

Regularity of Attendance and Excused Absences

I. Definition

The term "parent" as used in this regulation means a parent, guardian or person having legal custody of a child. If the student is eighteen (18) years or older, or is legally emancipated, the procedures for the parent in this regulation may be exercised by the student.

II. Absence

- A. Students are expected to attend all classes each day. Teachers shall keep a record of absences and tardies.
- B. It is the responsibility of the parent to provide an excuse to the school for a student's absence within three school days of the student's return to school.
- C. A Student with an excused absence (Section VI) has an equivalent number of days to make up any missed work assignments and/or graded activities. Students may receive a failing grade for those assignments and/or graded activities that are not made up.
- D. Students who are removed from a class or classes as a disciplinary measure, or students who have been placed on a short-term suspension may make up any missed work assignments and/or graded activities in the manner provided by the teacher. Students may receive a failing grade for those assignments and/or activities that are not made up.
- E. After fifteen (15) consecutive days of absence, a letter must be sent to the parents notifying them if they do not contact the school within five (5) days the student will be withdrawn pursuant to WAC 392-121-108. After twenty (20) consecutive days of excused or unexcused absences, a student must be withdrawn unless:
 - 1. The student is placed on home/hospital tutoring;
 - 2. There is a written agreement between the principal and the parent filed in the student's cumulative folder stating the excused absences will not adversely affect the student's education program; and
 - 3. The student is a special education student placed on home tutoring.
- F. Academic grades are to reflect academic achievement. Teachers shall provide notice to students of course expectations and basis for grading, including impact of absences.

1. During the first ten (10) days of each semester, every teacher shall specify in writing the student learning goals and standards for grading his/her respective courses. The teacher shall also indicate in writing the extent to which participation will be used as the basis of a mastery of a goal or standard.
2. Individual students who feel that an unjust application of attendance or tardiness factors has been made may appeal to the principal.

III. Attendance Conference for Elementary Students

- A. Attendance Conference: If an elementary school student has five (5) or more excused absences in a single month during a school year, or ten (10) or more excused absences in a school year the school will schedule a conference with the parent to discuss: (1) the barriers to the child's regular attendance; and (2) the support and resources available to help the student attend school regularly.
 1. If a regularly scheduled parent teacher conference is within thirty (30) days of the absences, the attendance conference can be held concurrently with the parent teacher conference.
 2. If the student is a special education student, the Individualized Educational Program team will convene to discuss the student's attendance with the parent.
- B. If an elementary school receives a physician's note excusing attendance or prior notice of an elementary school student's absences and an academic plan is in place, the attendance conference describe in Section A is not required.

IV. Tardiness

Students are expected to be in class on time. When a student's tardiness becomes frequent or disruptive, the student shall be referred to the principal or designee. The principal or designee may recommend counseling or initiate a parent conference.

V. Truancy

- A. A student who is absent from school or class, when such absence is not excused under this regulation, is deemed truant. The parent shall be notified as set forth in Section C below. The student may be subject to non-exclusionary discipline.
- B. A student who is truant shall not be permitted to make up missed assignments and/or graded activities for the time period of the truancy. The student shall receive a failing grade for those assignments and/or graded activities.

- C. If a student who is required to attend school under laws of the state of Washington fails to attend school without valid justification, the principal or designee shall take the following actions:
1. After the first unexcused absence, inform the student's parent by a notice in writing or telephone call in English and, if necessary, in the primary language of the parent, (RCW 28A.225.020), or by other means reasonably necessary to achieve notice of the fact that the student has failed to attend school without valid justification. School officials shall inform the parent of the potential consequences of additional unexcused absences.
 2. After two (2) unexcused absences, schedule a conference with the parent and student at a time and place reasonably convenient for all persons included for the purpose of analyzing the causes of the student's absence. If, for any reason, the parent does not attend the conference, he/she shall be notified of the outcome.
 3. Work closely with the parent and student, when possible, in taking data informed steps to eliminate or reduce the student's absences. These steps shall include, when appropriate: application of the Washington Assessment of the Risks and Needs of Students (WARNS) and providing an available approved best practice or research-based intervention, or both, consistent with the WARNS profile; adjusting the student's school program or school or course assignment; providing more individualized or remedial instruction; preparing the student for employment with specific vocational courses or work experience or both; or assisting the parent or student to obtain supplemental services that might eliminate or ameliorate the cause or causes for the absences from school.
 4. When a student transfers to another district, the Office of Student Welfare and Attendance will send a copy of the WARNS assessment (if completed), the history of any best practices or researched based interventions provided to the student and a copy of the most recent truancy information.
 5. At any time during the process, the principal or designee may request a home visit by the field attendance specialist by sending a referral to the Office of Student Welfare and Attendance.
 6. After five (5) unexcused absences in a month, an attendance agreement shall be formed between the principal or designee and the student and the parent.
- D. If action taken by the school principal or designee is not successful in substantially reducing a student's absences from school, the following actions shall be taken:

1. After seven (7) unexcused absences in a month the Officer of Student Welfare and Attendance shall file an initial petition with the Superior Court for the purpose of alleging a violation of the compulsory attendance laws of the state by the student, and/or the parent.
 2. After ten (10) unexcused absences in the school year the Office of Student Welfare and Attendance shall file an initial petition with the Superior Court alleging a violation of the state compulsory attendance laws of the state by the student, and/or the parent. The petition must include a list of all interventions that have been attempted, including a copy of any truancy assessment, the history of approved best practices interventions or researched-based interventions previously provided to the student by the district and a copy of the most recent truancy information signed by the parent and student.
 3. If the Office of Student Welfare and Attendance does not file a petition with the Superior Court alleging a violation of RCW 28A.225.020, the parent of a child with five (5) or more unexcused absences in any month during the current school year, or upon the tenth (10) unexcused cumulative absence during the current school year, may file a petition with the Superior Court alleging a violation of RCW 28A.225.020.
- E. Each school's principal shall submit a report of actions taken under RCW 28A.225.030 to the Superintendent or his/her designee who shall compile and submit an annual report to the Superintendent of Public Instruction.
- F. Disciplinary action may also be taken. Please refer to R5159.
- G. Any parent found guilty through the Superior Court system of violating any of the provisions of either RCW 28A.225.010 or 28A.225.080 shall be fined by the court not more than twenty-five dollars (\$25.00) for each day of unexcused absence from school. However, a child found to be in violation of RCW 28A.225.010 shall be required to attend school and shall not be fined.
- H. Once a court order is obtained, the Office of Student Welfare and Attendance shall notify the school of such order and school staff shall monitor the student's attendance. Any violation of the court order shall be referred to the Community Truancy Board.
- I. Any non-compliance with the Community Truancy Board on the student's part may result in the referral to the Prosecuting Attorney's Office for filing of contempt charges or initial charges against the parent.

VI. Excused Absences

- A. Any student absence from school is unexcused unless it meets one of the criteria listed below for an excused absence. The school principal, or

designee, will determine whether an absence meets the criteria for an excused absence.

- B. The parent is expected to notify the school of the reason for the absence within three (3) school days. The notice may be provided by phone, electronic mail, a written note, or through the district's family access system.
- C. The following are valid excuses for absences from school:
 - 1. Illness. If a student is ill for five (5) or more days in a month, a note from a doctor is required to have the absences be excused unless the principal, for good cause, waives the requirements;
 - 2. Health care appointments;
 - 3. Emergencies, including but not limited to, a death or illness in the family;
 - 4. Participation in a district or school approved activity or instructional program. Such absences shall be approved by the principal or designee;
 - 5. Religious or cultural purposes including observance of a religious or cultural holiday or participation in religious or cultural instruction;
 - 6. Court, a judicial proceeding, or serving on a jury;
 - 7. Absence related to the deployment activities of an active duty military parent or guardian;
 - 8. Absences related to a student's homeless status;
 - 9. State recognized search and rescue activities;
 - 10. Absences related to visitations for apprenticeships, technical school, post-secondary education, or scholarship interviews;
 - 11. Absences resulting from a disciplinary or corrective action (short or long term suspension or expulsion); and
 - 12. The principal (or designee) and parent or emancipated student mutually agree upon an approved activity. The school cannot excuse absences for trips taken by students unless these trips involve direct supervision by the school or the family.
- D. Any presentation of false evidence (e.g., telephone call or note) in order to qualify for an excused absence may subject the student to disciplinary action, suspension, or expulsion.

- E. If a principal or designee believes a modified school schedule is in the best interest of any student, the student's class schedule may be modified to shorten the school day.
- F. For seniors who are on track to graduate, one period of late arrival or early dismissal may be granted by the principal or designee if requested by the parent in writing.
- G. Request for exemption from school attendance, either full or part-time, may be granted in accordance with Policy 5112.
- H. All sanctions imposed for failure to comply with attendance policies and regulations shall be implemented in conformance with state and district policies and regulations regarding student attendance and discipline.

Legal Reference: RCW 28A.225.005-035

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