

Attendance

Definitions:

An “excused absence” occurs when the parent notifies the school telling the reason for the absence.

An “unexcused absence” occurs when the parent does not notify the school of the reason for the absence.

A “truant” student is one who has accumulated three or more unexcused absences.

A “habitually truant” student is one who has accumulated more than ten unexcused absences.

Roles and Responsibilities:

Students:

- Report to school daily and on time

Parents:

- Encourage students to attend school regularly
- Notify the teacher or administration of absence on the day of the absence or upon the student’s return to school
- Keep the school informed of current addresses and phone numbers

Teachers:

- Take attendance twice daily (A.M. and P.M.)
- Report attendance in one half or full day increments and categorize absences as either excused or unexcused
- Attempt to contact parents about students’ absences
- Maintain a hard copy of day to day attendance for the entire school year for each student
- Notify parents and administrators of excessive absenteeism whether it is excused or unexcused

Administration:

- Inform parents of the school’s attendance policy
- Keep attendance records
- Properly record absences as excused or unexcused; report attendance to the state as required by New Mexico law
- Monitor attendance of truant students
- Preside over parent conferences that result from truancy
- Notify appropriate legal authorities when necessary about habitually truant students

Attendance Procedures

Daily:

- The school day begins at 7:55 A.M. Attendance is taken after breakfast. Students arriving after 7:55 A.M. are tardy. Students are absent ½ day if they arrive near the lunch break. Students who are absent for more than 50% of the school day are absent for one day.

Accumulated absences:

- When a student is absent for three consecutive days without notification from the parent, the teacher should attempt to contact the parent or notify the administration so contact the parent.
- When a student has accumulated three unexcused absences in any period of time, the teacher will contact the parent, using the “3-Day Unexcused Absence Notification” form letter provided by the administration. A copy of the form letter will be submitted to the administration. A conference with the parent, teacher, and/or administration is scheduled.
- Subsequent form letters, if necessary, will be completed by the administration when a student accumulates five, seven, and ten unexcused absences. A conference with the parent and administration is scheduled.

Parent-to-school Communication

A parent may call the school to inform the teacher or administration that their child will be absent, stating the reason for the absence.

A parent may send a written note upon the student’s return from an absence, stating the reason for the absence.

School-to-parent Communication

Any communication (oral or written) about the unexcused absences from the school to the parent must be timely and expressed in language that is respectful and easily understood. The communication must include:

- the record of attendance that prompted the notice,
- a description of the school’s attendance policy pertinent to the situation,
- an invitation to discuss interventions that will prevent unexcused absences in the future, and
- if the communication concerns habitual truancy (ten or more unexcused absences), the communication must include a date, time, and place for the parent and administration to meet to develop intervention strategies that will work toward keeping the child in school.

Intervention

After sending the “3-Day Unexcused Absence Notification” form letter, the teacher and/or principal will meet the parent:

- The attendance policy will be discussed.

- Possible reasons for the absenteeism will be discussed in order to determine a way to correct the problem with attendance.

The student's subsequent attendance will be monitored. The "Attendance Monitor" form will be maintained to document communication and/or action by the school or parent.

A similar conference will be held if a parent is notified of a student's fifth and seventh unexcused absences.

- The administration and parent will agree upon intervention strategies to undertake to correct the problem. These strategies must include, but are not limited to:
 - Parent's corrective actions,
 - School district resources that promote regular school attendance,
 - A corrective action to end truancy.

A student who accumulates ten unexcused absences during the school year is defined as "habitually truant." Again the school will notify the parents of a conference to discuss causes for the truancy and actions to correct it.

Discipline

Appropriate disciplinary measures may be invoked upon students who are truant including, but not limited to, detention, suspension of privileges, assigned duties, or in-school suspension.

If a student is unexcused after accumulating ten unexcused absences (habitually truant), the student will be reported within seven days of that absence to the juvenile probation services. The school will keep documentation concerning habitually truant students:

- Attempts of the school to notify parents (beginning with the "3 Unexcused Absences Notification" form letter),
- Attempts of the school to meet with parents to discuss causes and interventions actions, and
- Intervention actions and strategies designed to promote regular school attendance.

At no time will discipline include out-of-school suspension or expulsion.