

4.2.4--Attendance – Middle School – Grades 6, 7, and 8

I. Excessive Absences:

- A. Eleven (11) or more total absences in a semester will be considered excessive. A student's parent or guardian may petition the school for additional absences before the student has accumulated 10 absences. Exceptions are allowed to satisfy an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) or 504 Plan.
- B. Students who accumulate more than ten (10) "regular school absences" and/or "truancy absences" in a class for the semester may not be eligible for credit in that class.
- C. Denial of credit may affect promotion or credits toward graduation.
- D. Juvenile Court authorities will be notified of all absences in which students under the age of eighteen (18) exceed the ten (10) day limit.

II. Classification of absences that will count toward the ten (10) day limit in which credit for the course may be denied:

- A. Excused Absences—An excused absence is defined as any time the student is not present in class excluding trancies and the types of absences identified in Section III of this policy. Written documentation of parental consent must be submitted to the attendance office within five (5) days of the day the student returns to school. Students may have six (6) parent permission notes per semester. Any absence after six (6) without a doctor's note will be unexcused.
- B. Unexcused Absence—An unexcused absence is defined as anytime a student is absent from school without the knowledge of the parent/guardian. This may include anytime a student is not in his/her assigned class during the school day.
- C. All absences not described as excused are unexcused.

III. Classification of Absences that DO NOT count toward the ten (10) day limit.

The following classification of absences will NOT count toward the ten (10) day limit in which credit for the course may be denied:

- A. Campus Activity – School sponsored field trips, assemblies, contest, or any other school activity as determined by the building principal.
- B. Medical – Student absences due to the directive of the student's medical doctor or doctor/dental appointments. Documentation of doctor/dental appointments must indicate the day and time the student was seen in the doctor/dental office. Appropriate written documentation from doctor/dental office must be submitted to the attendance office the day the student returns to school.
- C. Legal – Student absences due to court or legal appointments. Documentation of court/legal appointments must indicate the day and time of required student presence. Appropriate written documentation must be submitted to the attendance office the day the student returns to school.
- D. Voting - Up to one (1) time during each scheduled election, a student shall not be considered absent from school for the time the student accompanies the student's parent when the parent is exercising the parent's right to vote in a scheduled election.

In order for the absence to be considered excused, the student must:

- a) Bring a written statement to the principal or designee upon the student's return to school from the student's parent, legal guardian, or treating physician stating the reason for the student's absence;
- b) If the student is attending the District's courses digitally, upload a written statement from the student's parent, legal guardian, or treating physician stating the reason for the student's absence through the District's digital course management platform for review by the principal or designee; or
- c) Provide documentation as proof of a student's participation in an activity or program scheduled and approved by the 4-H program that is provided by a 4-H county extension agent, 4-H educator, or other appropriate entity associated with the 4-H activity or program.

A written statement presented or uploaded for an absence having occurred more than five (5) school days prior to its presentation or upload will not be accepted.

E. Death in family - Appropriate documentation such as copy of funeral program must be submitted to the attendance office the day the student returns to school.

F. Suspensions - Absences due to out of school suspensions will not count toward the ten (10) day limit.

G. Other extenuating circumstances as reviewed by the administration.

IV. Suspensions and Expulsions

Students who are suspended from school may make up any classwork missed during the time they are suspended.

For students who have been expelled the District shall establish programs, measures, or alternative means and methods to continue student engagement and access to education during a student's period of expulsion.

V. Notification to Parents of Student Absences

A. The student's parent/guardian shall be notified as required by law and as necessary. At a minimum this notification shall occur when the student has accumulated five (5) and eight (8) absences per class per semester.

B. Notice shall be made by telephone contact or by mail.

C. On the 8th day of absence a letter will notify student and parents that students may attend Saturday school to reverse the number of absences.

D. When a student is absent the eleventh (11th) day in a semester in a specific class, the attendance office will notify student and parent/guardian that the student has violated the attendance policy by accumulating an excessive number of absences. The letter will inform the student and parent of:

1. Credit denial for affected class(es)

2. Appeals process for credit to be reconsidered
3. Name and contact information of attendance clerk at respective school if additional information is needed

VI. Excessive Tardies and/or Early Checkouts – Grades 6, 7, and 8

Six (6) tardies/early checkouts per semester will be considered excessive.

Once a student has accumulated six (6) tardies and/or early checkouts, the students will acquire a full day absence.

Tardies are defined as students arriving between 8:00 –10:00 am.

Early Checkout will be defined as a student checking out of school between 1:00—3:00 pm.

VII. Student Responsibilities

A. Students who are denied credit for a class due to excessive absences must remain in the class in which credit was denied and complete assigned work for the remainder of the semester unless student is transferred to another educational facility or program.

B. Students who accumulate more than ten (10) absences in a class for the semester may not be eligible for credit in that class and will receive an “I” (incomplete) in semester grade column of their permanent transcript. Students may participate in an approved recovery program to regain credit status.

C. Students who wish to participate in a recovery program may apply to do so through the attendance office. The building principal or designee will determine eligibility and guidelines.

VIII. Appeal to Reinstate Credit

Students may appeal their denial of credit to the Attendance Committee. The Attendance Committee will operate under the guidelines developed and approved by the principal. The committee shall be made up of at minimum one administrator, one counselor, and one or more faculty members.

The Attendance Committee will take one of the following actions for each appeal:

- A. Uphold the decision to deny credit
- B. Overturn the decision to deny credit and grant an extension
- C. If the decision to deny credit is upheld, the student/parent will be offered a contract that will allow students to attend additional school programs held after school and/or on Saturday to recovery the credit if:

1. the student has earned a passing grade for the course and
2. the student does not accumulate any addition absences other than those noted in section III above.

FINS (Family in Need of Services)

Petitions may be filed on any student who has lost credit due to excessive absences.

Legal References: A.C.A. 6-16-1406

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