

NEW MEXICO SCHOOL FOR THE BLIND AND VISUALLY IMPAIRED	SUBJECT: NO. 504 Compulsory School Attendance
Effective Date: 7/17/08	Revised: 7/16/10; 7/24/14
Distribution: All Staff	Kind: Board Policy

1. GENERAL POLICY

Regular, uninterrupted classroom instruction, classroom participation, and interaction with classmates are essential to the educational process. Preparation and training for subsequent study or employment includes the development of self-discipline through regular class attendance. To adequately prepare students to become fully participating citizens, state law requires that all children of appropriate age and condition attend classes regularly.

2. PROCEDURES

Maintaining regular school attendance is the joint responsibility of parents/guardians and educators. In keeping with that obligation, the following rules for school attendance shall be observed and enforced for all students.

A. Definitions

1. **Unexcused Absence**: an absence for which no appropriate excuse has been provided by the student's parent or legal guardian within the time limit provided by this policy. Special family situations may be considered appropriate for excused absence when prior approval is received from the school.
2. **Truant**: a student who has accumulated five unexcused absences within any twenty day period.
3. **Habitual Truant**: a student who has accumulated ten or more unexcused absences within a school year.

B. Attendance Requirements

1. **Parent Notification of Absence**: Parent or guardian shall notify the school each day his or her child will be absent from any class and the reason for the absence; or shall provide a written and signed verification of the reason for the student's absence, to be presented upon the first day a student returns from any absence. If student has been absent for 5 or more consecutive days due to illness, the Superintendent or his/her designee may require written verification from the student's professional health-care provider.
2. **Prolonged Illnesses**: In cases of chronic or prolonged illnesses expected to last 10 days or more, during which the student is able to do school work, the student's parent or guardian shall present written verification from the student's professional health care provider of the expected length of the illness and of the student's ability to do school work at home, and the student shall be placed on home-bound study until he or she can return to school.

3. **Discipline:** In addition to the other measures to be imposed according to this policy, a student may, for each unexcused absence, at the discretion of the Superintendent or his/her designee, receive detention, in-school suspension, or other discipline designed to keep the student in school and progressing academically. Out-of-school suspension and expulsion will not be used as punishment for truancy or unexcused absences.
4. **Notice to Parents/Guardians of Unexcused Absence:** If a student is absent from school without a parent notification of absence, as required by paragraph B.1., above, the Superintendent or his/her designee will, as soon as practicable, contact the parents/guardians by telephone or mail to give notice of the student's absence and to ascertain and document the reason for the absence.
5. **Third Unexcused Absence – Parent/Guardian Written Notification Required:** Upon a student's accrual of three unexcused absences, the Superintendent or his/her designee shall contact the family to address the concern. In addition, a Three Day Parent Absentee Notification form shall be sent to the parents/guardians of the child.
6. **Fifth Unexcused Absence – Parent/Guardian Written Notification & Conference Required:** Upon a student's accrual of a fifth unexcused absence, the school will provide written notice _to the student's parents/guardians that the parent/guardian is required to meet with the Superintendent or his/her designee for the purpose of identifying the cause(s) of the unexcused absences and to develop appropriate interventions designed to eliminate unexcused absences.
7. **Seventh Unexcused Absence – Parent/Guardian Written Notification, Conference Required, & Student/Parent Plan Development:** Upon a student's accrual of a seventh unexcused absence, the school will provide written notice _to the student's parents/guardians that the parent/guardian is required to meet with the Superintendent or his/her designee for the purpose of identifying the cause(s) of the unexcused absences, and to establish a written plan designed to prevent future unexcused absences. The plan will be confirmed in writing and signed by Superintendent or his/her designee and the parent/legal guardian.
8. **Parent Failure to Meet:** If a parent/guardian fails to arrange, or to appear for, a conference regarding unexcused absences within 10 days of notice from the school, the school will provide written notice to the probation services office of the judicial district where the student resides.
9. **Habitual Truancy:** If a student accumulates **ten or more** unexcused absences within a school year the Superintendent or his/her designee shall give written notice to the parent/guardian of the habitual truancy, by certified mail or by personal service. If there are any other unexcused absences after delivery of a written notice of habitual truancy, the student shall, within seven (7) days of this unexcused absence, be reported to the probation services office of the judicial district where the student resides.
10. **Excessive and Pattern Absences:** Habitual student absences shall be monitored for patterns (i.e. every Monday or Friday), and reported as required herein.
11. **Distribution of Policy; Acknowledgement of Receipt:** A copy of this policy and an acknowledgement form will be issued to each student/parent/guardian during registration each year. The student and/or parent/guardian shall return the acknowledgement form for filing in each student's school record.

C. Intergovernmental Agreements

In carrying out its duties under this policy and the Compulsory School Attendance Law, NMSBVI shall take into consideration the sovereignty of a Native American tribe. While all children attending public schools will still be subject to being reported in accordance with the Compulsory School Attendance Law, 22-12-7, NMSA if they are truant or habitually truant, NMSBVI shall respect tribal laws and traditions in carrying out its duties of early identification, intervention, and parental notification.

D. Reporting Requirement

NMSBVI shall maintain class attendance records for every instructional day for each student in each school program, in a manner verifiable by the Public Education Department. The Superintendent or his/her designee will report absences through the accountability data system as specified by the Public Education Department.