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## STUDENT ATTENDANCE

### - POLICY -

Students are expected to attend all assigned classes each day. School staff shall keep a record of absences and tardiness, including documentation of excused absences. Accurate attendance and lateness data shall be promptly entered into the student information system to enable accurate and timely reporting.

Upon enrollment and at the beginning of each school year, schools shall inform students and their parents/guardians of the expectation that students attend school, the benefits of regular school attendance, the consequences of truancy, the role and responsibility of the district in regard to truancy, and resources available to assist the student and their parents and guardians in correcting truancy. The school will also make this information available online.

It is important for students to attend school every day. Absent or late students miss valuable coursework and instruction, and may fall behind in their education. This is true even for excused absences. Families are encouraged to not schedule appointments, vacations, or other events at times that would cause students to be absent from school as absences of any type (excused or unexcused) dramatically decreases a student's ability to graduate on time.

### - REGULATION -

#### **Excused Absences**

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

1. The Principal or designate has the authority to determine if an absence meets the criteria to be deemed an excused absence. An absence may not be considered excused if it causes a serious adverse effect on the student's educational progress. The following are valid excuses for absences:

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- a) Participation in a district or school approved activity or instructional program;
  - b) Illness, health condition or medical appointment for the student or a person for whom the student is legally responsible;
  - c) Family emergency including, but not limited to, a death or illness in the family;
  - d) Religious or cultural purpose including observance of religious or cultural holiday or participation in religious or cultural instruction;
  - e) Court, judicial proceeding, or serving on a jury;
  - f) Post-secondary, technical school or apprenticeship program visitation, or scholarship interview;
  - g) Absence directly related to the student's homeless status;
  - h) Absence resulting from a disciplinary/corrective action (e.g. suspension or expulsion);
  - i) Principal and parent/guardian/emancipated youth mutually agreed upon activity.
2. When possible, the parent/guardian is expected to notify the school office on the morning of the absence by phone, e-mail or written note and to provide the excuse for the absence. If no excuse is provided with the notification, or no notification is provided, the parent/guardian will submit an excuse via phone, e-mail or written note upon the student's return to school. Adult students (those over eighteen) and emancipated students (those over sixteen who have been emancipated by court action) will notify the school office of their absences with a note of explanation.
  3. If an absence from school is due to medical treatment pursuant to the *Infants Act*, where the student has provided mature minor consent to the treatment, the school shall keep the absence confidential and the student will be considered to be in attendance.
  4. Students shall be permitted to make up all missed assignments outside of class under reasonable conditions and time limits established by the appropriate teacher. A student's grade may be impacted in classes where participation during class is a demonstration of mastery.
  5. If an elementary student has five or more excused absences in a single month, or if a secondary student has missed 20 or more blocks in a single month, the school will schedule a conference with the parent/guardian and student. The purpose of the conference is to identify the barriers to the student's regular attendance and the supports and resources that may be available to help the student regularly attend school.
    - a) The conference should be scheduled at a mutually agreeable time for all attendees.
    - b) If a regularly scheduled parent/guardian-teacher conference is scheduled within thirty days of the absences the attendance conference can take place at that time.
    - c) The conference should include the counselor and a school administrator. If the student qualifies for inclusive education services, the school-based team should be convened to discuss the student's absences.
    - d) A conference is not required if prior notice of the excused absences is provided to the school or if a doctor's note has been provided. However, a plan must be in place to ensure the student will not fall behind in their coursework.

**Lateness**

Students are expected to be in class on time and being late to school, class, or an activity is not acceptable. Students at secondary school that show up for class only for attendance purposes, but are absent from class for the learning portion, are considered functionally absent and will be recorded as an unexcused absence in the attendance system. The teacher shall counsel with those students who are developing a pattern of being late. The teacher shall refer students to the principal, who in the teacher's judgment are not making progress towards correcting the problem and whose tardiness becomes frequent or disruptive. The principal may select an appropriate action, including additional school support, parent contact, a student/parent or guardian conference, or some other action.

**Unexcused Absences**

1. 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. This includes absences for which no excuse is ever provided.
2. 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 impacted in classes where participation during class is a demonstration of mastery.
3. If a student in elementary school is absent with an unexcused absence at any time in the school day, the student's parents/guardian will be notified immediately. If a student in secondary school is absent with an unexcused absence at any time of the school day, the school shall notify the student's parents/guardian within 4 hours of the end of the school day using an automated phone message system.
4. A conference with the parent/guardian and, when appropriate, the student, shall be held after two unexcused absences within any month during the current school year.
  - a) If a regularly scheduled parent/guardian-teacher conference is to take place within thirty days of the second unexcused absence, the attendance conference can take place on that day.
  - b) If the student's parent/guardian does not attend the attendance conference, the conference may be conducted with the student and school official. However, the parent will be notified of the steps taken to eliminate or reduce the student's absences.
5. As appropriate, the district will also consider:
  - a) Adjusting the student's course assignments;
  - b) Providing the student more individualized instruction;
  - c) Providing appropriate vocational courses or work experience;
  - d) Recommending the student consider other educational options;
  - e) Assisting the parent or student to obtain supplementary services; or
  - f) Referring the student to a community-based service.

6. Not later than the student's fifth unexcused absence in a month the school shall enter into an agreement with the student and parents that establishes school attendance requirements.
7. If such action is not successful, the school shall refer the matter to the district upon the tenth unexcused absence within any month during the current school year.
8. The Superintendent or designate shall enforce the district's attendance policies and procedures. Procedures shall be disseminated broadly and made available to parents and students annually to ensure the full knowledge and cooperation of students and parents.

### **Withdrawal**

A student absent without excuse for more than 20 consecutive school days after an attendance agreement has been implemented shall be withdrawn from the school's enrollment. The principal will notify the parent/guardian in writing.