

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/guardians 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 the student *and* the student's parent(s)/guardian(s) if a school-aged student is deliberately not attending school. Penalties are discussed in the following sections. **Attendance for all elementary grades shall be determined by the absences recorded at 9:30 a.m. each day.**

In Texas, students are *required* to attend school. **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 doctor excuse or 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.

Pre-Kinder and Kindergarten

Regular school attendance is essential for a student to make the most of his/her education. Texas law does not require children of Pre-Kinder and Kindergarten age to be enrolled in school. However, if a parent chooses to enroll **a child in Pre-Kinder or Kindergarten, the child is obligated to attend school and is under the compulsory attendance law.** This section of the law requires any Pre-Kinder or Kindergarten student who is enrolled in a public school to attend school each day for the entire period the program of instruction is provided. Withdrawing after enrollment obligates the child to be enrolled in another public or private school immediately.

Upon enrollment, the law places the responsibility on the parent(s)/guardian(s), or those who stand in parental relationship, to see that their child(ren) attend school regularly. Parent(s)/Guardian(s) are required to follow the attendance procedures in the District and to work closely with the school administration regarding absences.

Acceptable reasons for a school absence include, but are not limited to:

- 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
- U.S. citizen naturalization procedures and ceremonies, pursuing citizenship
- College visits—two (2) per year for juniors and seniors only (with approved verification)
- Student required to appear in court
- Any other unusual cause acceptable to the principal/district
- ** Personal or family illness with parent/guardian note is limited to eight (8) days in a school year

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

- Personal illness with note from physician
- Hospital confinement
- Death in the family
- Serious personal and family problems
- 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
- The late enrollment or early withdrawal of a student placed in or having resided in the 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
- Personal illness
- Illness or death in the family
- Quarantine
- Natural disaster, weather or road conditions
- Religious holy days
- Attendance at a school function, which has been authorized by the principal
- Any unusual cause judged to be acceptable by the principal

State law requires that a student may not be given credit for a class unless the student is in attendance for at least 90% of the time the class is offered or has been granted a waiver by the attendance review committee. School attendance is required by law. **Early removal of your child prior to the end of the school day is not advised.**

Unacceptable Reasons for Absences, but not limited to:

- Truancy
- Vacations
- Pleasure trips
- Birthday and/or other personal celebrations
- Rare special circumstances not approved in advance by principal
- Athletic programs not associated with the district, i.e., Pop Warner
- Cheerleading/dance programs, club sports programs not affiliated with the District
- Non-school affiliated fine arts productions
- Missing the bus
- Car problems
- Oversleeping

At the beginning of the school year all parents will be notified in writing of the state attendance requirements. Under the law, if a 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. The student's parent is subject to prosecution under Section 25.093 and
2. The student is subject to prosecution under Section 25.094 of the Texas Education Code

Excessive absences will result in loss of credit unless the student makes up the missed work in an acceptable alternative manner, including, but not limited to, Saturday School, Summer School, or after-school hours. **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.**

When a student's attendance drops below 90 percent but remains at least at 75 percent of the days the class is offered, the student may earn credit for the class by completing a plan approved by the principal. This plan must provide for the student to meet the instructional requirements of the class as determined by the principal. If the student fails to successfully complete the plan, or when a student's attendance drops below 75 percent of the days the class is offered, the student, parent, or guardian may request award of credit by submitting a written petition to the appropriate attendance committee.

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 for the semester in which the attendance was below 90 percent. The attendance committee shall review the student's entire attendance record and the reasons for absences and shall determine whether to award credit. The committee may also, whether a petition is filed or not, review the records of all students whose attendance drops below 90 percent of the days the class is offered. Students who have lost credit because of excessive absences may regain credit by fulfilling the requirements established by the attendance committee.

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

- Level One: Appeal in writing to the campus attendance committee
- Level Two: Appeal in writing to Principal within 10 days following the receipt of the Attendance Committee's response
- 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
- Level Four: A 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