

## Important Attendance Information September 2012

The State Board of Education adopted a new policy regarding the definitions of “excused” and “unexcused” absences. If your son/daughter is absent from school, a parent/guardian must provide a written note to the school or send an email to your child’s school to have the absence excused.

Phone calls to the school are no longer acceptable for the purpose of excusing a student absence as per these recent changes in state legislation.

### **Excused Absences**

Absences 1-9 are “excused” when parent/guardian approves the absence and submits written documentation of the reason for the absence within 10 days of the student’s return to school.

Any reason approved by the parent/guardian is considered acceptable and excused for absences 1-9, as long as the proper documentation is submitted within the 10-day timeframe.

Absence 10 and all absences thereafter will be considered excused when the school receives appropriate and timely documentation of the absence for one of the 6 approved reasons.

### **Six Approved Reasons for Absence**

1. Student illness (Note: all student illness absences must be verified by an appropriately licensed medical professional to be deemed excused, regardless of the length of absence);
2. Student observance of a religious holiday;
3. Death in the student’s family or other emergency beyond the control of the student’s family;
4. Mandated court appearances (additional documentation required);
5. The lack of transportation that is normally provided by a district other than the one the student attends (no parental documentation required); or
6. Extraordinary educational opportunities pre-approved by the district administrators and in accordance with State Department of Education guidance.

### **Documentation for Excused Absences**

Written documentation should explain the nature of, reason for, and length of the absence.

Such documentation may be in the form of a signed note from a parent/guardian or a note confirming the absence by the school nurse or licensed medical professional.

Separate documentation must be submitted for each incidence of absenteeism.

The requirement that “all student illness absences must be verified by an appropriately licensed medical professional to be deemed excused, regardless of the length of absence,” only applies to the tenth and subsequent absences.

Documentation for absences 10 and more must be submitted directly to the office or sent to your child's school (school email address for this purpose).

Additional documentation regarding court appearances can be any of a variety of court materials that validate the student's presence in court on the date of the absence.

If a student comes in late or leaves early from school, a note is needed if the time out of school exceeds three (3) hours.

### **Unexcused Absences**

A student's absence from school will be considered unexcused unless the absence meets the criteria for an excused absence (including proper documentation), or the absence is the result of a disciplinary action by the school or district.

### **Disciplinary Absences**

When a student is not attending due to a disciplinary action (out-of-school suspension, expulsion), the absence shall not be recorded as "excused" or "unexcused," but rather, as a "disciplinary" absence.