

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, particularly for closing the achievement gap. Continuity in the learning process and social adaptation is seriously disrupted by excessive absences. In most situations, the work missed cannot be made up adequately. Students who have good attendance generally achieve higher grades, enjoy school more and are more employable after leaving school. For at least these reasons, the Board believes that a student must satisfy two basic requirements in order to earn full class credit: (1) satisfy all academic requirements, and (2) exhibit good attendance habits as stated in this policy.

When developmentally appropriate it is the responsibility of the student to attend school. Ultimately, however, the responsibility to ensure that the student has good attendance rests with the parent/guardian. According to state law, it is the obligation of every parent/guardian to ensure that every child under their care and supervision receives adequate education and training and, if of compulsory attendance age, attends school. Schools 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 enroll at the beginning of the school year, to attend regularly and to be prompt in arriving at school and at each class during the day.

Excused Absences

The building principal 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 of the school of attendance on a prearranged basis. Prearranged absences shall be approved for appointments or circumstances of a serious nature only which cannot be taken care of outside of school hours.
2. A student who is absent for a prearranged extended period due to physical, mental or emotional disability.
3. A student who is pursuing a work-study program under the supervision of the school.
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. Family vacations. (While discouraged, such excuses should be prearranged with the school administration. If a student has poor attendance or poor academic performance, a principal may deny an excused absence for vacation purposes.)
4. Religious observances when requested by a parent or guardian.
5. Absence required by a legal body or social agency (court, juvenile authorities, public health department or police).
6. Military connected students whose parent or legal guardian has been called to duty, is on leave from, or immediately returned from deployment.

The District may require suitable proof regarding the above exceptions, including written statements from a health care provider.

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 expelled 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 District, District designee, or building staff.

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 building administrator.

In accordance with law, the District may impose academic penalties which relate directly to classes missed while unexcused. Middle school students shall receive 50% credit for work completed due to an unexcused absence. High school students shall receive 50% credit for work completed due to an unexcused absence. Students and parents/guardians may appeal to the Assistant Superintendent or designee for exceptions to this policy or the accompanying regulations provided that no exception shall be sustained if the student fails to abide by all requirements imposed as conditions for granting any such exception.

The minimum number of unexcused absences a student may incur before judicial proceedings are initiated to enforce compulsory attendance is four (4) days in one month or ten (10) days during any school year.

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. Students who accumulate 3 unexcused tardies shall be issued one-half day unexcused absence. Parents/guardians shall be notified of all penalties regarding tardiness.

Teachers shall be responsible for addressing tardiness as a classroom management issue. Excessive tardiness may be referred to the administration for consideration as an attendance problem.

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 their next class. Teachers shall honor passes presented in accordance with this policy.

Attendance Officer

The Board shall appoint an Attendance Officer to assist school administrators in the enforcement of this policy and to assist in identifying the reasons for and causes of nonattendance and excessive absences.

The provisions of this policy shall be applicable to all students in the District, including those above and below the age for compulsory attendance as required by law.

Adopted February 28, 1984

Revised June 10, 1987

Revised August 22, 1990

Revised October 27, 1993

Revised May 24, 1995

Revised September 25, 1996

Revised January 22, 1997

Revised November 10, 1999

Revised April 8, 2009

Revised May 11, 2011

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)

CROSS REFS.: IC/ICA, School Year/School Calendar
JEA, Compulsory Attendance Ages
JHB, Truancy
JK, Student Discipline
JKD/JKE, Suspension/Expulsion of Students
JLIB, Student Dismissal Precautions

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