

# Attendance Policy

Consistent attendance is critical to student success. Starting in kindergarten the school board policy requires that a child must be not less than 5 years of age prior to September 1 of that school year. State law requires that students who are enrolled attend school consistently. Students are expected to arrive on time each day and to remain for the entire school day. We ask that parents stress the importance of school attendance and make every effort to avoid scheduling appointments or other activities that conflict with school hours.

## **Excused Absences**

On occasion, students may need to miss school and will be excused for the following reasons per state law:

- Participation in a district or school approved activity or instructional program;
- Illness, health condition or medical appointment (including but not limited to medical, counseling, dental or optometry);
- Family emergency, including but not limited to a death or illness in the family;
- Religious or cultural purpose including observance of a religious or cultural holiday or participation in religious or cultural instruction;
- Court or judicial proceeding;
- State-recognized search and rescue activities consistent with RCW 28A.225.055;
- Absence directly related to the student's homeless status;
- Absence resulting from a disciplinary/corrective action. (e.g., short-term or long-term suspension, emergency expulsion); and
- Temporary absences excused upon the request of a parent/guardian and agreed upon with the school principal (or designee), provided that such excused absences shall not be permitted if deemed to cause a serious adverse effect upon the student's educational progress

The school administration has the authority to determine if an absence meets the above criteria for an excused absence. In some cases this may result in further investigation regarding excessive excused absences.

In order to excuse absences, parents/guardians should contact the school using the attendance hotline at 425-366-3201, Option #1 by 9:15 a.m. the morning of the absence. Your message should include the

child's name, teacher's name, date(s) of absence, reason for the absence, and parent name. If you do not have access to a telephone, please send a written note within two days of the student's return to school or the absence will be unexcused.

If your child is ill for two or more days you may call the office or your child's teacher to request homework. Assignments and directions will be prepared by the teacher and will be available for pick up at the end of the next school day.

### **Unexcused Absences**

Any absence from school for the majority of hours or periods in an average school day is unexcused unless it meets one of the criteria above for an excused absence.

State law requires that schools take steps to insure students are in school. If students are unexcused or truant from school, the school must take action in accordance with Washington State Law.

### **Washington State Requirements for School/District**

- After **one** unexcused absence in a month, the school is required to inform the parent in writing or by phone.
- After **two** unexcused absences, the school is required to initiate a parent conference to improve the student's attendance. Students will also participate in Odyssey's A-Team Program, which connects students with a staff member who promotes and provides incentives for regular school attendance. If a student is on transfer/waiver, they may be provided a final opportunity to improve attendance.
- After **five** unexcused absences in a month, the parent and school must enter a contract to improve the student's attendance. Or, the case can be referred to a Community Truancy Board. Transfer students on a waiver who have not shown improvement with their attendance at this time may have their waiver revoked.
- After **seven** unexcused absences in a month, or ten unexcused absences in an academic year, the school district may file truancy petitions with the juvenile court.
- If the student is not in compliance with a court order resulting from a truancy petition, the school is required to file a contempt motion.