

Revised: 11/18/09	ARIZONA DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION GUIDELINES & PROCEDURES	NO. EX-1
SUPERSEDES: 02/26/09		SHEET 1 of 2
SUBJECT: SCHOOL FINANCE - EXCUSED ABSENCES		FILING INSTRUCTIONS (Guidelines & Procedures Manual) Section: External As item: EX-1

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of this guideline is to inform district schools and charter schools when an absence shall be considered excused.

II. GUIDELINE

- A. Pursuant to A.R.S. §15-901(A)(2), "...excused absences shall be identified by the Department of Education...". The Department of Education defines an excused absence as being an absence due to illness, doctor appointment, bereavement, family emergencies and out-of-school suspensions not to exceed 10% of the instructional days scheduled for the school year. The Department of Education delegates the decision of family vacations as an excused absence to individual school districts and charter holders.
- B. Pursuant to A.R.S. §15-806, "the governing board of each school district shall adopt a policy governing the excuse of students for religious purposes. The policy may permit a student to be excused from school attendance for religious purposes, including participation in religious exercises or religious instruction. If the policy permits a student to be excused for religious purposes, the policy shall stipulate the conditions under which the excuse will be granted." Pursuant to A.R.S. §15-806(1) and (2) these conditions will include at least a written consent from the person who has legal custody of the student and the religious instruction or exercises must take place at a suitable place away from school property. Pursuant to Op.Atty.Gen. No. R76-292, the total number of days of excused absences for religious purposes shall be reasonable and not abused.
- C. Pursuant to A.R.S. §15-902(C), a district or charter may apply to the Arizona Department of Education for an adjustment when excessive absences occur that are a result of a widespread illness, adverse weather conditions, a concentrated refusal by students to attend classes which extends to three or more consecutive instructional days, threats of violence against school property, school personnel or students for any period of one day or more, or school closure due to situations affecting the safety of persons or property resulting from fire, flooding or floodwater, an earthquake, a hazardous material event or other causes if approved by the department of education.

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D. Pursuant to A.R.S. §15-902(E), a district or charter may also apply to the Arizona Department of Education for absence approval for students with chronic health problems if the district or charter is providing services to the students during their absences.

E. Pursuant to A.R.S. §15-803(A)(2), in order for any of the above absences to be excused, a child who is under 16 years of age must be accompanied by a parent, guardian, or authorized person.

III. Procedure

In order for absences relating to illness, doctor appointment, bereavement, family emergencies, or district approved family vacation to be counted as excused absences, the school must be notified of the absence prior to the absence or when the absence occurs by the parent or legal guardian who has custody of the student. The school will document on paper or paperless format the date and reason for the absence. The documented record shall be maintained for not more than four (4) years.

In order for a district or charter to apply to ADE for the exclusion of excess absences due to widespread illness, adverse weather conditions, or a concentrated refusal by students to attend classes exceeding three days, the districts and charters shall apply for an adjusted ADM, and if approved, will be reflected on the ADMS 46-1 and the ADMS 40-2 Report.

If an absence occurs relating to any other term or condition that is not specifically designated herein, the absence shall be counted as unexcused. Students absent for ten (10) consecutive school days, except for excused absences identified herein, shall be withdrawn from the school, pursuant to A.R.S. §15-901 (A)(2).

*If you have any questions or comments concerning the interpretation or clarification of these guidance statements, please contact the Office of Legislative Guidelines (602)542-0384.