



**Subject:** Absences and Excuses for Seat-Based Programs

**Effective Date:** February 14, 2019

**Approved By:** Board of Directors

**Policy:** 5026.1

### **Compulsory Attendance**

The Board of Directors believes that regular attendance plays a key role in student achievement. The Board recognizes its responsibility under the law to ensure that students attend school regularly. Parents/guardians of children aged six (6) to eighteen (18) are obligated to send their children to school unless otherwise provided by law. The Board shall abide by all state attendance laws and may use appropriate legal means to correct problems of excessive absence or truancy (EC 48200). The Board recognizes that all excessive absences, whether excused or unexcused, place students at risk of not graduating and will, therefore, make a concerted effort to keep students in school.

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. (EC 46010, 48216, 48205)

Class participation is an integral part of pupils' learning experience. Parents/guardians and pupils shall be encouraged to schedule medical appointments during non-school hours. Excessive absences, whether excused or unexcused, may affect a student's grades.

Pursuant to the Board of Education Policy 5026.1, corresponding Administrative Regulations 5026.1, will govern the operating procedures in regard to pupil absences and excuses.

Legal Reference:        *Education Code*  
                                 46010-46015 Absences  
                                 48200-48231 Compulsory Education Law

In accordance with the Board of Education's Policy 5026.1, the following Administrative Regulations will be followed in reference to student absences and excuses:

### **Notification of Absences and Excuses Procedures Concerning Confidentiality**

At the beginning of each academic year, notifications shall be sent to the parents/guardians of all pupils in grades 7 through 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, according to Education Code Section 46010.1.

### **Notification of Absences and Excuses Procedures Concerning Religious Purposes**

At the beginning of each academic year, notifications shall be sent to parents or guardians of all TK-12 pupils informing them of the administrative regulations regarding excuses and absences for religious purposes. Student absence for religious instruction or participation in religious exercises away from school property may be considered excused subject to administrative regulations and law. (Education Code 46014)

### **Parent Knowledge and Consent**

Students in grades TK-6 should not be absent from school without their parents/guardians' knowledge or consent, except in cases of medical emergency.

Students in grades 7-12 should not be absent from school without their parents/guardians' knowledge or consent, except in cases of medical emergency or confidential medical appointment.

### **Student Attendance and Excused Absences**

Student attendance is monitored to ensure compliance with state attendance laws and to correct problems of excessive absence or truancy. In accordance with state law, a student's absence shall be excused for the following reasons:

1. Personal illness. (Education Code 46010)
2. Quarantine under the direction of a county or city health officer. (Education Code 46010)
3. Medical, dental, optometric, or chiropractic appointments. (Education Code 46010)
4. Attendance at funeral services for a member of the immediate family. (Education Code 46010)
  - a. Excused absence in this instance 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 46010)
  - b. "Immediate family" shall be defined as mother, father, grandmother, grandfather, spouse, son/son-in-law, daughter/daughter-in-law, and brother, sister or any relative living in the student's immediate household. (Education Code 46010)
5. Jury duty as required by law for 18 year-olds or older. (Education Code 46010)
6. Exclusion from school to obtain required immunizations, if the absence is not more than five days. (Education Code 46010)

7. Approved participation in a school co-curricular activity in which the student represents the school or district including athletic events, fine arts and/or vocational exhibits or performances, and academic competitions. (Education Code 35330)

A student's absence shall be excused for justifiable personal reasons, including but not limited to: (Education Code 6010)

1. Appearance in court either as a defendant or as a subpoenaed witness.
2. Observation of a holiday or a ceremony of the student's religion.
3. Attendance at a funeral service for a person other than a member of the student's immediate family.
4. Attendance at religious retreats for no more than four hours during a semester.
5. Participation in an employment conference when requested in writing by the parent and approved in advance by the Principal.
6. Absences while the student is in Juvenile Hall, Children's Shelter, other shelter care or other custodial facilities.

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

1. Due to the illness or medical appointment during school hours of a child of whom the pupil is the custodial parent.
2. For the purpose of serving as a member of a precinct board for an election pursuant to Section 12302 of the Elections Code.
3. For the purpose of spending time with a member of the pupil's immediate family, who is an active duty member of the uniformed services, as defined in Section 49701, and has been called to duty for, is on leave from, or has immediately returned from deployment to a combat zone or combat support position. Absences granted pursuant to this paragraph shall be granted for a period of time to be determined at the discretion of the Principal.
4. For the purpose of attending the pupil's naturalization ceremony to become a United State citizen.

### **Clearing Absences**

When pupils, who have not been cleared for an absence prior to being absent, return to school, they must present a satisfactory explanation verifying the reason for the absence.

Absences for all pupils must be cleared within **five (5) school days**, from the date of the absence. After five (5) school days, an un-cleared absence will be recorded as unexcused.

The following methods will be accepted as verification of student absences:

1. A written note from the parent/guardian or parent representative. (Education Code 46012)
2. A conversation, in person or by telephone, between the verifying employee and the student's parent/guardian or parent representative. The school district 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 or dates of absence
  - e. Reason for absence
3. A visit to the student's home by the verifying school or District employee.
  4. Any other reasonable method that establishes the fact that the student was actually absent for the reasons stated. A written record shall be made, including the information outlined above.
  5. A physician's verification. Absence for a confidential medical appointment may require verification by the student's physician. When excusing pupils 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 only to verify the time of the appointment.

### **The 10% Policy**

To be implemented at the 20th day of instruction of the school year.

When a student has accrued absences due to illness verified by the methods listed in paragraphs one (1) through five (5) above, equal to or surpassing ten percent (10%) of the school days during which the student was enrolled, from the date of enrollment to the current date, subsequent absences must be verified by a physician, health professional, school nurse, or other school personnel.

Absences must be cleared daily, unless other arrangements are made with the school principal or designee. Failure to provide verification from a physician, health professional, school nurse or other school personnel, will result in said additional absences being recorded as unexcused. When a student has absences equal to or surpassing the 10% limit as described above, for excusable reasons other than illness, the student and parent may be referred to MTSS (Multi-Tiered System of Support) Team for a case review.

Placing a student under the requirement of the ten percent (10%) policy or removing a student from said requirements and procedures prior to the end of the current academic year shall be left to the discretion of the school site principal.

### **Verification of Absence By 18-Year-Olds**

No pupils, including those 18 years old and older, may verify their own absence, except or legally emancipated youth. It is acceptable for 18-year-old pupils to document their reasons for absences, either in the form of a note or phone call. However, said absences must be verified by any of the following persons:

1. A school or public health nurse
2. An attendance clerk
3. An attendance supervisor

4. A physician
5. A principal
6. A teacher
7. Any other qualified employee of the school assigned to make such verification or a substitute for such employee

**Multi-Tiered System of Support**

The Superintendent or designee shall implement whatever steps are deemed appropriate to keep pupils in school, including communication with parents/guardians and the use of a MTSS (Multi-Tiered System of Support) Team and/or a SARB (Students Attendance Review Board).

**School Attendance Review Board**

The School shall maintain a School Attendance Review Board as allowed by law in order to meet the special needs of pupils with school attendance and/or school behavior problems. When the student's attendance problems cannot be resolved, or the student and parent/guardian have failed to respond to directives to correct the problem, a student who has been classified as truant may be referred to the District Attorney or Probation Officer.