

## STUDENTS

### Excused and Unexcused Absences

Students are expected to attend all assigned classes each day. Teachers shall keep an accurate record of absence and tardiness. Absences shall be verified in writing.

### Excused Absences

The following are valid excuses for absences and tardiness. Missed work assignments and activities may be made up in the manner prescribed by the teacher.

- a. Participation in school-approved activity. To be excused this absence must be authorized by a staff member and the affected teacher(s) must be notified prior to the absence unless it is clearly impossible to do so.
- b. Absence caused by illness, health condition or family emergency. When possible, the parent is expected to notify the school office on the morning of the absence and send a signed note of explanation with the student upon his/her return to school. A student will be allowed one makeup day for each day of absence.
- c. Absence for parental-approved activities. This category of absence shall be counted as excused for purposes agreed upon by the principal and the parent prior to absence.
- d. Absence resulting from disciplinary actions or short-term suspension. As required by law, students who are removed from a class or classes as a disciplinary measure, or students who have been placed on short-term suspension, shall have the right to make up assignments or exams missed during the time they were denied entry to the classroom if the effect of the missed assignments will be a substantial lowering of the grade.
- e. Extended illness or health condition. If a student is confined to home or hospital for an extended period, the school will arrange for the accomplishment of assignments at the place of confinement whenever practicable. If the student is unable to do his/her school work, or if there are major requirements of a particular course which cannot be accomplished outside of class, the student may be required to take an incomplete or withdraw from the class without penalty.
- f. Excused absence for chronic health condition. Students with a chronic health condition which interrupts regular attendance may qualify for placement in a limited attendance and participation program. The student and his/her parents shall apply to the principal or counselor, and a limited program shall be written following the advice and recommendations of the student's needs, though the confidentiality of medical information shall be respected at the parents request.

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Unexcused absences

Unexcused absences fall into two categories:

1. Submitting a signed excuse which does not constitute an excused absence as defined previously; or
2. Failing to submit any type of excuse statement signed by the parent, guardian or adult student. This type of absence is also defined as truancy.

- a. Unexcused absences shall be followed by a warning letter to the parent of the student. Each notice shall be in writing. A student's grade shall not be affected if no graded activity is missed during such an absence.
- b. After two unexcused absences (equivalent of two school days) within any month a conference shall be held between the parent, student and principal. At such a conference the principal or designee, student and parent shall consider: adjusting the student's program; providing more individualized instruction; preparing the student for employment with specific vocational experience or both; transferring the student to another school; assisting the student to obtain supplementary services that might eliminate or remedy the causes of absence or, imposing other corrective actions that are deemed to be appropriate.

Not later than the student's fifth unexcused absence in a month (equivalent of five school days) 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.

- c. If the above action fails to correct the attendance problem, the student shall be declared a habitual absentee. The principal or designee shall interview the student and his/her family and prescribe corrective action which may include suspension for the current semester and expulsion. No later than the seventh unexcused absence within any month (equivalent of seven school days) during the current school year or upon the tenth unexcused absence during the current school year (equivalent of ten school days) 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. The petition consists of written notification to the court alleging that:

1. The student has unexcused absences in the current school year (petitions must be filed if the student has seven or more unexcused

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absences (equivalent to seven school days) within any month during the current school year or ten or more unexcused absences (equivalent to ten school days) in the current school year, but a petition may be filed earlier; also unexcused absences accumulated in another school or school district may be counted for all purposes in this procedure)

2. Actions taken by the school district have not been successful in substantially reducing the student's absences from school; and
3. Court intervention and supervision are necessary to assist the school district to reduce the student's absences from school.

Additionally, the petition shall include the student's name, age, school and residence; and the names and residences of the student's parents. The petition must include facts that support the allegations made in the petition, must generally request relief available under the statute, and must describe what the court might order.

Petitions may be served by certified mail, return receipt requested, but if such service is unsuccessful, personal service is required.

At the district's choice, it may be represented by a person who is not an attorney at hearings related to truancy petitions.

- d. A student who has been suspended for attendance violations may petition the superintendent or designee for reinstatement. Such petition may be granted upon presentation of a firm and unequivocal commitment to maintain regular attendance.
- e. Any student who presents false evidence, with or without the consent of his/her parents, in order to wrongfully qualify for an excused absence shall be subject to appropriate corrective action.
- f. A reasonable effort shall be made to acquire a written excuse for each absence or a written documentation by school personnel as to why the excuse was not obtained.
- g. All written excuses of each school year will be maintained and stored by the designated building official.

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Building Attendance Committees

Each building shall have a Building Attendance Appeal Committee made up of 3-7 teachers, administrators, and classified personnel appointed by the Building Principal or designee.

The Building Attendance Appeal Committee shall meet after the conclusion of each semester and after grades have been recorded to consider appeals from students and parents who have received a Denial of Class Credit notification.

The Building Attendance Appeal Committee shall consider student appeals using the following general framework:

- Building good attendance habits in students will help ensure success later in life.
- Students who can demonstrate improving attendance should get their credits restored.
- Students may need assistance in changing some of their behaviors and conditions in order to improve their attendance.
- The total number of absences in this and other semester classes should be considered.
- Patterns of absences in prior semesters should be considered.
- Whether the non-school related absences were related to verified illness, emergencies within the family, and/or absences that have a significant family or educational related value
- Whether the student, even though he/she has excessive absences, has earned an A, B, or C in the course
- Whether the student has earned a D+ or D in the course
- Whether the student has been voluntarily been involved in other mitigating factors developed by the high school.

Tardies

Students are expected to be to class on time. When a student's tardiness becomes frequent or disruptive, the student shall be referred to the principal or counselor. If counseling, parent conferencing, or disciplinary action is ineffective in changing the student's attendance behavior, he/she may be suspended from the class.

All sanctions imposed for failure to comply with the attendance policies and procedures shall be implemented in conformance with state and district regulations regarding corrective action or punishment.

Revised: June 2008