

# ATTENDANCE REGULATIONS

Regular school attendance is essential for the student to make the most of his or her education---to benefit from teacher-led and school activities, to build each day's learning on the previous day's, and to grow as an individual. Absences from class may result in a serious disruption of a student's mastery of the instructional materials; therefore, the student and parent/guardian should make every effort to avoid unnecessary absences. Two state laws, one dealing with compulsory attendance, the other with attendance for credit, should be of special interest to students and parents/guardians. Be advised, a court of law may also impose penalties against both the student and/or parent(s)/guardian(s) if a school-aged student is deliberately not attending school. Penalties are discussed in the following sections:

In Texas, children between the ages of 6 and 18, depending on when the child's birthday falls, are required to attend school unless otherwise exempted by law. School employees investigate and report violations of the state compulsory attendance law.

At the beginning of the school year all parents/guardians will be notified in writing of the state attendance requirements. Under the law, if the student is absent from school on 10 or more days or parts of days within a six-month period in the same school year or on three or more days or parts of days within a four-week period:

- (1) Student's parent/guardian is subject to prosecution under Section 25.093 and
- (2) Student is subject to prosecution under Section 25.094

## **Students 18 Years and Older**

A student who voluntarily attends or enrolls after his/her 18<sup>th</sup> birthday is required to attend each school day. If a student, 18 years of age or older, has more than five (5) unexcused absences in a semester, the District may revoke the student's enrollment. The student's presence on school property after that is unauthorized and may be considered trespassing.

## ***Minimum Attendance Requirements***

State law requires that a student may not be given credit for a class unless the student is in attendance a minimum of 90% of the days the class is scheduled to meet. If a student is in attendance less than 90% of the days the class meets, the student will lose credit unless each and every class is made up in an acceptable manner, such as, but not limited to, Saturday School, after school hours, etc. **Time made up allows for credit to be given but does not remove the absence documented by the school to meet State compulsory attendance requirements.** Unusual extenuating circumstances would be a basis for appeal to the attendance review committee. The structure of the review committee, the procedures, and criteria to be considered are available from the administration. For the purpose of rank, a grade of 50 will be recorded if a student does not receive credit if he/she does not meet the state mandated attendance requirements.

Parents/Guardians are asked to call the school **to report when their child will be absent**. If the school is not notified early, school personnel will attempt to call the parent/guardian. Students who have been absent must also bring **a written, signed statement by a parent/guardian – explaining the reason for the absence within two days following the student's return to school after his/her absence** to enable the student to make up missed assignments and

**obtain approval for the absence to be excused. A note from the student's physician may also be required if absences are excessive.**

Some acceptable reasons for school absence are:

- Personal illness
- Illness or death in the family
- Quarantine
- Natural disasters, weather or road conditions making travel dangerous
- A student observing religious holy days, and for the days in which the student must travel to and from the holy day observance (one to and one from). A student who is absent under this subsection shall not be penalized for such absence and it shall be counted as if he/she attended school for purposes of calculating the average daily attendance.
- Attending an authorized school function
- A doctor or dentist's appointment that is verified by a signed note or form by the doctor or dentist and presented upon return to school
- Any other unusual cause acceptable to the principal.

The District considers the following as possible extenuating circumstances for the purpose of granting credit for a class:

- Personal illness with note from physician
- Hospital confinement
- Death in the family
- Serious personal and family problems
- Days of suspension for which the student has satisfactorily completed the assignments for the suspended period
- Participation in a court proceeding or a child abuse/neglect investigation
- The late enrollment and/or early withdrawal of a migratory student
- Completion of a competency-based education program for students identified as at-risk/dropouts
- Participation in approved curricular/extra-curricular activities
- The late enrollment or early withdrawal of a student placed in or having resided in a community care home by the Texas Youth Commission (TYC)
- The absence of a teen parent due to caring for his/her child
- Participation in a substance abuse rehabilitation program
- Other emergencies recognized by the principal, superintendent, or committee
- Homelessness as defined by Federal law.

Pregnant students under a physician's care should be referred to the School Age Parenting Program. A student with a physician's note requesting the student remain at home due to pregnancy must have the approval from the School Age Parenting Program Coordinator for enrollment into Pregnancy Related Services (PRS-054). PRS consists of regular academic instruction with an altered schedule during prenatal and/or postpartum recovery times designated by a physician. If the pregnant student declines enrollment into PRS-054, the student will be required to complete all assignments due during the student's absence period without the assistance of PRS-054. Credit will be denied if the student does not complete the required assignments in a reasonable time.

When a student's attendance drops below 90% of the days the class is offered, the student, parent/guardian, or representative may request award of credit by submitting a written petition in accordance with the Attendance Appeal Process. Petitions for credit may be filed at any time the student receives notice, but in any event, no later than 15 days after the last day of classes of the semester in which the attendance was below 90% (FEC[Local]).

The due process steps to appeal non-credit due to excessive absences are as follows:

1. Level One: Appeal in writing to the campus attendance committee
2. Level Two: Appeal in writing to the Principal within 10 days following the receipt of the Attendance Committee's response
3. Level Three: Appeal in writing to the Executive Director of Pupil Personnel in charge of the District Attendance Review Committee, within 10 days following the receipt of the principal's response
4. Level Four: Request in writing to the Superintendent for a Board review of the District Attendance Review Committee's decision, within 10 days following the receipt of the District Attendance Review Committee's response

Students shall be permitted to make-up assignments and tests after excused absences. For extended absences, make-up assignments shall be made available to students after two (2) consecutive class days of excused absence. Teachers shall inform their students of the time allotted for the completion of make-up work and tests after an excused absence. However, the student shall be responsible for obtaining and completing make-up assignments in a satisfactory manner within the allotted amount of time. For information on how to make-up time for excessive absences, please contact your campus administrator.

Students will be allowed reasonable time to make up work and/or tests missed due to an excused absence (one day per day of school missed with a maximum of five school days). Students may receive a zero for assignments and tests missed because of absences.

Any student who leaves and/or arrives to the campus during school hours has the responsibility to sign in/out at the campus attendance office. All students are expected to follow the school's procedures regarding notes, absences, and other reasons for being absent from class.

#### **PERMITS TO LEAVE SCHOOL**

A student who knows in advance that he/she will need to leave the building during school hours should have a written request from his/her parents/guardians. If the permit is for the student to be out of the building for only a part of the day, the time limits should be specified on the written request. This request should be presented to the attendance office before school begins. A permit will be issued and will serve as a pass for the student to report to the attendance office prior to leaving the building. For safety reasons, students will be released ONLY to parents/guardians or persons listed on the emergency card, which provide proper picture identification prior to the child's release. When the student returns to school, he/she should report to the attendance office for a readmission slip to class.

**UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCE SHOULD STUDENTS LEAVE THE SCHOOL CAMPUS WITHOUT PROPER PERMISSION FROM ADMINISTRATIVE PERSONNEL/ATTENDANCE OFFICE. FAILURE TO DO SO WILL RESULT IN ADMINISTRATIVE DISCIPLINARY ACTION. ALL STUDENTS WHO LEAVE CAMPUS DURING SCHOOL HOURS MUST SIGN OUT THROUGH THE ATTENDANCE OFFICE BEFORE LEAVING SCHOOL GROUNDS.**

### **TRUANCY/UNEXCUSED ABSENCE**

Truancy is defined as absence from class or school for any portion of a period or day without proper permission from home and school. Any willful or premeditated violation of the state's compulsory attendance laws or regulations governing school attendance on the part of the student or parent/guardian is regarded as *truancy*. When a student is truant from school, the truancy will be considered a behavior problem and the student will be subject to school/district consequences. A student who continues to be truant from school will be officially warned and subsequent legal charges will be filed against the parent/guardian. Any student who leaves or arrives at the campus during school hours must sign in or out at the campus attendance office.