

Attendance Policy and Procedure

1. “Hawaii State **Compulsory School Attendance Law** The Hawaii Revised Statutes, Section 302A-1132, states that unless excluded from school or excepted from attendance, all children who will have arrived at the age of at least six years, and who will not have arrived at the age of eighteen, by January 1st of any school year, shall attend either a public or private school for, and during, the school year and any parent, guardian, or other person having the responsibility for, or care of, a child whose attendance at school is obligatory shall send the child to either a public or private school.”

- a. Parents or guardians are legally responsible to make certain that their child attends school every day.
- b. Students must be physically present in school for at least half of the school day to be marked present. Any student who leaves school before, or arrives after 11:00 a.m. will be marked absent.
- c. If a student leaves school before 11:00 a.m.; then returns to school after an appointment; the student is considered present for the school day.

The Hawaii Department of Education recognizes the importance that consistent school attendance can have on a child’s education. Any student with 15 or more absences is considered “Chronically Absent”. Also, the school’s performance rating will be impacted if there are a high number of chronically absent students.

- d. For reporting purposes, there is no distinction made between “excused or “unexcused” absences. Students are either present or absent.

2. **Absences** – In order to insure students’ accountability for their attendance and safety, parents or guardians should adhere to the following procedures:

- a. Call the school at 622-6336 before 9:00 a.m. to report a child’s absence stating:
 - Child’s first and last legal name
 - Grade Level and/or Room No.
 - Date(s) of absence
 - Reason for absence
 - Parent’s name and phone number(s) where parent/guardian may be contacted

An answering machine will record the above information after school hours.

b. **Excused absence** = written documentation (**Note*** below) must be submitted within three (3) days upon student’s return to school, and the absence is for one of the following reasons:

- Illness, injury, quarantine (chicken pox, measles, etc.) verifiable by a doctor’s note. **A doctor’s note is required for 3 or more consecutive days of absence.**
- Doctor/Dental appointment verifiable by a doctor’s note

- Death in the family
- Court attendance verifiable by a court document
- Special case approved by the Principal – for example:
 - 1) Child is seeing their deployed parent off or welcoming them back, the principal may approve this as an excused absence. Notice should be given prior to the event.
 - 2) Family emergency has occurred and the child must be with the parent for the day, the principal may approve this as an excused absence. Parent should call school as soon as possible.
 - 3) Severe weather conditions.
- Authorized school activities which may include, but are not limited to on-campus activities (ie: Fun Run, parent involvement, meetings, etc.) and off-campus activities (ie: field trips, student council, etc.)
- Other activities approved by the Principal or designee prior to the activity or absence.

Note*: *The note from parent or guardian must include the information cited in “a.,” plus the parent or guardian’s signature.*

c. **Unexcused absence** = all student absences not covered above in “b”. Excused absence.” These are events that may occur during the school day, but are considered ‘unexcused’:

- Babysitting siblings or other children
- Caring for the elderly or any family member
- Entertaining visitors or guests
- Kept at home to clean house
- Family vacations (on/off island) trips*
- Parent request without explanation
- Personal business
- Youth camp*
- Sports competition events*

This is just an example of reasons considered “unexcused,” other reasons could be taken on a case-by-case basis,

** Parents must notify the school in writing when plans for any extended absences due to family vacation, youth camp, and/or sports competition events (i.e. Little League World Series, etc.) The school administration has the discretion to determine if the extended absence will be excused or unexcused, especially if student academics are adversely affected and/or if attendance is a concern. Parents should meet with the school administration and teacher to discuss educational arrangements. Parents, as much as possible, please plan family trips during intersessions or holidays. When children miss several days of instruction they have difficulty catching up, progressing and maintaining the rigors of a standards-based education.*

d. **Tardy** = Students who arrive at school after 7:55 a.m. are tardy. Students must report to the office to check in. All excused absence reasons apply. Other reasons must be reviewed by an administrator before the tardy is excused. The student's tardiness is considered excused if the student:

- Brings a verified doctor/dental, court, or parent note using the same information as with an "excused absence."
- Brings doctor's note that is required for 3 or more consecutive tardy days.
- Is detained by school personnel.
- Is delayed by the school bus.
- Is delayed by unusual weather conditions (approved by administration)

e. **Unexcused tardy** includes, but are not exclusive of:

- Overslept/late start
- Car trouble
- Missed the bus
- Babysitting
- Personal business

3. **Truancy** – "The State of Hawaii Department of Education, defines truancy as unauthorized absences from school. Currently, Section 302A-1135 of the Hawaii Revised Statutes states that if any child of school age persists in absenting oneself from school, the family court judge, upon a proper petition, citation, or complaint being made by the school teacher or any other officer or agent of the department, or police officer, or other person, shall cause the child, and the father or mother, guardian, or other person having charge of the child, to be summoned to appear before the judge. Upon it's being proved that the person responsible for the child had not used."

4. **Disciplinary action for absences, tardies, and truancy:**

The following pro-active steps will be used to help you and your child understand the importance of daily school attendance because a child's learning is continuous and filled with daily activities to maximize his or her potential. These are steps that you will want to avoid. Because avoidance of these steps is key, please contact the teacher, counselor, or vice principal at any time to help you.

1st written notice:

- Teacher or counselor will call and document the call OR send a note or notate it on the student's calendar/homework log that your child has been absent or tardy for 4 days.
- The DOE does not differentiate between excused or unexcused.
- Parent sign letter and return it to the teacher.

2nd written notice:

- Counselor will send home a letter after a total of eight (8) days of absence or tardy.
- Parent sign letter and return it to the teacher.
- Counselor or teacher will call to schedule a conference between parents, teacher(s), counselor, and administrator.

3rd written notice:

- Counselor will send home a letter after another twelve (12) days of absence or tardy. By this time the child will have been absent or tardy for approximately 20 days.
- Parent sign letter and return it to the teacher.
- Counselor or teacher may call to schedule a 2nd conference with an administrator present.

Family Court referral:

- Continued chronic absenteeism or tardiness may result in a petition to Family Court for a parent's non-compliance of the State's Compulsory Attendance law for their child's absences/tardies/truancies. The school will proceed on a case-by-case basis.