Title: **Procedure - Excused and Unexcused Absences**
Code: 3122P
Section: WSSDA Model Policies
Section: 3000 - Students

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

Excused Absences
The following procedure applies to excused absences.
Parental notification
When possible, the parent/guardian is expected to notify the school office on the morning of the absence by phone, e-mail, or written note, and to provide the excuse for the absence. If no excuse is provided with the notification, or no notification is provided, the parent/guardian will submit an excuse via phone, e-mail 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 years old or older who are absent from school due to testing or treatment for a sexually transmitted disease will notify the school of their absence with a note of explanation, which will be kept confidential. Students thirteen 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.

A parent/guardian may request that a student be excused from attending school in observance of a religious holiday. In addition, a student, upon the request of his/her parent, may be excused for a portion of a school day to participate in religious instruction provided such is not conducted on school property. A student will be allowed one makeup day for each day of absence.

Absence for parental-approved activities
This category of absence will be counted as excused for purposes agreed to by the principal 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 class. In such a case, a parent or guardian-approved absence would have an adverse effect on the student's educational progress, including the grade for the course. A student, upon the

request of his/her parent/guardian, may be excused for a portion of a school day to participate in religious instruction provided such is not conducted on school property or otherwise involves the school to any degree.

Absence resulting from disciplinary actions — or short-term suspension
As required by law, students who are removed from a class or classes as a disciplinary measure or students who have been placed on short-term or long-term suspension will have the right to make up assignments or exams missed during the time they were denied entry to the classroom if the effect of the missed assignments will be a substantial lowering of the course grade.

Extended illness or health condition
If a student is confined to home or hospital for an extended period, the school will arrange for the accomplishment of assignments at the place of confinement whenever practical. If the student is unable to do his/her schoolwork, or if there are major requirements of a particular course which cannot be accomplished outside of class the student may be required to take an incomplete or withdraw from the class without penalty.

Excused absence for chronic health condition
Students with a chronic health condition that interrupts regular attendance may qualify for placement in a limited attendance and participation program. The student and his/her parent 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 student's needs, though the confidentiality of medical information will be respected at the parent's request.

Required conference for elementary school students
If an elementary school student has five or more excused absences in a single month during the current school year or ten or more excused absences in the current school year, the district will schedule a conference with the student and their parent(s) at a reasonably convenient time. The conference is intended to identify barriers to the student’s regular attendance and to identify supports and resources so the student may 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 days of the absences. If the student has an Individualized Education Program or a

Section 504 Plan, the team that created that 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.

Tiered response system for student who are absent from remote learning

Students who are marked absent from remote learning will receive interventions and services consistent with the tiered response system for student absences implemented by the district pursuant to WAC 392-401A-045. Under the tiered response system, the district will:

- Monitor daily attendance data for all students who are absent from remote learning, whether excused or unexcused;
- Make multiple attempts to contact the families regarding student absences using multiple modalities and in the parent's home language;
- Provide daily notification of absences to parents;
- Provide outreach from the student's school to determine student needs, such as basic needs, connectivity and hardware, connection with health and social services as necessary;
- Provide differentiated supports to students that address the barriers to attendance and participation, including universal supports for all students and tiered interventions for students at-risk of and experiencing chronic absence; and
- When feasible and appropriate, transition students to full-time in-person learning or other program to accommodate the student's needs.

Unexcused Absences

The following procedure applies to unexcused absences.
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 in Policy 3122; 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.

Any Unexcused Absence During the School Year

Each unexcused absence within any month of the current school year will be followed by a letter or phone call to the parent informing them of the consequences of additional unexcused absences. The school will make reasonable efforts to provide this information in a language in which that

parent is fluent. A student's grade will not be affected if no graded activity is missed during such an absence; however, a student's grade may be affected if a graded activity or assignment occurs during the period of time when the student is absent and that absence is not excused.

Three Unexcused Absences within Any Month During the Current School Year

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

After a Student's Sixth Unexcused Absence within Any Month During the Current School Year

Not later than a student's seventh unexcused absence in a month, the District will either (1) enter into an agreement with the student and parents/guardians that establishes school attendance requirements; (2) refer the student to a community engagement board; or (3) file a petition to juvenile court.

Between the Second and Seventh Unexcused Absences within Any Month During the Current School Year

At some point after the second and before the seventh unexcused absence, the district will take data-informed steps to eliminate or reduce the student's absences.

In middle school and high school, these steps will include application of the Washington Assessment of the Risks and Needs of Students (WARNS) or other assessment by the district's designated employee. These steps must include, where appropriate:

- providing an available approved best practice or research-based intervention, or both, consistent with the WARNS profile or other assessment, if an assessment was applied;
- adjusting the child's school program or school or course assignment;
- providing more individualized or remedial instruction;

- providing appropriate vocational courses or work experience;
- requiring the child to attend an alternative school or program;
- assisting the parent or child to obtain supplementary services that might
- eliminate or ameliorate the cause or causes for the absence from school; or
- referring the child to a community engagement board.

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 student's parent gives consent, the district will conduct a functional behavior assessment and will compete a detailed behavior plan to explore the function of the absence behavior. 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 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.

Between the Seventh and Fifteenth Unexcused Absence within Any Month During the Current School Year

After the student's seventh unexcused absence within any month during the current school year and not later than the fifteenth 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, the district will file a petition and supporting affidavit for a civil action in juvenile court.

Community Engagement Board

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

the student attends school. The district will enter into an MOU with the juvenile court in Klickitat County to establish and/or continue a community engagement board.

The district will designate and identify to the juvenile court (and update as necessary) and to the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction a staff member to coordinate district efforts to address excessive absenteeism and truancy, including outreach and conferences, coordinating the MOU, establishing protocols and procedures with the court, coordinating trainings, sharing evidence-based and culturally appropriate promising practices. The district will also identify a person within each school to serve as a contact regarding excessive absenteeism and truancy and assisting in the recruitment of community engagement board members.

Petition to juvenile court

The petition will contain the following:

1. A statement that the student has unexcused absences in the current school year. *(District Note: While petitions must be filed if the student has seven or more unexcused absences within any month, or ten or more unexcused absences in the current school year, a petition may be filed earlier. 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;
4. A statement that RCW 28A.225.010 has been violated by the parent, student or parent and student;
5. The student's name, date of birth, school, address, gender, race and ethnicity; and the names and addresses of the student's parents/guardians, whether the student and parent are fluent in English, whether there is an existing individualized education program (IEP) and the student's current academic status in school;
6. A list of all interventions that have been attempted, a copy of any previous truancy assessment completed by the student's current school district, the history of approved best practices intervention or research-based intervention(s) previously provided to the student by the district, and a copy of the most recent truancy information document provided to the parent.
7. Facts that support the above allegations.

Petitions may be served by certified mail, return receipt requested, but if such service is unsuccessful, personal service is required. At the district's

choice, it may be represented by a person who is not an attorney at hearings related to truancy petitions.

If the allegations in the petition are established by a preponderance of the evidence, the court shall grant the petition and enter an order assuming jurisdiction to intervene for a period of time determined by the court, after considering the facts alleged in the petition and the circumstances of the student, to most likely cause the student to return to and remain in school while the student is subject to the court's jurisdiction.

If the court assumes jurisdiction, the school district will periodically report to the court any additional unexcused absences by the student, actions taken by the school district, and an update on the student's academic status in school at a schedule specified by the court. The first report must be received no later than three (3) months from the date that the court assumes jurisdiction.

All sanctions imposed for failure to comply with the attendance policies and procedures will be implemented in conformance with state and district regulations regarding discipline or corrective action. (See WSSDA policy 3241, Student Discipline.)

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, together with a copy of the WARNS assessment and any interventions previously provided to the student, the most recent truancy information for that student. The information will include the online or written acknowledgment by the parent and student. The sending district will use the standard choice transfer form for releasing a student to a nonresident school district for the purposes of accessing an alternative learning experience program.

Adopted: **09.21**
Classification: **Critical**
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Management Resources:

- 2022 - June Issue
- 2021 - June Issue
- 2020 - September Alert
- 2018 - August 2018 - August Policy Issue
- 2017 - July Policy Issue
- 2016 - July Policy Issue

- 2015 - June Policy Issue
- 2012 - December Issue
- 2012 - October Issue
- 2011 - December Issue
- 2011 - June Issue

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