Absences & Excuses

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Excused Absences

A student's absence shall be excused for the following reasons:

1. Personal illness, including absence for the benefit of the student's mental or behavioral health

2. Quarantine under the direction of a county or city health officer

3. Medical, dental, optometrical, or chiropractic appointment

4. Attendance at funeral services for or grieving the death of a member of the student's immediate family or, as determined by the student's parent/guardian, a person so closely associated with the student as to be considered the student's immediate family

   A student may be excused for this reason for up to five days for each incident.

5. Jury duty in the manner provided by law

6. Illness or medical appointment during school hours of a child to whom the student is the custodial parent

7. Upon advance written request by the parent/guardian and the approval of the principal or designee, justifiable personal reasons including, but not limited to:

   a. Appearance in court

   b. Attendance at a funeral service

   c. Observation of a holiday or ceremony of the student's religion

   d. Attendance at religious retreats not to exceed four hours per semester

   e. Attendance at an employment conference

   f. Attendance at an educational conference offered by a nonprofit organization on the legislative or judicial process

8. Service as a member of a precinct board for an election pursuant to Elections Code 12302

9. To spend time with an immediate family member who is an active duty member of the uniformed services, as defined in Education Code 49701, and has been called to duty for deployment to a combat zone or a combat support position or is on leave from or has immediately returned from such deployment

Such absence shall be granted for a period of time to be determined at the discretion of the Superintendent or designee.

10. Attendance at the student's naturalization ceremony to become a United States citizen

11. Participation in a cultural ceremony or event which relates to the habits, practices, beliefs, and traditions of a certain group of people

12. For a middle school or high school student, engagement in a civic or political event, provided that the student notifies the school ahead of the absence

    Unless otherwise permitted by the Superintendent or designee, students shall be limited to one such school day-long absence each school year.

13. When a student's immediate family member or, as determined by the student's parent/guardian, a person so closely associated with the student as to be considered the student's immediate family has died:

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

    b. To access grief support services

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

    Such absence shall be excused for not more than three days for each incident.

14. For a student's participation in military entrance processing

15. Participation in religious exercises or to receive moral and religious instruction at the student's place of worship or other suitable place away from school property as designated by the religious group, church, or denomination

    Absence for student participation in religious exercises or instruction shall not be considered an absence for the purpose of computing average daily attendance if the student attends at least the minimum school day as specified in Board Rule 6112 - School Day, and is not excused from school for this purpose on more than four days each school month.

16. For a student who holds a work permit authorizing work in the entertainment or allied industries for a period of not more than five consecutive days, work in such industry

    For this purpose, student absence shall be excused for a maximum of up to five absences each school year.

17. Participation with a nonprofit performing arts organization in a performance for a public school audience

    A student may be excused for up to five such absences each school year provided that the student's

parent/guardian provides a written explanation of such absence to the school.

18. Other reasons authorized at the discretion of the principal or designee based on the student's specific circumstances

For the purpose of the absences described above, immediate family means the student's parent/guardian, sibling, grandparent, or any other relative living in the student's household.

Method of Verification
When a student who has been absent returns to school, the student shall present a satisfactory explanation verifying the reason for the absence. Absences shall be verified by the student's parent/guardian, other person having control of the minor, or the student if age 18 or older.

The following methods may be used to verify student absences:

1. Written note, email, or voice mail from parent/guardian or parent representative

2. Conversation, in person or by telephone, between the verifying employee and the student's parent/guardian or parent representative.

   The employee shall subsequently record the following:

   a. Name of student

   b. Name of parent/guardian or parent representative

   c. Name of verifying employee

   d. Date(s) of absence

   e. Reason for absence

3. Visit to the student's home by the verifying employee, or any other reasonable method which establishes the fact that the student was absent for the reasons stated. The employee shall document the verification and include the information specified in item #2 above.

4. Physician's verification

   a. When excusing students for confidential medical services or verifying such appointments, district staff shall not ask the purpose of such appointments but may contact a medical office to confirm the time of the appointment.

   b. When a student has had 14 absences in the school year for illness verified by methods listed in #1-3 above, any further absences for illness shall be verified by a physician.

Unexcused Absences
When an unexcused absence occurs, the student and parent/guardian shall be notified and informed of the district's policy regarding excessive unexcused absences. The student and parent/guardian shall have a reasonable opportunity to explain the absence.

Chronic Absences and Truancy
Chronic absentee means a student who is absent for any reason on 10 percent or more of the school days in the school year, when the total number of days the student is absent is divided by the total number of days the student is enrolled and school was actually taught in the regular schools of the district, exclusive of Saturdays and Sundays.

Truant means a student who is absent from school without a valid excuse three full days in one school year, or tardy or absent for more than any 30-minute period during the school day without a valid excuse on three occasions in one school year, or any combination thereof.

Habitual truant means a student who has been reported as a truant three or more times within the same school year, provided the district has made a conscientious effort to hold at least one conference with the student and their parent/guardian.

Chronic truant means a student who has been absent from school without a valid excuse for 10 percent or more of the school days in one school year, from the date of enrollment to the current date, provided the district has met the requirements of Education Code 48260-48263 and 48291.

Note: For purposes of classifying a student as a truant, valid excuse includes, but is not limited to, the reasons for which a student shall be excused from school pursuant to Education Code 48205 and 48225.5. A valid excuse also may include other reasons that are within the discretion of school administrators and, based on the facts of the student's circumstances, are deemed to constitute a valid excuse.

Truancy/School Attendance Review Board (SARB)
District administrative staff shall participate in a School Attendance Review Board (SARB), as allowed by law in order to meet the special needs of students with school attendance or school behavior problems. Students identified as “truant” may be required to attend makeup classes on one day of a weekend.

A student who has been classified as “habitually truant” shall be referred to the district’s SARB. When the district determines that the student’s attendance problems cannot be resolved or that the student and parent/ guardian has failed to respond to the district directives to correct the problem, the parent/guardian and student shall be referred to the district attorney in a complaint.

Parent Notification
At the beginning of each school year, the Superintendent or designee shall:

1. Notify parents/guardians of the right to excuse a student from school in order to participate in religious exercises or to receive moral and religious instruction at their places of worship, or at other suitable places away from school property designated by a religious group, church, or denomination

2. Notify students in grades 7-12 and the parents/guardians of all students enrolled in the district that school authorities may excuse any student from school to obtain confidential medical services without the consent of the student's parent/guardian

3. Notify parents/guardians that a student shall not have a grade reduced or lose academic credit for any excused absence if missed assignments and tests that can reasonably be provided are satisfactorily completed within a reasonable period of time

   Such notice shall include the full text of Education Code 48205.

Policy Reference Disclaimer:
These references are not intended to be part of the policy itself, nor do they indicate the basis or authority for the Board to enact this policy. Instead, they are provided as additional resources for those interested in the subject matter of the policy.

Legal References:

STATE
CALIFORNIA CODE OF REGULATIONS
5 CCR 306 Explanation of absence
5 CCR 420-424 Record of verification of absence due to illness and other causes
EDUCATION CODE
1740 Employment of personnel to supervise attendance
37201 School month
37223 Weekend classes
41601 Reports of average daily attendance
42238-42252.1 Apportionments
46000 Attendance records
46010-46015 Absences
46110-46120 Attendance in kindergarten and elementary schools
46140-46148 Attendance in junior high and high schools
48200-48208 Children ages 6-18; compulsory full-time attendance
48210-48216 Exclusions from attendance
48225.5 Work permit; excused absence; entertainment or allied industries; participation in not-for-profit performing arts organization
48240-48246 Supervisors of attendance
48260-48273 Truants
48292 Filing complaint against parent
48320-48324 School attendance review boards
48340-48341 Improvement of student attendance
49067 Unexcused absences as cause of failing grade
49701 Provisions of the Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunities for Military Children
ELECTIONS CODE
12302 Student participation on precinct boards
FAMILY CODE
6920-6930 Consent by minor for medical treatment
WELFARE & INSTITUTIONS CODE
11253.5 Compulsory school attendance; eligibility for aid
601-601.5 Habitually truant minors

MANAGEMENT RESOURCES:
ATTORNEY GENERAL OPINIONS
66 Ops.Cal.Atty.Gen. 244 (1983)
87 Ops.Cal.Atty.Gen. 168 (2004)
COURT DECISION
American Academy of Pediatrics et al v. Lungren et al (1997) 16 Cal.4th 307
CSBA PUBLICATION
Seize the Data: Using Chronic Absence Data to Drive Student Engagement, March 2024
INSTITUTE FOR EDUCATION SCIENCES PUBLICATION
Resources for Supporting Student Engagement and Attendance, April 2024
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION PUBLICATION
Action Planner for Reengaging Students to Support Everyday Attendance, May 2024
WEBSITES
Institute for Education Sciences https://ies.ed.gov/

U.S. Department of Education, Office of Elementary and Secondary Education
https://www.ed.gov/about/ed-offices/oese
CSBA District and County Office of Education Legal Services https://legalservices.csba.org/
CSBA http://www.csba.org/

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