

## **EXCUSED AND UNEXCUSED ABSENCES**

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**

Regular school attendance is necessary for mastery of the educational program provided to students of the district. Students at times may appropriately be absent from class. The following principles shall govern the development and administration of attendance procedures within the district:

A. The following are valid excuses for absences:

1. Participation in a district or school-approved activity or instructional program;
2. Illness, health condition or medical appointment (including but not limited to medical, counseling, dental or optometry);
3. Family emergency, including but not limited to a death or illness in the family;
4. Religious or cultural purpose including observances of a religious or cultural holiday or participation in religious or cultural instruction;
5. Court, judicial proceeding or serving on a jury;
6. Post-secondary, technical school or apprenticeship program visitation, or scholarship interview;
7. State-recognized search and rescue activities consistent with RCW 28A.225.055;
8. Absence directly related to the student's homeless status;
9. Absence resulting from a disciplinary/corrective action (e.g., short-term or long-term suspension, emergency expulsion); and
10. Principal (or designee) and parent, guardian, or emancipated youth mutually agreed upon approved activity.

The school principal (or designee) has the authority to determine if an absence meets the above criteria for an excused absence.

- B. If an absence is excused, the student shall be permitted to make up all missed assignments outside of class under reasonable conditions and time limits established by the appropriate teacher except that in participation-type classes a student's grade may be affected because of the student's inability to make up the activities conducted during a class period.
- C. An excused absence shall be verified by a parent/guardian; or adult, emancipated or appropriately aged student; or school authority responsible for the absence. If attendance is taken electronically, either for a course conducted online or for students physically within the district, an absence will default to unexcused until such time as an excused absence may be verified by a parent or other responsible adult. If a student is to be released for health care related to family planning or abortion, the student may require that the district keep the information confidential. Students thirteen and older have the right to keep information about drug, alcohol or mental health treatment confidential. Students fourteen and older have the same confidentiality rights regarding HIV and sexually transmitted diseases.

### Unexcused Absences

- A. Any absence from school for the majority of hours or periods in an average school day is unexcused unless it meets one of the criteria above for an excused absence.
- B. As a means of instilling values of responsibility and personal accountability, a student whose absence is not excused shall experience the consequences of his/her absence. A student's grade may be affected if a graded activity or assignment occurs during the period of time when the student is absent.
- C. The school will notify a student's parent or guardian in writing or by telephone whenever the student has failed to attend school after one unexcused absence within any month during the current school year. The notification shall include the potential consequences of additional unexcused absences.
- D. A conference with the parent or guardian shall be held after two unexcused absences within any month during the current school year. A student may be suspended or expelled for habitual truancy. Prior to suspension or expulsion, the parent shall be notified in writing in his/her primary language that the student has unexcused absences. A conference shall be scheduled to determine what corrective measures should be taken to ameliorate the cause for the student's absences from school. If the parent does not attend the conference, the parent shall be notified of the steps the district has decided to take to reduce the student's absences.
- E. Not later than the student's fifth unexcused absence in a month the district shall enter into an agreement with the student and parents that establishes school attendance requirements, refer the student to a community truancy board or file a petition and affidavit with the juvenile court alleging a violation of RCW 28A.225.010.
- F. If such action is not successful, the district shall file a petition and affidavit with the juvenile court alleging a violation of RCW 28A.225.010 by the parent, student or parent and student no later than the seventh unexcused absence within any month during the current school year or upon the tenth unexcused absence during the current school year.
- G. All suspensions and/or expulsions shall be reported in writing to the superintendent within 24 hours after imposition.

The superintendent shall enforce the district's attendance policies and procedures. Because the full knowledge and cooperation of students and parents are necessary for the success of the policies and procedures, procedures shall be disseminated broadly and made available to parents and students annually.

### Excessive Excused Absences/Tardies or Patterns of Non-Attendance

- A. Students who exceed 10 or more excused absences or 10 or more excused tardies in a school year will be addressed on a case-by-case basis to determine if an intervention is necessary to better assure school success and reduce student absence/tardiness. This will be done in a face-to-face conference which will include the principal, school counselor, and parents/guardians. Depending on the age of the student, their attendance may be requested for all or part of this conference.

After 10 or more excused absences a principal may request further documentation for subsequent absences (e.g., doctor's note). If no documentation is provided the principal has the discretion to count these absences as unexcused.

Cross References:	Board Policy 3230 Board Policy 3241	Student Privacy Classroom Management, Corrective Actions or Punishment
Legal References:	RCW 13.34.300  28A.225  WAC 180-16-215(4) 392-400-235 392-400-260	Relevance of failure to cause juvenile to attend school to neglect petition  Compulsory School Attendance and admission  Minimum 180 school day year Discipline — Conditions and limitations Long-term suspension — Conditions and limitations
Management Resources:	<i>Policy News</i> , June 2001 <i>Policy News</i> , December 2011  OSPI Memorandum NO 052.11M	More Tweaking of Becca Petitions Revision of Excused/Unexcused Definitions Unexcused Absence Definition

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