

STUDENT ABSENCES AND EXCUSES

Regular attendance by all students is very important. In many cases, irregular attendance is the major reason for poor schoolwork; therefore, all students are urged to make appointments, do personal errands, etc., outside of school hours.

The Board directs the Superintendent/designee to develop appropriate procedures for tracking student attendance based on the mode of learning. The District monitors daily absences for trends related to COVID-19.

Students will not be penalized for absences related to contracting COVID-19 or having to quarantine or isolate due to COVID-19 exposure/symptoms, regardless of whether the student is participating in-person, remotely, or both.

Reasons for medically excused absences may include, but are not limited to:

1. personal illness of the student;
2. illness in the student's family necessitating the presence of the child
3. quarantine for contagious disease or
4. emergency or other set of circumstances in which the judgment of the Superintendent constitutes a good and sufficient cause for absence from school, which may include but not be limited to absences due to documented medical appointments.

Any limits that may be in place regarding the number of medical excuses that will be authorized without a doctor's note may be extended if the student or someone in the student's family is in quarantine due to COVID-19 or experiencing symptoms of COVID-19.

Reasons for non-medically excused absences may include, but are not limited to:

1. needed at home to perform necessary work directly and exclusively for parents or legal guardians for a limited period of time when approved by the Superintendent (applies to students over 14 years of age only);
2. death in the family (applies to absences of up to 18 school hours unless a reasonable cause may be shown for a longer absence);
3. observance of religious holidays consistent with a student's truly held religious belief;
4. traveling out of state to attend a Board-approved enrichment activity or extracurricular activity (applies to absences of up to 24 school hours);
5. college visitation;
6. absences due to a student's placement in foster care, change in foster care placement, or a court proceeding related to the student's foster care status;
7. absences due to a student's being homeless;
8. temporary internet outage for individual students or households;
9. technical difficulties for individual students or households occurring at inopportune times such as during a teacher-led remote learning lesson;
10. absences due to COVID-19 reasons that are not considered medically excused until alternative arrangements can be made or
11. as determined by the Superintendent

The District makes an attempt to contact the parent, guardian, or other person having care of a student who has not notified the school of the student's absence that day regarding that student's absence without legitimate excuse within 120 minutes of the start of the school day. The Board authorizes the Superintendent to determine and use the appropriate notification procedure and methods consistent with State law.

Upon return to school, each student who is absent must make arrangements immediately with his/her teacher(s) to make up work missed. Students who are absent from school for reasons not permitted by State law may, or may not, be permitted to make up work. Each case is considered on its merits by the principal and the respective teacher(s). Students who are absent due to an in-school or out-of-school suspension are permitted to make up missed classroom assignments in accordance with District level policies and procedures. Students are requested to bring a note to school after each absence explaining the reason for the absence or tardiness in accordance with procedures and timelines defined in District level policies and procedures.

The Board does not believe that students should be excused from school for vacations or other nonemergency trips. The responsibility for such absences resides with the parent(s), and they must not expect any work missed by their child to be retaught by the teacher. If the school is notified in advance of such a trip, reasonable efforts are made to prepare a general list of assignments for the student to do while he/she is absent.

The Board authorizes the Superintendent to establish a hearing and notification procedure for the purpose of denying a student's driving privileges if that student of compulsory school age has been absent without legitimate excuse for more than 60 consecutive hours during a school month or a total of at least 90 hours during a school year.

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CROSS REF.: IGAC, Teaching About Religion
IKB, Homework
JEDB, Student Dismissal Precautions
JEE, Student Attendance Accounting (Missing and Absent Children)
JHC, Student Health Services and Requirements
JHCC, Communicable Diseases