
Student Attendance and Truancy

Policy 3-600

Scope:

The District establishes standards governing student attendance, including requirements related to absences and excuses, truancy prevention and enforcement, chronic absenteeism habitual truancy intervention, and student leaves of absence.

The policy addresses:

- The classification and verification of excused and unexcused absences;
- the identification and response to truancy;
- the monitoring and reduction of chronic absenteeism through early intervention and supportive practices; and
- the use of alternative attendance options, including independent study or other legally authorized programs, for students who are unable to attend school in person.

Purpose

The District recognizes that regular school attendance is essential to student achievement, academic success, and overall student well-being. The Board is committed to promoting consistent attendance, reducing truancy and chronic absenteeism, and ensuring compliance with all applicable laws governing compulsory education and student attendance.

1. Generally

The Superintendent or designee shall ensure that the District maintains accurate attendance records, implements appropriate attendance interventions, and complies with all applicable provisions of the law.

The Superintendent or designee shall serve as the District's Attendance Supervisor.

- **Compulsory Education**

All students between the ages of 6 and 18 years shall attend school full time unless otherwise exempted by law.

Parents/guardians are responsible for ensuring their child's regular attendance at school.

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- **Attendance Monitoring and Reporting**

The District shall:

- o Maintain accurate attendance records;
- o Monitor attendance, truancy, and chronic absenteeism rates; and
- o Report required data to the California Department of Education.

School sites shall regularly review attendance data and implement site-based interventions as needed.

The District is committed to providing early, proactive, and compassionate interventions that:

- Address barriers to attendance;
- Connect students and families to appropriate services; and
- Promote a positive and inclusive school environment that supports regular attendance.

2. Absences and Excuses

- **Excused Absences**

A student's absence shall be excused only for reasons permitted by law, including but not limited to:

- o Illness or medical appointment;
- o Quarantine;
- o Funeral services;
- o Religious observances or retreats;
- o Jury duty or court-related obligations;
- o Illness or medical care of the student's child;
- o Attendance at naturalization or immigration proceedings; or
- o Other reasons authorized by law.

Students shall be permitted to complete all assignments and tests missed during an excused absence that can reasonably be provided and, upon satisfactory completion, shall be given full credit.

- **Unexcused Absences**

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The policies are developed in collaboration with the Small School Districts' Association for general informational, educational and procedural purposes only and are not intended to constitute legal advice for any specific situation.

Any absence not meeting the criteria for an excused absence shall be considered unexcused.

Unexcused absences may contribute to a student being classified as truant.

- **Verification of Absences**

The District may require reasonable verification of student absences. When excessive absences occur, the District may require documentation from a medical provider or other appropriate source.

3. **Truancy**

- **Definitions**

- o Truant means a student who is absent without a valid excuse for three (3) full days or tardy or absent for more than thirty minutes on three occasions.
- o Habitual Truant means a student who is reported as truant multiple times without improvement.
- o Chronic Truant means a student who is absent without a valid excuse for ten (10) percent or more of the school year.

- **Response to Truancy**

The District shall implement timely and progressive interventions to address truancy, including:

- o Notification of parents/guardians
- o Conferences with students and families
- o Referral to appropriate support services
- o Referral to the School Attendance Review Board (SARB) or other appropriate agencies when necessary

Efforts shall be made to address attendance issues through supportive and preventative measures before escalating enforcement actions.

4. Chronic Absenteeism

A chronic absentee is a student who is absent for 10 percent or more of the school year for any reason, including excused and unexcused absences.

The District shall:

- Monitor attendance data to identify students at risk of chronic absenteeism;
- Implement early intervention strategies to address attendance barriers; and
- Provide support services designed to improve attendance and student engagement.

Interventions shall focus on addressing the underlying causes of absenteeism, including health, transportation, school climate, and family-related challenges.

5. Student Leaves of Absence and Alternative Attendance

The District recognizes that, in limited circumstances, students may be unable to attend school for extended periods due to illness, family hardship, or other significant reasons. When appropriate, the District may provide alternative means of instruction, including:

- Independent study
- Home or hospital instruction
- Other legally authorized educational programs

Unapproved absence from school, including extended travel or discretionary leave, shall be considered unexcused unless authorized through an approved alternative attendance program.

Administrative Regulations

1. Communication and Parent/Guardian Engagement

The District shall:

- Notify parents/guardians of attendance expectations annually;
- Provide information regarding the importance of attendance and available support services; and
- Communicate promptly regarding attendance concerns.

2. Daily Attendance and Recordkeeping

Teachers shall:

- Record daily attendance in the District's student information system for every instructional day;
- Only record attendance when students are under the immediate supervision and control of a certificated employee and engaged in educational activities.

Office Staff shall:

- Verify absences through parent/guardian contact;
- Record absences as excused, unexcused, or unverified; and
- Update attendance records promptly upon receipt of verification.

3. Classification of Absences

- A full-day absence occurs when a student is not present for any portion of the instructional day.
- A partial-day absence occurs when a student:
 - Arrives late;
 - Leaves early; or
 - Misses a portion of the instructional day.
- Tardiness occurs when a student is tardy or absent from class for more than 30 minutes without a valid reason.

4. Excused Absence Verification

- **Parent/Guardian Notification**

- o Parents/guardians shall notify the school of a student absence as soon as reasonably possible.
- o Notification may be provided by written note, phone call, electronic communication, or in person.

Note: Students that are 18 years of age or older, or legally emancipated may verify their own absences.

- **Documentation**

The District may require documentation when:

- o Absences are excessive or recurring;
- o There is reason to question the validity of the absence; or
- o Required by law.

Acceptable documentation may include:

- o Medical verification;
- o Court notice; or
- o Religious or official documentation.

Unverified absences shall be recorded as unexcused absences until verification is received.

5. Make-Up Work for Excused Absences

- Students shall be provided the opportunity to complete assignments and tests missed during an excused absence.
- Teachers shall establish reasonable timelines for completion.
- Full credit shall be awarded upon satisfactory completion of work.

6. Truancy Intervention Process

- **Initial Identification**

After the student accumulates three (3) unexcused absences, the School shall:

- o Issue a first truancy notice; and

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- o Notify the parent/guardian of legal obligations.
- Escalation

If attendance does not improve, the School shall issue:

 - o Issue a Second Notice that includes an invitation to a parent/student conference.
 - o Issue a Third Notice that requires a conference with student and parent/guardian, and develops an attendance improvement plan.
- School Based Interventions

Before referral to the **School Attendance Review Board (SARB)**, the School shall make reasonable effort to provide support, including:

 - o Attendance counseling;
 - o Referral to support services;
 - o Scheduling adjustments when appropriate; and/or
 - o Site-based intervention team review (e.g. Student Attendance Review Team, if one exists)

7. **SARB Referral Process**

If School-based interventions fail:

- The site administrator may refer the student to SARB or appropriate local agency.
- Documentation shall include:
 - o Attendance records
 - o Copies of all notices
 - o Record of interventions and conferences

The District shall participate in SARB proceedings in accordance with applicable law.

8. **Chronic Absenteeism Monitoring and Intervention**

- Identification

School(s) shall regularly identify students who are approaching or exceed 10% absence (excused or unexcused).

- Intervention Strategies

For students identified as Chronically Absent, strategies that include the following shall be implemented:

- o Parent outreach and conferences;
- o Individual attendance improvement plans;
- o Referral to health, counseling, or social services;
- o Transportation or scheduling support; and/or
- o School climate or engagement strategies.

Interventions shall focus on eliminating barriers to attendance.

9. Student Leaves of Absence or Alternative Attendance

Extended absences are not permitted unless they are supported through an approved alternative attendance program, which include:

- Independent Study

Independent Study, short or long-term in accordance with District policy.

- Home and Hospital Instruction

Students with temporary disabilities may be eligible for instruction in the home or hospital setting as required by law.