

## **Student Absences and Excuses**

One criteria of a student's success in school is regular and punctual attendance. Frequent absences may lead to poor academic work, lack of social development and possible academic failure. Regular attendance is of utmost importance for school interest, social adjustment and scholastic achievement. No single factor may interfere with a student's progress more quickly than frequent tardiness or absence.

According to state law, it is the obligation of every parent/guardian to ensure that every child under their care and supervision receives adequate education and training and, if of compulsory attendance age, attends school.

Continuity in the learning process and social adaptation is seriously disrupted by excessive absences. In most situations, the work missed cannot be made up adequately. Students who have good attendance generally achieve higher grades, enjoy school more and are more employable after leaving school. For at least these reasons, the Board believes that a student must satisfy two basic requirements in order to earn full class credit: (1) satisfy all academic requirements and (2) exhibit good attendance habits as stated in this policy.

### **Excused absences**

The following will be considered excused absences:

1. A student who is temporarily ill or injured or whose absence is approved by the administrator of the school of attendance on a prearranged basis. Prearranged absences will be approved for appointments or circumstances of a *serious nature only* which cannot be taken care of outside of school hours.
2. A student who is absent for an extended period due to a physical disability or a mental or behavioral health disorder.
3. A student who is pursuing a work-study program under the supervision of the school.
4. A student who is attending any school-sponsored activity or activities of an educational nature with advance approval by the administration.
5. A student who is suspended or expelled.

As applicable, the district may require suitable proof regarding the above exceptions, including written statements from medical sources.

If a student is in out-of-home placement (as that term is defined by C.R.S. 22-32-138 (1)(e)), absences due to court appearances and participation in court-ordered activities will be excused. The student's assigned social worker must verify the student's absence was for a court appearance or court-ordered activity.

## **Unexcused absences**

An unexcused absence is defined as an absence that is not covered by one of the foregoing exceptions. Each unexcused absence will be entered on the student's record. The parents/guardians of the student receiving an unexcused absence will be notified orally or in writing by the district of the unexcused absence.

In accordance with law, the district may impose appropriate penalties that relate directly to classes missed while unexcused. Penalties may include a warning, school detention, or in-school suspension. Academic penalties, out-of-school suspensions, or expulsion will not be imposed for any unexcused absence.

The administration will develop regulations to implement appropriate penalties. The school administration will consider the correlation between course failure, truancy, and a student dropping out of school in developing these regulations and will implement research-based strategies to re-engage students with a high number of unexcused absences.

Students and parents/guardians may petition the Board of Education for exceptions to this policy or the accompanying regulations provided that no exception will be sustained if the student fails to abide by all requirements imposed by the Board as conditions for granting any such exception.

The maximum number of unexcused absences a student may incur before judicial proceedings are initiated to enforce compulsory attendance is 10 days during any calendar year or school year.

## **Chronic absenteeism**

When a student has an excessive number of absences, these absences negatively impact the student's academic success. For this reason, a student who has eight absences in a semester or 10 total absences in a school year, whether the absences are excused or unexcused, may be identified as "chronically absent" by the principal or designee. Absences due to suspension or expulsion will not be counted in the total number of absences considered for purposes of identifying a student as "chronically absent."

If a student is identified as "chronically absent," the principal or designee will develop a plan to improve the student's attendance. The plan will include best practices and research-based strategies to address the reasons for the student's chronic absenteeism, including but not limited to meeting with administrators, referral to the attendance advocate, YFC referral, signing an attendance contract. When practicable, the student's parent/guardian will participate in the development of the plan.

Nothing herein will require the principal or designee to identify a student as "chronically absent" prior to declaring the student as a "habitual truant" and pursuing court proceedings against the student and his or her parents/guardians to compel the student's attendance in accordance with state law.

## **Make-up work**

Make-up work will be provided for any class in which a student has an excused absence unless otherwise determined by the building administrator or unless the absence is due to the student's expulsion from school. It is the responsibility of the student to pick up any make-up assignments permitted on the day returning to class. There will be two day(s) allowed for make-up work for each day of absence.

Make-up work will be allowed following an unexcused absence or following a student's suspension from school with the goal of providing the student an opportunity to keep up with the class and an incentive to attend school. This work may receive full or partial credit to the extent possible as determined by the building administrator.

Unless otherwise permitted by the building administrator, make-up work will not be provided during a student's expulsion. Rather, the district will offer alternative education services to the expelled student in accordance with state law. The district will determine the amount of credit the expelled student will receive for work completed during any alternative education program.

## **Tardiness**

Tardiness is defined as the appearance of a student without proper excuse after the scheduled time that a class begins. Because of the disruptive nature of tardiness and the detrimental effect upon the rights of the non-tardy student to uninterrupted learning, appropriate penalties may be imposed for excessive tardiness. Parents/guardians will be notified of all penalties regarding tardiness.

In an unavoidable situation, a student detained by another teacher or administrator will not be considered tardy provided that the teacher or administrator gives the student a pass to enter the next class. Teachers will honor passes presented in accordance with this policy. The provisions of this policy are applicable to all students in the district, including those above and below the age for compulsory attendance as required by law.

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Revised and recoded by the Board: July 17, 2019  
Revised: July 22, 2020

LEGAL REFS.: C.R.S. 22-14-101 *et seq.* (dropout prevention and student re-engagement)  
C.R.S. 22-32-109 (1)(n) (length of school year, instruction & contact time)  
C.R.S. 22-32-109.1 (2)(a) (conduct and discipline code)  
C.R.S. 22-32-138 (6) (excused absence requirements for students in out-of-home placements)  
C.R.S. 22-33-101 *et seq.* (School Attendance Law of 1963)  
C.R.S. 22-33-105 (3)(d)(III) (opportunity to make up work during suspension)  
C.R.S. 22-33-108 (judicial proceedings to enforce school attendance laws)  
C.R.S. 22-33-203 (educational alternatives for expelled students and determination of credit)  
1 CCR 301-78 Rules 1.00 *et seq.* (standardized calculation for counting student attendance and truancy)

CROSS REFS.:

*Board policies:*

EL-4, Communication and Council to the Board  
EL-9, Treatment of Students Parents and Community  
EL-10, Student Conduct, Discipline and Attendance

*Administrative policies:*

EBCE, Closing and Cancellations  
IC/ICA, School Year/School Calendar/Instruction Time  
JEA, Compulsory Attendance Ages  
JFABE\*, Students in Foster Care  
JFC, Student Withdrawal from School/Dropouts  
JHB, Truancy  
JK, Student Discipline  
JKD/JKE, Suspension/Expulsion of Students (and Other Disciplinary Interventions)  
JLIB, Student Dismissal Precautions

## **Guidelines for Student Absences, Excuses and Tardiness**

The building principal and/or designated district attendance advocate will work with students and parents to improve attendance through early intervention, positive and timely communication.

Every absence shall be recorded as unexcused unless the legal guardian contacts the school by the end of the third school day following a student's return to school.

To excuse an absence, the building principal or designee may require suitable proof regarding exceptions stated in excused absences, including written statements from medical sources.

Vacations or non-emergency activities should be scheduled for days or times when students are not in school. Requests for absences due to vacation or for other non-emergency reasons will be pre-approved if the student has a 95% or higher attendance rate over the prior two grading periods, and/or if the student is otherwise meeting academic performance expectations as determined by school administration. Pre-approval does not mean an absence will be marked as an "excused" absence.

Make-up work shall be provided for any class in which a student has an absence unless otherwise determined by the building principal or designee. It is the responsibility of the student to pick up any make-up assignments on the day he/she returns to class.

Letters will be sent to the legal guardians of students who are absent at 5, 8, 10 and 12 days during the school year, unless the administrator is aware of a documented medical situation or a pre-approved absence. Examples of letters are included in Exhibit A.

Unexcused absences of four in a month or 10 in a year, requires an immediate intervention (i.e. meeting, contract, Youth and Family Connections referral, court referral, home visit by advocate, etc.)

Attendance contracts (Exhibit B) may be generated with the district attendance advocate at the 10th day of absence. Exceptions may include those listed in excused absences. Attendance contracts are typically written for 365 days.

If attendance issues continue to occur, the family will be referred to Youth and Family Connections (YFC) for evaluation and support in correcting the issues relating to the attendance concerns.

Cases that have reached the legal limit will be referred to the district attendance advocate to begin court proceedings

Elementary students are considered absent of a half day if they are 30 minutes tardy in the morning or leave 30 minutes before the end of the school day.

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Secondary students are considered absent from class if they are more than 10 minutes tardy.

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Weld County School District Re-3J, Hudson, Colorado