

ABSENCES AND EXCUSES

The Board of Trustees believes that regular attendance plays an important role in student achievement. The Board shall work with parents/guardians and students to ensure their compliance with all state attendance laws, and may use appropriate legal means to correct problems of chronic absence or truancy.

(cf. 5112.1 - Exemptions from Attendance)

(cf. 5112.2 - Exclusions from Attendance)

(cf. 5113.1 - Chronic Absence and Truancy)

Excused Absences

Absence from school shall be excused only for health reasons, family emergencies, and justifiable personal reasons, as permitted by law, Board policy, and administrative regulations. (Education Code 48205)

Inasmuch as class participation is an integral part of students' learning experiences, parents/guardians and students shall be encouraged to schedule medical appointments during nonschool hours.

At the beginning of each school year, the Superintendent or designee shall send a notification to the parents/guardians of all students, and to all students in grades 7-12, informing them that school authorities may excuse any student from school to obtain confidential medical services without the consent of the student's parent/guardian. (Education Code 46010.1) Such notice shall be on a separate sheet of paper from other notifications and shall be in large bold print.

(cf. 5145.6 - Parental Notifications)

Students shall not be absent from school without their parents/guardians' knowledge or consent except in cases of medical emergency or confidential medical appointment.

Absences for confidential medical appointments may be excused when requested by the student. When excusing students for confidential medical services or verifying such appointments, district staff shall not ask the purpose of such appointments. Staff may contact a doctor or medical office in order to verify the time of the appointment only and may request students to bring a time stamped not from their health appointment.

When a student requests to leave for a confidential medical appointment, staff members will check the student's records to ascertain whether or not a parent/guardian of the student has opted to put a letter in their student's file to be given to the student upon request to leave for a confidential medical appointment. This letter shall be placed in the student's record in an unsealed envelope. If so, the staff member will ask the student to read the letter prior to leaving for the appointment. The letter will then be returned to the student's file in the unsealed envelope. If the student still wishes to leave for the appointment, he/she will be allowed to do so.

ABSENCES AND EXCUSES (continued)

When a student volunteers confidential medical information to a district staff member, the staff member should suggest that the student consult his/her parent/guardian or doctor, or seek medical advice from the city or county department of health.

Student absence for religious instruction or participation in religious exercises away from school property may be considered excused subject to law and administrative regulations. (Education Code 46014)

Effect of Absence on Grades/Credits

If a student's absence is excused under Education Code 48205, he/she shall be allowed to complete any missed assignment or test that can be reasonably given, as determined by the teacher of that class. The student shall be given full credit for the assignment or test if he/she satisfactorily completes the assignment or test within a reasonable period of time. (Education Code 48205)

A student's grades may be affected by excessive unexcused absences in accordance with Board policy.

(cf. 5121 - Grades/Evaluation of Student Achievement)
(cf. 6154 - Homework/Makeup Work)

Legal Reference: (see next page)

ABSENCES AND EXCUSES (continued)

Legal Reference:

EDUCATION CODE

1740 *Employment of personnel to supervise attendance (county superintendent)*
2550-2558.6 *Computation of revenue limits*
37201 *School month*
37223 *Weekend classes*
41601 *Reports of average daily attendance*
42238-42250.1 *Apportionments*
46000 *Records (attendance)*
46010-46014 *Absences*
46100-46119 *Attendance in kindergarten and elementary schools*
46140-46147 *Attendance in junior high and high schools*
48200-48208 *Children ages 6-18 (compulsory full-time attendance)*
48210-48216 *Exclusions from attendance*
48240-48246 *Supervisors of attendance*
48260-48273 *Truants*
48292 *Filing complaint against parent*
48320-48324 *School attendance review boards*
48340-48341 *Improvement of student attendance*
49067 *Unexcused absences as cause of failing grade*
49701 *Provisions of the interstate compact on educational opportunities for military children*

ELECTIONS CODE

12302 *Student participation on precinct boards*

FAMILY CODE

6920-6929 *Consent by minor*

VEHICLE CODE

13202.7 *Driving privileges; minors; suspension or delay for habitual truancy*

WELFARE AND INSTITUTIONS CODE

601-601.4 *Habitually truant minors*
11253.5 *Compulsory school attendance*

CODE OF REGULATIONS, TITLE 5

306 *Explanation of absence*
420-421 *Record of verification of absence due to illness and other causes*

ATTORNEY GENERAL OPINIONS

87 *Ops. Cal. Atty. Gen.* 168 (2004)
66 *Ops. Cal. Atty. Gen.* 244 (1983)

COURT DECISIONS

American Academy of Pediatrics et al v. Lungren et al (1997) 16 Cal.4th 307

Management Resources:

CSBA PUBLICATIONS

Improving Student Achievement by Addressing Chronic Absence, Policy Brief, December 2010

WEB SITES

CSBA: <http://www.csba.org>

ABSENCES AND EXCUSES

Excused Absences

A student's absence shall be excused for the following reasons:

1. Personal illness (Education Code 48205)
2. Quarantine under the direction of a county or city health officer (Education Code 48205)

(cf. 5112.2 - Exclusions from Attendance)

3. Medical, dental, optometrical, or chiropractic appointment (Education Code 48205)
4. Attendance at funeral services for a member of the immediate family, which shall be limited to one day if the service is conducted in California or three days if the service is conducted out of state (Education Code 48205)

Immediate family shall be defined as mother, father, grandmother, grandfather, spouse, son/son-in-law, daughter/daughter-in-law, brother, sister, or any relative living in the student's immediate household. (Education Code 45194, 48205)

5. Jury duty in the manner provided by law (Education Code 48205)
6. The illness or medical appointment during school hours of a child to whom the student is the custodial parent (Education Code 48205)

(cf. 5146 - Married/Pregnant/Parenting Students)

7. Upon advance written request by the parent/guardian and the approval of the principal or designee, justifiable personal reasons including, but not limited to: (Education Code 48205)
 - a. Appearance in court
 - b. Attendance at a funeral service
 - c. Observation of a holiday or ceremony of his/her religion
 - d. Attendance at religious retreats not to exceed four hours per semester
 - e. Attendance at an employment conference
 - f. Attendance at an educational conference offered by a nonprofit organization on the legislative or judicial process

ABSENCES AND EXCUSES (continued)

8. Service as a member of a precinct board for an election pursuant to Elections Code 12302 (Education Code 48205)

(cf. 6142.3 - Civic Education)

9. To spend time with his/her immediate family member who is an active duty member of the uniformed services, as defined in Education Code 49701, and has been called to duty for deployment to a combat zone or a combat support position or is on leave from or has immediately returned from such deployment (Education Code 48205)

(cf. 6173.2 - Education of Children of Military Families)

Method of Verification

When a student who has been absent returns to school, he/she shall present a satisfactory explanation verifying the reason for the absence. Absences shall be verified by the student's parent/guardian, other person having control of the minor, or the student if age 18 or older. (Education Code 46012; 5 CCR 306)

The following methods may be used to verify student absences:

1. Written note, fax, email, or voice mail from parent/guardian or parent representative.
2. Conversation, in person or by telephone, between the verifying employee and the student's parent/guardian or parent representative. The employee shall subsequently record the following:
 - a. Name of student
 - b. Name of parent/guardian or parent representative
 - c. Name of verifying employee
 - d. Date(s) of absence
 - e. Reason for absence
3. Visit to the student's home by the verifying employee, or any other reasonable method which establishes the fact that the student was absent for the reasons stated. The employee shall document the verification and include the information specified in item #2 above.
4. Physician's verification.

ABSENCES AND EXCUSES (continued)

When excusing students for confidential medical services or verifying such appointments, district staff shall not ask the purpose of such appointments but may contact a medical office to confirm the time of the appointment.