

ABSENCES AND EXCUSES

Attendance/Classroom Participation

The Board of Trustees recognizes the importance of regular school attendance and believes that parent(s)/guardian(s)/caregiver(s) and students must be encouraged to assume their responsibility.

The board believes that:

1. Classroom participation is an integral part of the learning experiences provided to students in the district schools. To the extent the failure to attend a class results in a student not attaining certain prescribed minimum academic standards, this failure would properly be reflected in the grade the student receives.
2. Student absences may not be used exclusively to determine student grades.
3. Academic performance can and should be evaluated in part on the quality of individual participation in planned classroom activities designed for adult-student or student-student interaction. Therefore, teachers are to include and document student participation in planned classroom learning activities as part of the criteria for determining and reporting student progress.
4. Reasonable opportunities shall be provided to students who are absent from classes, except truancies, to make up that portion of work missed that can reasonably be replicated.
5. Upon request of parent(s)/guardian(s) or the student, if 18 years of age or older, a student, expecting to be absent from class for a reason deemed acceptable by the principal or his/her designee and/or the student's respective teachers, may arrange with his/her teachers for planned, independent learning activities that will make up some work which he/she will be missing.
6. At the discretion of the teacher, reasonable opportunities may be provided students who are truant to make up that portion of work missed.

Definitions

In accordance with Board policy, student absences are to be categorized as excused, unverified, or truant in accordance with the following guidelines:

Excused Absences: A student's absence shall be excused for the following reasons:

1. Personal illness (Education Code 48205)

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2. Quarantine under the direction of a county or city health officer (Education Code 48205)
3. Medical, dental, optometrical, or chiropractic appointments (Education Code 48205)
4. Participation in religious instruction or exercises in accordance with district policy attendance at funeral services for a member of the immediate family (Education Code 48205)
 - a. Excused absence in this instance shall be limited to one day if the service is conducted in California or three days if the service is conducted out of state. (Education Code 48205)
 - b. "Immediate family" shall be defined as mother, father, grandmother, grandfather, spouse, son/son-in-law, daughter/daughter-in-law, brother, sister or any relative living in the student's immediate household. (Education Code 45194, 48205)
5. Jury duty in the manner provided by law (Education Code 48205)
6. The illness or medical appointment during school hours of a child to whom the student is the custodial parent (Education Code 48205)
7. Upon advance written request by the parent/guardian and the approval of the principal or designee, justifiable personal reasons including but not limited to: (Education Code 48205)
 - a. Appearance in court
 - b. Attendance at a funeral service
 - c. Observation of a holiday or ceremony of his/her religion
 - d. Attendance at religious retreats not to exceed four hours per semester
 - e. Attendance at an employment conference
 - f. Other reasons requested in writing by the parent/guardian and considered legitimate by the principal or his/her designee

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- (1) Such absences shall have prior approval of the principal or his/her designee. Students who contemplate absence for reasons other than those listed above, should request projected absence be excused by presenting a note from their parent/guardian to indicate approval or disapproval or disapproval with reasons for disapproval if the request is denied.
 - (2) A request from a parent/guardian that a student's absence be excused shall not be granted if the principal or his/her designee believe that such approval would be educationally harmful to the student or set a poor example in matters of school attendance for the student or other students.
8. Service as a member of a precinct board for an election pursuant to Elections Code 12302 (Education Code 48205)

Unverified Absence or Truant (Does not generate state apportionment payments)

Any absence for reasons other than those listed in paragraphs above shall be considered unexcused.

Method of Verification

In verifying absences, the following procedures shall apply:

1. A student who has been absent from school for one or more days shall be required to provide the attendance tech with a completed Verification of Absence Form, number 7204-B-61 (blue slip).
2. The form shall be signed by the student's parent/guardian, unless the student is 18 years of age or older or has established legal status as an emancipated minor, in which case the student may sign his/her own verification.
3. Absences due to illness or quarantine generally shall be verified by the school nurse. However, any of the following may verify such absences if the situation warrants.
 - a. Principal or his/her designee
 - b. Doctor
 - c. Supervisor of Attendance
 - d. Superintendent or his/her designee

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4. Parent/guardian shall notify the school within 30 school days of the student's absences.
 - a. Absences remaining unverified for 30 school days after the student's return to school will be considered truant or unexcused.
 - (1) Less than three unverified absences are considered unexcused.
 - (2) Three or more unverified absences are considered truant.
5. Any student with 14 or more excused absences, verified by phone calls or blue slips, will be required to provide a written explanation for all future absences.

This verification must be written by the appropriate professional on his/her letterhead, addressing the medical, legal or bereavement reasons.

When students who have been absent return to school, they shall present a satisfactory explanation verifying the reason for the absence. The following methods may be used to verify student absences:

1. Written note from parent/guardian, parent representative, or student if 18 or older. (Education Code 46012)
2. Conversation, in person or by telephone, between the verifying employee and the student's parent/guardian or parent representative. The employee shall subsequently record the following:
 - a. Name of student
 - b. Name of parent/guardian or parent representative
 - c. Name of verifying employee
 - d. Date(s) of absence
 - e. Reason for absence
3. Visit to the student's home by the verifying employee, or any other reasonable method which establishes the fact that the student was absent for the reasons stated. A written recording shall be made, including information outlined above.
4. Physician's verification

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- a. When excusing students for confidential medical services or verifying such appointments, district staff shall not ask the purpose of such appointments but may contact a medical office to confirm the time of the appointment.
- b. When a student has had 14 absences in the school year for illness verified by methods listed in #1-3 above, any further absences for illness must be verified by a physician.

Implementing Board Policy on Student Attendance

In implementing Board policy on student attendance, responsibility shall be assumed as follows:

1. Principals are responsible:
 - a. Developing and disseminating to student's parents/guardians and staff, school attendance procedures which are consistent with Board policy 5113.
 - b. Establishing and maintaining attendance records on all students.
 - c. Overseeing the checking and reporting of daily attendance for each class.
 - d. Verifying written excuses and/or phone confirmation following student's absences.
 - e. Monitoring and investigating chronic absenteeism.
 - f. Impressing upon students and parent(s)/guardian(s)/caregiver(s) the value of necessity of regular attendance.
2. Teachers are responsible for:
 - a. Developing and communicating to students and parent(s)/guardian(s) criteria for grading their classes. Students and parent(s)/guardian(s)/caregiver(s) are to be made aware of the importance of regular classroom attendance and that failure to attend classes regularly may be reflected in the grades the student receives.
 - b. Documenting student participation in planned classroom learning activities as part of the criteria for determining and reporting student progress.
 - c. Providing students the opportunity to make up work missed during absences, except trancies.

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- (1) A teacher may provide students the opportunity to make up work missed because of truancy.
 - (2) Students shall be permitted to complete all assignments and tests missed during absences which can be reasonably provided and, upon satisfactory completion, shall be given full credit for their work.
 - (3) The teacher of any class from which a student is absent shall determine what assignments and/or tests the student shall make up and in what period of time the student shall complete such assignments.
 - (4) Tests and assignments shall be reasonably equivalent to, but not necessarily identical to, tests and assignments which the student missed during his/her absence.
- d. Student to students and parent(s)/guardian(s), at appropriate intervals and in accordance with the grading procedure of the site, instances in which poor attendance is adversely affecting student academic performance to the extent that a failing grade may result.
3. Students are responsible for:
- a. Regular attendance.
 - b. Clearing absences in accordance with established procedures.
 - c. Requesting make-up work following an absence:
 - (1) Assignments must be requested within two days following return from absence.
 - (2) Assignment must be completed within a period of time equal to the length of absence.