Excused and Unexcused Absences - 3122

Regular school attendance is necessary for mastery of the educational program provided students. Daily attendance and active participation in each class are critical parts of the learning process. Students, at times, may appropriately be absent from class. The following principles shall govern the development and administration of attendance procedures within the district:

A. Excused Absences (School Day and Individual Class)

1. Excused absences are absences due to:
   a. illness or a health condition,
   b. a religious observance, when requested by a student's parent(s),
   c. school-approved activities,
   d. family emergencies,
   e. required court proceedings,
   * f. with prior administrator approval, family trips,
   g. and, as required by law, disciplinary actions or short-term suspensions.

   *Since high school coursework generates credit toward graduation, family vacations may only be excused in exceptional circumstances.

   The principal or designee may only grant permission for a student's absence providing such absence does not adversely affect the student's educational process.

2. If an absence is excused, the student shall be permitted to make up all missed assignments outside of class under reasonable conditions and time limits established by the appropriate teacher. An exception is that in participation-type classes, a student's grade may be affected because of the student's inability to make up the activities conducted during a class period. A student shall be allowed one make-up day for each day of absence.

3. An excused absence shall be verified by the parent or guardian, the student if legally emancipated or at least eighteen (18) years of age, or school authority responsible for the absence. If a student is to be released for health care related to family planning or abortion, the student may require that the district keep the information confidential. Students thirteen (13) years old and older have the legal right to keep information about drug, alcohol or mental health treatment confidential. Students fourteen (14) years old and older legally have the same confidentiality rights regarding HIV and sexually transmitted diseases.

B. Unexcused School Day Absences

A school day absence is defined as non attendance for a majority, more than one half, of a school day.

1. An unexcused absence shall result in appropriate consequences as a means of instilling values of responsibility and personal accountability. A student's grade shall be affected if a graded activity or assignment occurs during the period of time when the student is absent without excuse.

2. The school shall notify a student's parent or guardian in writing or by telephone whenever the student has failed to attend school after one (1) unexcused absence within any calendar month during the school year. The notification shall include the potential consequences of additional unexcused absences.

3. A conference with the parent or guardian shall be held after two (2) unexcused absences within any month to determine what corrective measures should be taken to ameliorate the cause for the student's absences from school. If the parent does not attend the conference, the parent shall be notified of the steps the school has initiated to reduce the student's absences.

4. Not later than the student's fifth (5th) unexcused absence in any month the school shall enter into an agreement with the student and parents that establishes school attendance requirements, or file a petition and affidavit with the juvenile court alleging a violation of RCW 28A.225.010. A student may receive an in-house suspension, suspension, or expulsion for habitual truancy. Prior to a suspension or expulsion, the parent shall be notified in writing that the student has unexcused absences.

5. If such action is not successful, the school 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 no later than the seventh (7th) unexcused absence within any month or upon the tenth (10th) unexcused absence during the current school year.

6. All suspensions or expulsions shall be reported in writing to the superintendent within 24 hours after imposition.

C. Attendance Requirements for Children Under Eight (8) Years of Age.

Although compulsory attendance laws apply only to children who are at least eight (8) years of age up to eighteen (18) years of age (see policy 3121), students who are less than eight (8) years of age who have been enrolled in the district's schools are required to attend school, and their parents are responsible for ensuring that they attend.

D. Tardiness and Individual Class Absences

Unless properly excused, students are required to be in class each assigned class period and on time. A *tardy* becomes an *absence* if the student arrives more than fifteen (15) minutes late per instructional hour.

E. Partial Day Absence

Students who must leave the school during the school day must be properly checked out through the Attendance Office prior to leaving school (see 3124 and 3124P). Leaving without prior approval and without properly signing out will be cause for disciplinary action.

F. Class Absence Limit – Before Loss of High School Credit

1. Daily attendance and active participation in each class are vital to a comprehensive education. Therefore, in any semester, when a student accumulates the equivalent loss of eleven (11) instructional hours in a class, excused or unexcused, but excluding absences for religious observances**,** the student and parent/guardian will be notified that there has been a loss of credit in that subject. The student will remain in the class to allow for continued learning and the right to appeal. School-approved activities and discipline suspensions which require a student to miss class are not included. Pre-arranged and all other absences, excused and unexcused, are included.

2. An Attendance Appeals Committee composed of students, parents, teachers, and an administrator shall consider all appeals. The committee shall receive annual training and operate under common democratic principles. The purpose of the Attendance Appeals Committee is to maximize the daily attendance and learning of all students.

3. The committee will thoughtfully consider the appropriateness and circumstances of each absence.

4. The committee may choose to reinstate credit with or without conditions, or deny credit. Committee decisions will not be reconsidered. If credit is denied, a student will receive a "N.C." grade if s/he remains in the class and is a productive participant. Upon a teacher or student request, the student may be removed from class due to disruptive or nonproductive conduct and a "F" grade will be given.

G. Student/Parent Notification

Because the full knowledge and cooperation of students and parents are necessary for the success of these policies and procedures a condensed version shall be disseminated each school year. The complete attendance policy and procedure are available to students and parents upon request.

Cross References:

Policy	3121	Compulsory Attendance
	3200	Student Rights and Responsibilities
	3230	Student Privacy
	3300	Student Discipline
	3305	Rules of Conduct, K-12
	3306	Rules of Conduct, K-5
	3320	Long-Term Suspension/Expulsion
	3321	Short-Term Suspension
	3342	Possible Consequences for Misbehavior, K-5
	3342	Possible Consequences for Misbehavior, 6-12
	3345	Procedural Due-Process

Legal References:

RCW	13.34.300	Failure to cause juvenile to attend school as evidence under neglect petition
	28A.225	Compulsory School Attendance
WAC	180-16-215 (4)	Minimum 180 school day year--Five day flexibility--Students graduating from high school
	180-40-235	Discipline--Conditions and limitations
	180-40-260	Long-term suspension--Conditions and limitations