receiving targeted intervention.
7. Any other data that can be used to assess the effectiveness of strategies and interventions.

Strategies found to be ineffective will be modified or replaced. The principal will provide evaluation information to the superintendent.

Tardy/Late Consequences

Students arriving at school after 7:25 am will check in at the Tardy Desk before reporting to 1st hour.

Any student arriving after the bell rings without an excused pass from the office will be considered late. First hour tardies/late passes will be recorded by the office, and 2nd – 7th hour tardies will be recorded in PowerSchool by the classroom teacher. Administrators are to communicate with parents and assign appropriate consequences for repeated tardiness.

Consequences for excessive tardies

10 tardies- Parent Square contact

15 tardies- 1 hour detention & Parent Square contact

30 tardies- 1 day ISS & parent phone call

40 tardies- 1 day ISS & parent meeting****

****After 40 tardies, each additional 10 tardies is 1 day OSS and possible additional consequences.

Consequences for excessive late to school

3 times late to school- Parent Square contact

5 times late to school- 1 hour detention & Parent Square contact

10 times late to school- 1 day ISS & parent phone call

15 times late to school-1 day ISS & parent meeting****

****After 15 times late to school, each additional 5 times late to school will result in additional consequences.

Leave permits

A parent or guardian should notify the school in advance when a student needs to leave during the school day. Students must obtain approval through the attendance office before leaving campus.

Students leaving school for appointments or other approved reasons must sign out through the office and sign back in upon returning to school. Students are expected to return to school immediately following the conclusion of the appointment or activity. Documentation will be required to verify medical, dental, court, or other appointments.

Leave permits and partial-day absences count toward a student's attendance percentage unless otherwise exempted by district policy. Students are responsible for obtaining and completing any missed assignments.

Academics

A+ Requirements

Requirements are set by the Missouri Department of Secondary and Elementary Education.

[Visit the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education A+ Schools Program webpage.](#)

Class Change Request

Adding and Dropping Courses

Students are encouraged to carefully consider their course selections for the upcoming school year. Course requests are used to develop the master schedule and determine staffing needs. Once the master schedule has been finalized, maintaining balanced class sizes and minimizing schedule disruptions become priorities. Therefore, schedule changes will be limited and granted only under specific circumstances.

After schedules have been finalized, requests for course changes will be considered only for the following reasons:

Computer Error

If a course has been incorrectly entered into the student information system, the original enrollment worksheet will be used to verify and correct the error.

Prerequisite Not Met

Some courses require completion of prerequisite coursework. If a student has not met the required prerequisite, an appropriate alternative course will be assigned.

Duplicate Credit

Students may not earn credit for the same course more than once. A schedule change will be made if a student is enrolled in a course for which credit has already been earned. Exceptions include Music, Debate, Newspaper, Yearbook, Studio Art, and Physical Education.

Graduation Requirement

A required course needed to fulfill graduation requirements is missing from the student's schedule.

Failed Course

The student previously failed a semester or year-long course and must repeat it to earn credit.

Request for Increased Academic Rigor

A student may request enrollment in a more challenging or advanced course, subject to course availability and prerequisite requirements.

Schedule Changes After the Start of the Term

Once classes begin, students seeking a schedule change must first meet with the teacher of the course in question to discuss their concerns and explore possible solutions. If concerns remain after meeting with the teacher, the student may then consult with their administrator to determine whether a schedule change is appropriate.

For additional information regarding schedule changes, students should contact their administrator

Good Standing

Students are expected to be in good standing in academics, attendance, and behavior during school hours to be able to participate in activities after school or in school activities that take them from the classroom. To be in good standing, students may not be failing more than one course and must maintain at least 90% attendance.

Good standing reports will be run at the end of each week for the following week's activities. Any student that is not in good standing will be notified through their 5-Star account. Being on the no privilege lists means students may not participate in school activities until they are back in good standing. Good standing resets the following week on Monday.

Finals Policy (Grades 9-12)-Attendance Incentive

Students will participate in finals at high school. Teachers have the authority to determine the design of the semester assessment that will be given on the assigned finals dates.

Attendance Incentive Semester One: Any student with 90% attendance, passing their courses on December 14, and no in-school suspension (ISS) or out of school suspension (OSS) for the semester, will be exempt from taking finals on December 16th and 17th. (August 25 - December 14).

Attendance Incentive Semester Two: Any student with 90% attendance, passing their courses on May 20th, and no ISS or OSS for the semester, will be exempt from taking finals on May 24th and 25th. (January 5- May 20). There will be no exemption for finals at the end of course (EOC) tested courses. Seniors Finals May 14. ***There will be no appeals.**

Student Expectations

ID Badges

Students should have their IDs in their possession at all times. It is required to enter after school activities. If a student loses an ID, the student should request a replacement as soon as possible at the cost of \$5.00. Replacements may be purchased in the main office.

Graduation Ceremony Requirements

Participation in the graduation ceremony is optional. It's your decision whether you would like to be a part of this momentous event. We understand that everyone has different preferences, and we respect your choice.

Rehearsals

If you decide to participate in the graduation ceremony, you must be present at all rehearsals. These rehearsals are designed to ensure that everything runs smoothly during the ceremony. We value your contribution and want to make sure you feel confident and prepared for this special day. If a student needs to miss a rehearsal, prior communication to building administration must be made.

Ticket Information

Our graduation ceremony takes place at the Civic Arena, which has limited seating capacity. Therefore, tickets are required for admittance to the ceremony. The number of tickets distributed is based on the number of graduates. We strive to accommodate your loved ones

and provide an enjoyable experience for all. Generally, each graduate receives between 6-10 tickets at the final graduation rehearsal.

Closed Campus

During school hours, high school students are expected to remain on the school premises. Leaving the school building, campus, or assigned areas is not permitted. Students who violate the closed campus rule will face disciplinary consequences, unless permission is obtained from an administrator to leave the campus. Please note that parking lots are also off-limits during school hours, except with administrator permission.

Visitor Procedures

All entrances are locked during the school day to maintain a safe environment. Visitors must enter through the main entrance of the building and check in at the main office. Visitors must have a valid driver's license, which will be scanned into the district's security system called Raptor. All visitors must wear the visitor sticker badge while in the building. Visitors must check out through the main office before leaving.

Hall Passes

Students must obtain a digital hall pass from their teacher before leaving the classroom during class time. Students are expected to travel directly to their approved destination and return promptly. Being outside of the classroom during class time without a valid digital pass, or being in an unauthorized location, may result in disciplinary action. A digital hall pass does not permit a student to leave the school building. Permission from the main office is required before leaving the school building.

Lunch/Outside Food

Closed campus lunch. No outside food deliveries are allowed.

Universal Dress Code Standards

While dress codes may vary between buildings and grade levels, all district dress codes must include the following:

1. Students must wear clothing that covers undergarments, private areas (buttocks, chest, and genitals), and midriffs at all times.
2. Clothing, footwear, and accessories must allow students to participate in school activities without risk of health or safety.
3. Students may not wear dress shoes, such as inappropriate footwear, that might damage district property.
4. Students must wear protective clothing and equipment when required by district staff.

Students may not wear clothing or accessories that:

1. Contain content that is obscene to minors, libelous, indecent, or vulgar;
2. Contain insulting or fighting words or threats of violence;
3. Are likely to cause a disruption to the educational environment;
4. Show or imply gang affiliation;
5. Include images or language that violate district rules on illegal discrimination or harassment; and
6. Disrupt the school environment, promote disruptive behavior, or infringe on the rights of others.

For safety/student identification purposes, students may not wear hoods over their heads while inside the school building during school hours.

When, in the judgment of the principal, a student's appearance or mode of dress does not comply with the above criteria, the student may be required to make modifications. Failure to comply may result in disciplinary action.

Junior/Senior Prom

All fees must be cleared prior to attending prom.

All attendees must be a Junior or Senior enrolled in Good Standing in a high school, a high school alternative program, home school, or other accredited high school or 20 years of age or less if out of High School. Guests not in high school will undergo a background check.

Good standing refers to 90% or better attendance rate for second semester and no more than one failing grade. All other activity eligibility requirements apply.

In addition, if a student accumulates three or more days of OSS for the second semester, the student will not be eligible to attend Prom.

No appeals for attendance will be heard. Absences coded as “Medical” will not be counted against a student for Good Standing.

All absences are calculated into attendance rate, so retain copies of documentation regarding prolonged illness.

Outside guests are to be registered by the deadline for outside guests. This includes the submission of an outside guest form. This date will be announced prior to prom. Single students are welcome.

All students and guests must purchase tickets.

Specific details and information about dance times, themes, etc. will be provided to students by the school Prom Committee and sponsors.

Discipline

Cell Phone Policy

Under board policy EHB-AP, the usage of personal communication devices is prohibited during school days. Unauthorized use of such devices disrupts the instructional program and distracts from the learning environment. Failure to comply with reasonable requests pertaining to personal communication devices may result in additional consequences.

High School Expectations

Students are not allowed to display or use personal communication devices during the school day. Violations of this policy will result in the device being confiscated.

1st Offense - Device confiscated and turned into the office. A parent or guardian will be notified. Picked up at the end of the day by the student.

2nd Offense - Device confiscated and turned into the office. Picked up at the end of the day by a parent/guardian or designated adult.

Subsequent - The personal communication device will be confiscated and turned into the office. A parent/guardian or designated adult will be required to pick up the device. Additionally, consequences for Disrespectful or Disruptive Conduct or Speech will be assigned.

Detention

Students may be assigned detention by any staff member or administrator for attendance concerns, excessive tardiness, misconduct, failure to follow school expectations, or other disciplinary concerns.

Detentions are one (1) hour in length and should be served within one week of assignment. Students are expected to report to the designated location at the assigned date and time, arrive on time, remain for the entire detention period, and follow all school rules and staff directions.

Students may reschedule a detention one time if arrangements are made with school personnel prior to the assigned detention date. Failure to attend a scheduled detention without prior approval, or failure to attend a rescheduled detention, will result in assignment to In-School Suspension (ISS).

Additional disciplinary consequences may be assigned for behavior that occurs during detention or for repeated failure to comply with school expectations.

Transportation & Parking

Bus Transportation - School Sponsored Trips

Transportation for participants in school sponsored trips and competitive activities shall be by bus or school vehicle. Students represent the school and must travel by means provided. There must be a faculty representative in each bus or other authorized vehicle. (The same rules and regulations governing student behavior while at school apply to those riding school bus.

Refer to the SJSD Parent & Student Handbook (page 20).

Student Parking

Parking lot space is limited for students. Parking in these lots is a privilege and is not guaranteed. Not all students will be able or allowed to park in the designated parking lots. The following eligibility criteria will be used to offer student parking spots.

Senior Reserved Parking

Seniors will be offered the ability to purchase a reserved spot to paint for \$100.00. These will be the only reserved and assigned spots in either parking lot. There are a limited number of spots available. Parking spots will be offered to students based on their cumulative high school attendance. Students with 90% attendance and better will be offered the first option to purchase painted spots.

General Parking Lot Pass

Seniors with 90% or better who do not purchase a painted spot can purchase the general parking pass for \$5. Remaining spots will be offered first to Juniors then to Sophomores, with 90% attendance or better until all parking spots are accounted for.

Anyone driving to school that does not have a parking pass will be allowed to park on the street in legal parking zones. The enforcement of street parking will be handled by the St. Joseph Police Department.