

STUDENT ABSENCES AND EXCUSES

Philosophy

One criteria of a student's success in school is regular and punctual attendance. Frequent absences may lead to poor academic work, lack of social development and possible academic failure. Regular attendance is of utmost importance for school interest, social adjustment and scholastic achievement. Continuity in the learning process and social adaptation is seriously disrupted by excessive absences. Students who have good attendance generally achieve higher grades, enjoy school more and are more employable after leaving school.

Initially, the responsibility to attend school rests with the students. Ultimately, however, the responsibility to insure that the student has good attendance rests with the parent/guardian. According to state law, it is the obligation of every parent/guardian to insure that every child under compulsory attendance age attends school. The school will inform the parents/guardians if a student's education is being jeopardized by poor attendance.

Each year the Board establishes the school attendance policy by adopting a school calendar. Students are required to have actual teacher-pupil instruction and contact time of 1,056 hours for secondary students and 968 hours for elementary students during each school year.

Attendance

Students are expected to attend regularly and be prompt in arriving at school and at each class during the day.

Excused Absences

The principal and/or their designee will grant excused absences with substantiated reason. The following will be considered:

1. A student who is temporarily ill or injured or whose absence is approved by the administrator on a prearranged basis. Prearranged absences shall be approved for appointments or circumstances of a serious nature only that cannot be taken care of outside of school hours.
2. Requests for ongoing prearranged absences shall be considered on a case-by-case basis. To apply, student must have the recommendation of a minimum of two core teachers, principal, grade point average of 3.0 or above and agree to abide by the contract agreed upon by student, parent/guardian, teacher, principal, and Board.

3. A student who is absent for an extended time due to physical, mental or emotional disability
4. A student who is attending any school-sponsored activity or activities of an educational nature with advance approval by the administration

The following may be considered excused absences at the discretion of the principal or designee:

1. Serious illness or death in the family
2. Family emergencies or hardship
3. Religious observances when requested by a parent or guardian
4. Absence required by a legal body or social agency (court, juvenile authorities, public health department or police)
5. Family vacations (While strongly discouraged, such excuses shall be prearranged with the principal with no more than five days total per school year being granted as excused absences. If a student has poor attendance or poor academic performance, the administration shall deny an excused absence for vacation purposes.)

The administration may require suitable proof regarding the above exceptions, including written statements from medical sources

Unexcused Absences

An unexcused absence is defined as an absence that is not covered by one of the foregoing exceptions. Students who are suspended or dismissed shall be considered unexcused. Each unexcused absence shall be entered on the student's record. The parents or guardians of the student receiving unexcused absences shall be notified orally or in writing by the principal or designee.

Parents/guardians shall be required to furnish an explanation for student absenteeism either in writing or orally. Absences not explained within two days after returning to school shall be recorded as unexcused absences unless unusual or extenuating circumstances exist as determined by the principal.

In accordance with law, the principal may impose academic penalties that relate directly to classes missed while unexcused. The school administration shall develop regulations to implement appropriate penalties. Students and parents or guardians may appeal to the Board for exceptions to this policy or the accompanying regulations provided that no

exception shall be sustained if the student fails to abide by all the requirements imposed by the Board and principal as conditions granting any exception.

Tardiness

Tardiness is defined as the appearance of a student without proper excuse after the scheduled time that a class begins. Because of the disruptive nature of tardiness and the detrimental effect upon the rights of the non-tardy student to uninterrupted learning, penalties shall be imposed for excessive tardiness. Parents or guardians shall be notified of all penalties regarding tardiness.

Excessive tardiness shall be referred to the administration for consideration as an attendance problem. For the purpose of attendance, five unexcused tardies are equal to one unexcused absence.

In an unavoidable situation, a student detained by another teacher or administrator shall not be considered tardy provided that the teacher or administrator gives the student a pass to enter his/her next class. Teachers shall honor passes presented in accordance with this policy.

Cross Ref: T-JKD/JKE, Suspension of Students
T-IC/ICA, School Year/School Calendar
JHB, Truancy
T-JK, Student Discipline

Legal Refs: C.R.S. 22-2-114.1(3)(a)
C.R.S. 22-32-109 (1)(n), (w)
C.R.S. 22-33-101 et seq. (School Attendance Law of 1963)

Approved April 8, 1999
Revised May 11, 2000
Revised November 15, 2001