

Series 500 – Student Personnel

A. PHILOSOPHY

Students will be expected to attend classes regularly and to be on time in order to receive maximum benefit from the instructional program, to develop habits of punctuality, self-discipline and responsibility, and to assist in keeping disruption of the educational environment to a minimum. While it is possible for an absent student to make up much of the schoolwork missed, it is impossible to completely compensate for absence from classes.

Absences always cause some disruption in the educational progress of the student who was absent. In order to maintain interest and understanding in a program of instruction, students should not expect to be absent any more than is absolutely necessary. Students who fail to make up work missed may not understand what the teacher is currently presenting, and may also become discouraged with the double burden of keeping current and making up missed work. Irregular attendance or tardiness by students not only hinders their own studies, but also interferes with the progress of those pupils who are regular and prompt in attendance.

Students who have good attendance records are most likely to achieve higher grades, enjoy school life to a greater degree, and have more employment opportunities after leaving school. Prospective employers expect promptness and regular attendance from employees and are reluctant to hire persons who have not developed good habits of responsibility and self-discipline. Lifelong patterns of responsibility and self-discipline of regular attendance and promptness are fostered by attention given them during the years of school attendance.

There are times, however, when school officials may determine that the problems associated with absence from school are outweighed by the advantages of an activity in which the student participates and they may endorse or sponsor an activity or trip. Attendance at such approved trips and activities will not be considered an absence from school.

The principal of each building shall cause these rules and regulations to be brought to the attention of all students and parents/guardians at the beginning of each school year.

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B. DEFINITIONS

Absence: A student who is not present at school when school attendance is required shall be considered absent.

Tardy: A student who arrives late to school or class without a reason approved by the school shall be considered tardy.

Excused Absence: An absence from class or school for a reason which the school considers appropriate and for which the parent or guardian has given approval shall be considered an excused absence.

The following reasons are considered appropriate for excused absences:

- a. Illnesses
- b. Medical or dental appointments that cannot be scheduled outside of the school day (Such appointments should generally not cause the student to miss an entire school day.)
- c. Death or serious illness in the family
- d. Court or judicial appearances scheduled beyond the control of the student
- e. Family vacations with an educational value which are arranged in advance (Whenever possible family vacations should be planned to coincide with days during which school is not in session.)
- f. Other reasons which can be justified from an educational standpoint and which are arranged in advance
- g. Other verified emergencies.

Unexcused Absence: An absence from school for any reason not considered as excused.

Truancy: Willful failure to attend school regularly even though attendance is required.

C. ELEMENTARY AND MIDDLE SCHOOL

Any student who has become a chronic absence or tardy problem may be removed from class with readmittance contingent upon satisfactory resolution of the problem. The problem shall be documented and a conference will be held involving any or all of the following persons: principal, student, teacher, parents/guardians, counselor, and other interested persons upon request of either the school or the parent/guardian.

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Should the problem not be resolved, the parents/guardians remain uncooperative, or the truancy level be deemed to violate state compulsory attendance laws, the student may be suspended requiring a parent/guardian conference with the superintendent or designee. Failure to resolve the problem at this level may result in the initiation of appropriate legal action against the parent/guardian, the student or both.

School activities and in-school suspensions shall not be considered absences in the context of this policy even though the student is not present in class or in school. Work missed for school activities or in-school suspension must be made up if credit is to be given.

D. SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL

1. ADDITIONAL DEFINITIONS APPLICABLE TO HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

Absence: A student who is not present at school when school attendance is required, or who misses more than 1/2 of a class period, shall be considered absent.

Tardy: A student who arrives late to school or class without a reason approved by the school shall be considered tardy. For purposes of this policy, three tardies or any tardy of 10 or more minutes shall be considered one absence.

Excused Absence: An excused absence is an absence for which the school asks the parent or guardian to give special consideration to the student's current academic performance. At least three things should be considered: the necessity of the absence, the timing of the absence, and the performance of the student in any class to be missed. If the absence can be planned in advance and will last more than two days, the student should gather a progress report in each of the classes showing the current grade and the anticipated effect of the absence upon future performance. The parent/guardian must sign the progress report and return it to the school prior to the absence. If the student's current progress in class is unsatisfactory, or if the absence would jeopardize success in the class, the school may deny the absence, if taken, will be unexcused. Excused absences will be counted in determining excessive absences under Number 5.

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Requests for excused absences could be considered in the following situations:

- a. Family emergencies such as caring for an ill sibling or special work at home
- b. Family trips or vacations if the student's work is finished prior to the trip or vacation
- c. College visits arranged in advance by juniors or seniors who are seriously considering enrolling in that college
- d. Other reasons which can be justified from an educational standpoint and which are arranged in advance.

Unexcused Absence or Truancy

An unexcused absence occurs when a student does not attend school or an assigned class or study hall for any reason not considered as excused or for which prior arrangements have not been made even though the parent/guardian may consent to the absence.

Absences for the following reasons will be considered unexcused:

- a. Intentional skipping of class, study hall or school
- b. Working for an employer
- c. Oversleeping
- d. Transportation problems
- e. Pleasure trips such as shopping
- f. Appointments, which could be made outside of, class time
- g. Staying at home to do school work
- h. Leaving the school building or campus without prior administrative approval
- i. Remaining on school grounds after being excused from class by parent/guardian and school or removed from class by school officials.
- j. Out of school suspension
- k. Absences for which the parent/guardian gives no reason.

School activities and in-school suspensions shall not be considered absences in the context of this policy even though the student is not present in class or in school. Work missed for school activities or in-school suspension must be made up if credit is to be given.

Each absence shall be considered as excused or unexcused.

Only when a student of majority age (18 years or older or married) is not residing with the student's parent or guardian, may the student present his or

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her own reason for absence without parent/ guardian verification. The principal should be notified in advance of any such circumstances.

In the event that the principal determines that it is advisable to verify a reason given for an absence, the principal may take appropriate steps to do so. If it is determined that the reason given misrepresents the facts, the principal may declare that absence unexcused.

2. CREDIT FOR WORK MISSED DUE TO ABSENCES

When a student anticipates an absence, every effort should be made to obtain assignments in advance.

Students will receive full credit for school work missed because of excused absences up to 6 per term in a block class and up to 10 per semester in a halfblock class or out of school suspension if the work is made up within the number of school days which are double those of the absence up to a total of six make-up days. For absences longer than three consecutive days, additional time may be given at the discretion of the teacher. Credit for work not completed within the designated time limit shall be at the discretion of the teacher.

Daily classwork, tests or assignments missed because of an unexcused absence or excessive absences (more than 6 per term in a block class or more than 10 per semester in a halfblock class) may not be made up for credit and a grade of zero or comparable grade shall be recorded. If the reason for the unexcused absence was unintentional, the principal may allow make-up work for credit even though the absence remains unexcused. If excessive absence is due to medical conditions, the principal may allow make-up work for credit.

Being absent from school in itself will not be cause for reduction of a student's grade. If a student fails to make up the work missed, he/she will fail those assignments not completed and this will be averaged with other grades. If points or percentages for attendance and participation are given, the denial of those points or percentages for absenteeism is permissible. A report card comment will indicate which grades were reduced due to absences.

A student who is absent on the day(s) prior to the day of a previously announced test or assignment due date will be expected to take that test or have the assignment completed upon his/her return to school.

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3. CONSEQUENCES FOR ATTENDANCE POLICY VIOLATIONS

Whenever possible, discipline imposed because of absence problems shall not create further class absences.

The following disciplinary measures may be used by school authorities as consequences for attendance policy violation:

- a. Warning
- b. Parent/guardian contact
- c. After school or before school detention
- d. Saturday detention
- e. Nonteaching day attendance
- f. Loss of school privileges
- g. Temporary removal from class pending a parent or guardian conference
- h. Forfeiture of the opportunity to earn credit in the class and/or assignment to a study hall
- i. Suspension from school.

4. UNEXCUSED ABSENCES

When a student accumulates his or her 1st or 2nd unexcused absence from class or study hall, the parent/guardian shall be contacted and the student will be subject to disciplinary action deemed appropriate.

When a student accumulates his or her 3rd unexcused absence from class or study hall, the parent/guardian shall be contacted and the student may forfeit the opportunity to earn credit in the class. The student who has forfeited the opportunity for credit may choose to continue to participate in the class for no credit, or will be assigned to a study hall.

5. EXCESSIVE ABSENCES

Whenever a student has accumulated 4 absences per term in a block class or 8 absences per semester in a halfblock class, the counselor shall confer with the student and notify parent or guardian.

The parent/guardian notification shall be by personal contact whenever possible, and shall include a brief summary of the district's philosophy on regular attendance, the student's absence record for the current semester in all classes, the consequences of additional absences, and an invitation for the parent/guardian to have a conference with the teacher (s), principal, student and /or counselor. The counselor shall record the date and method of this notification.

Whenever a student has accumulated 6 absences per term in a block class or 10 absences per semester in a halfblock class, an administrator shall

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notify the student, parent or guardian and may arrange a conference with the student, parent or guardian, counselor and/or teachers.

The purpose of the conference shall be to review the performance of the student in all classes, the amount of work needing to be made up if any, the reasons for the absences, the commitment of the student toward successfully completing the class and any extenuating circumstances which directly caused the excessive absences. The outcome of the conference shall be one of the following:

- a. Classwork for additional absences may not be made up for credit.
- b. The student will forfeit the opportunity to earn credit in the class. The student who has forfeited the opportunity for credit may choose to continue to participate in the class for no credit, or will be assigned to a study hall.
- c. If there are significant extenuating circumstances which directly caused the excessive absences (for example a documented medical condition excluding routine doctor or dental appointments), and if the student is making reasonably good progress in the class, and if the student makes a commitment to improved attendance and performance, that student may be allowed to continue in class on a probationary status. The terms and conditions of that probation shall be determined at the conference, shall be reasonable, shall not last beyond the current semester and may include one term classes in which the student has not yet accumulated 6 absences and two term classes in which the student has not yet accumulated 10 absences.

Should the absences be attributed to a hospitalization or treatment which precludes the continuation of a class, the principal may withdraw the student from class without penalty with the agreement of the parent/guardian, or may extend the course completion date beyond the end of the current semester with the agreement of the parent/guardian and the teacher based upon what is deemed to be in the student's best interest.

If mutual agreement cannot be reached at this conference, the principal holding the conference shall render a decision.

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6. REVIEW

Students or parents or guardians wishing to have a review of a decision made under the provisions of this policy, may do so by filing a written or verbal request for review with the person at the next higher level from which the decision was rendered. The request must state the specific reason necessitating the review and must be filed within two school business days following the decision. The decision-making levels are as follows:

1. Teacher
2. Assistant Principal
3. Principal
4. Superintendent or designee
5. Board of Directors

Within two days of the receipt of a request for review, the person receiving the request will determine a mutually agreeable time, place and date for the review and notify the person(s) requesting the review and the decision maker accordingly. At the appointed time, the parties attending the review will meet to discuss the matter informally. Following the review, the person conducting the review shall affirm, reverse or modify the previous decision.

No disciplinary action, loss of credit or loss of opportunity to participate shall be imposed until the decision is final.

An appeal to the Superintendent or designee or the Board of Directors may be made only by both parent/guardian and student.

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