

Students

Excused and Unexcused Absences

Definition of Absence

1. Pursuant to WAC 392-401-015, a student is absent from in-person learning when they are:
 - a. Not physically present on school grounds; and
 - b. Not participating in the following activities at an approved location:
 - i. Instruction;
 - ii. Any instruction-related activity; or
 - iii. Any other district or school approved activity that is regulated by and instructional/academic accountability system, such as participation in district-sponsored sports.

Pursuant to WAC 392-401-016, a student is absent from remote learning as follows:

- a. A student is absent from synchronous online instruction when the student does not login to the synchronous meeting/class; or
 - b. A student is absent from asynchronous instruction when there is evidence that the student accessed the planned asynchronous activity. Evidence of student participation in remote learning may include, but is not limited to:
 - i. Daily logins to learning management systems;
 - ii. Daily interactions with the teacher to acknowledge attendance (including messages, emails, phone calls or video chats); and
 - iii. Evidence of participation in a task or assignment.
2. Students will not be absent if:
 - a. They have been suspended, expelled, or emergency expelled pursuant to Chapter 392-400 WAC;
 - b. Are receiving educational services as required by RCW 28A.600.015 and Chapter 392-400 WAC; or
 - c. The student is enrolled in qualifying “course of study” activities as defined in WAC 392-121-107.
 3. As used in this Policy and accompanying Procedure 3122P, a “full day” absence is when a student is absent for fifty percent or more of their scheduled day.
 4. As used in this Policy and accompanying Procedure 3122P, a “tardy” is non-attendance for less than a full instructional hour for elementary students or less than a full class period for secondary students. The district will not convert or combine tardies into absences that contribute to a truancy petition.
 5. A student will be considered absent if they are on school grounds but not in their assigned setting.

Excused and Unexcused Absences

Students are expected to attend all assigned classes each day. Upon enrollment and at the beginning of each school year, the district will inform students and their parent/guardian of this expectation, the benefits of regular school attendance, the consequences of truancy; the potential effects of excessive absenteeism, whether excused or unexcused, on academic achievement, and graduation and dropout rates; the schools expectations of the parent/guardian to insure regular attendance by the child; the role and responsibility of the school, and the resources available to assist the student and their parent/guardian. The district will also make this information available online and will take reasonable steps to ensure parents/guardians are able to request and receive such information in a language in which they are fluent. Parent/guardian will be required to date acknowledge review of this information online or in writing before or at the time of enrollment of the child at a new school and at the beginning of each school year.

Excused Absences

Regular school attendance is necessary for mastery of the educational program provided to students of the district. Students at times may appropriately be absent from class. School staff will keep a record of absences and tardiness, including a record of excuse statements submitted by a parent/guardian, or in certain cases, students, to document a student's excused absences. Absences due to the following reasons will be excused:

1. Physical or mental health symptoms, illness, health condition or medical appointment for the student or person for whom the student is legally responsible. Examples of symptoms, illness, health conditions or medical appointments include, but not limited to, medical, counseling, mental health wellness, dental, optometry, pregnancy, and behavior health treatment (which can include in-patient or out-patient treatment for chemical dependency or mental health);
2. Family emergency including, but not limited to, a death or illness in the family;
3. Religious or cultural purpose including observance of a religious or cultural holiday or participation in religious or cultural instruction;
4. Court, judicial proceeding, court-ordered activity, or jury service;
5. Post-secondary, technical school or apprenticeship program visitation, or scholarship interview;
6. State-recognized search and rescue activities consistent with RCW 28A.225.055;
7. Absence directly related to the student's homeless or foster care/dependency status;
8. Absences related to deployment activities of a parent or legal guardian who is an active duty member consistent with RCW 28A.705.010;

9. Absences due to suspension, expulsions or emergency expulsions imposed pursuant to Chapter 392-400 WAC if the student is not receiving educational services and is not enrolled in qualifying “course of study” activities as defined in WAC 392-121-107:
10. Absences due to a student’s safety concerns, including absences related to threats, assaults, or bullying;
11. Absences due to a student’s migrant status;
12. Absences due to the student’s lack of necessary instructional tools, including internet access and connectivity; and
13. Absences due to an approved activity that is consistent with district policy and is mutually agreed upon by the principal or designee and a parent/guardian, or emancipated youth.

A school principal or designee has the authority to determine if an absence meets the above criteria for an excused absence.

In the event of emergency school facility closure due to COVID-19, other communicable disease outbreak, natural disaster, or other event when districts are required to provide synchronous and asynchronous instruction, absences due to the following reasons must be excused:

1. Absences related to the student’s illness, health condition , or medical appointments due to COVID-19 or other communicable disease;
2. Absences related to caring for a family member who has an illness, health condition, or medical appointment due to COVID-19, other communicable disease, or other emergency health condition related to school facility closures;
3. Absences related to the student’s family obligations during regularly schedule school hours that are temporarily necessary because of school facility closures, until other arrangements can be made; and
4. Absences due to the student’s parent’s work schedule or other obligations during regularly scheduled school hours, until other arrangements can be made.

If an absence is excused, the student will be permitted to make up all missed assignments outside of class under reasonable conditions and time limits established by the appropriate teacher. If a student misses a participation-type class, they can request an alternative assignment that aligns with the learning goals of the activity missed where reasonable.

An excused absence must be verified by a parent/guardian or an adult, emancipated or appropriately aged student, or school authority responsible for the absence. If attendance is taken electronically, either for a course conducted online or for students physically within the district, and absence will default to unexcused until such time as an excused absence may be verified by a

parent/guardian or other responsible adult. If a student is to be released for health care related to family planning or abortion, the student may require that the district keep the information confidential. Students thirteen and older have the right to keep information about drug, alcohol or mental health treatment confidential. Student fourteen and older have the same confidentiality rights regarding HIV and sexually transmitted diseases.

Unexcused Absences

1. An absence is unexcused if it does not meet the criteria above for an excused absence.
2. A student whose absence is not excused may experience the consequences of their absence. A student's grade may be affected if a graded activity or assignment occurs during the period of time when the student is absent.
3. The district's procedures for addressing and attempting to ameliorate unexcused absences is set forth in Procedure 3122P.

Students dependent pursuant to Chapter 13.34, RCW

A school district representative or school employee will review unexpected or excessive absences with a student who is subject to dependency proceedings (as defined by RCW 26A.150.510) and the adults involved with the student. This includes the student's caseworker(s), educational liaison(s), attorney(s) if appointed, parent/guardian, foster parents and/or the person providing placement for the student. The purpose of the review is to determine the cause of the absences, taking into account unplanned school transitions, periods of running from care, in-patient treatment, incarceration, school adjustment, educational gaps, psychosocial issues, and the student's unavoidable appointments that occur during the school day. The representative or staff member must proactively support the student's management of their school work so the student does not fall behind.

Migrant Students

The district, parent/guardian and student are encouraged to work to create an Extended Absence Agreement with the school to decrease the risk of an adverse effect on the student's educational progress.

The Superintendent or designee will enforce the district's attendance policies and procedures. Because the full knowledge and cooperation of students and parents/guardians are necessary for the success of the policies and procedures, they will be disseminated broadly and made available to parents/guardians and students annually.

Cross References:	Board Policy 2342	Religious Holidays and Observances
	Board Policy 2420	Grading and Progress Reports
	Board Policy 3120	Enrollment
	Board Policy 3230	Student Privacy and Searches
	Board Policy 3241	Student Discipline

