

Excused and Unexcused Absences

Students are expected to attend all assigned classes each day. School staff will keep a record of absence and tardiness, including a call log and/or a record of excuse statements submitted by a parent/guardian, or in certain cases, students, to document a student's excused absences.

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. The following principles will govern the development and administration of attendance procedures within the district:

A. The following are valid excuses for absences:

1. Participation in a district or school approved activity or instructional program;
2. Illness, health condition or medical appointment (including but not limited to medical, counseling, dental or optometry);
3. Family emergency, including but not limited to a death or illness in the family;
4. Religious or cultural purpose including observance of a religious or cultural holiday or participation in religious or cultural instruction;
5. Court, judicial proceeding or serving on a jury;
6. Post-secondary, technical school or apprenticeship program visitation, or scholarship interview;
7. State-recognized search and rescue activities consistent with RCW 28A.225.055;
8. Absence directly related to the student's homeless status;
9. Absence resulting from a disciplinary/corrective action. (e.g., short-term or long-term suspension, emergency expulsion); and
10. Principal (or designee) and parent, guardian, or emancipated youth mutually agreed upon approved activity.

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

- A. 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 except that in participation-type classes a student's grade may be affected because of the student's inability to make up the activities conducted during a class period.
- B. An excused absence will 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, an absence will default to unexcused until such time as an excused absence may be verified by a parent 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. Students fourteen and older have the same confidentiality rights regarding HIV and sexually transmitted diseases.

Unexcused Absences

- A. 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.
- B. As a means of instilling values of responsibility and personal accountability, a student whose absence is not excused will experience the consequences of his/her 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.
- C. The school will notify a student's parent or guardian in writing or by telephone whenever the student has failed to attend school after one unexcused absence within any month during the current school year. The notification will include the potential consequences of additional unexcused absences.
- D. A conference with the parent or guardian will be held after two unexcused absences within any month during the current school year. A student may be suspended or expelled for habitual truancy. Prior to suspension or expulsion, the parent will be notified in writing in his/her primary language that the student has unexcused absences. A conference will be scheduled to determine what corrective measures should be taken to ameliorate the cause for the student's absences from school. If the parent does not attend the conference, the parent will be notified of the steps the district has decided to take to reduce the student's absences.
- E. Not later than the student's fifth unexcused absence in a month the district will enter into an agreement with the student and parents that establishes school attendance requirements, refer the student to a community truancy board or file a petition and affidavit with the juvenile court alleging a violation of RCW 28A.225.010.
- F. If such action is not successful, the district will file a petition and affidavit with the juvenile court alleging a violation of RCW 28A.225.010 by the parent, student or parent and student no later than the seventh unexcused absence within any month during the current school year or upon the tenth unexcused absence during the current school year.
- G. All suspensions and/or expulsions will be reported in writing to the superintendent within 24 hours after imposition.

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

Students dependent pursuant to Chapter 13.34, RCW

A school district representative or certificated staff member will review unexpected or excessive absences of a student who has been found dependent under the Juvenile Court Act with that student and adults involved with that student. Adults includes the student's caseworker, educational liaison, attorney if one is appointed, parent or guardians, foster parents and/or the person providing placement for the student. The review will take into consideration the cause of the absences, 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.

Cross References: 3240- Student Conduct Expectations and Reasonable Sanctions
3241 - Classroom Management, Discipline and Corrective Action
3230 - Student Privacy and Searches
3120 - Enrollment

Legal References: RCW 13.34.300 Relevance of failure to cause juvenile to attend school to neglect petition

RCW 28A.225.105 Attendance mandatory – six or seven year olds – unexcused absences – Petition.

RCW 28A.225.010 Attendance mandatory – Age –Exceptions

RCW 28A.225.020 School's duties upon child's failure to attend school.

RCW 28A.225.023 Youth dependent pursuant to Chapter 12.34 RCW – Review of unexpected or excessive absences – Support for youth's school work.

RCW 28A.225.055 Search and rescue activities

WAC 392-400-325 Statewide definition of excused and unexcused daily absences

Management Resources: 2015 – June Issue
2012 - December Issue
2011 - December Issue
Policy News, June 2001 More Tweaking of Becca Petitions

Rochester School District
Adoption Date: February 27, 2008
Classification: Essential
Revised: 09/11; 04/12; 3/13; 08/15