

# S-4: Administrative Procedures

## Student Attendance and Exemption From School



### REFERENCES

[Board Policy S-4](#)

### DEFINITIONS

**Absence:** The failure of a school-age child assigned to a class or class period to attend a class or class period. "Absence" or "absent" does not mean multiple tardies used to calculate an absence for the sake of truancy.

**Excused Absence:** An absence from school that is accompanied by a valid excuse which may include a physical or mental illness, family death, family event, observance of a religious holiday, an approved school activity, or an excuse consistent with the student's IEP or Section 504 accommodation plan.

**Truant:** A condition in which a school-age child, without a valid excuse, is absent for at least half the day. A school-age child may not be considered truant more than one time during the day.

**Home School:** An alternative to public school education in which a child between the ages of six and 18 is taught at home and officially exempt from compulsory public-school attendance.

**Parent:** For purposes of these administrative procedures and the corresponding board policy, "parent" means:

- A. a biological or adoptive parent;
- B. a legal guardian or other individual legally authorized to make educational decisions for the child;
- C. an individual, with whom the child lives, who is acting as a parent in the absence of a natural parent or a guardian;
- D. a foster parent if the authority of the biological or adoptive parents to make educational decisions on the child's behalf has been terminated or specifically limited by a court order;
- E. in the absence of any individual qualified under parts A-D, a surrogate parent appointed pursuant to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act; and/or
- F. a stepparent if the stepparent is present on a day-to-day basis with the natural parent and child, and the other parent is absent from the home. A stepparent who is not present on a day-to-day basis in the home of the child does not have rights under Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) with respect to the child's education records. Stepparents without guardianship of a child do not have the authority to enroll or register a child in school.

"Parent" does not include the state or any political subdivision of government.

**School day:** The portion of a day that school is in session in which a school-age child is required to be in school for purposes of receiving instruction.

**School-age child:** A minor who is at least six years old but younger than 18 years old; and is not emancipated.

**Truancy Notification:** Notification issued in accordance with state law to a student and his or her parent for truancy violations.

**Unexcused Absence:** Any absence without a legitimate or valid excuse.

### PROCEDURES FOR IMPLEMENTATION

#### I. School-Wide Attendance Plan

- A. Upon registration, the school or district must provide parents and students with a copy of Board Policy S-4: Student Attendance and Exemption from School and these administrative procedures.
- B. Each school must widely publish the compulsory education notice in school newsletters, in other publications sent to the community and patrons, and on school/district websites.
- C. Each school must have a plan to monitor and track student attendance, and develop appropriate interventions, and incentives to help students who may have attendance issues and/or are truant from school. (See, Section V.)
- D. Teachers must accurately record student attendance daily for students in elementary schools, and during each class period at the secondary level.
- E. School staff will follow guidelines for absence reporting and coding, including resolving student absences, as established by the student information systems department.  
Absences are coded as "A" = Unexcused; "E" = Excused; "S" = Suspension; and "L" = Late.
- F. Teachers must provide make-up work and may not penalize students for work they missed when an absence is excused. Regardless of the type of absence, teachers are encouraged to allow their students to make-up missed assignments.

## **II. Attendance – In Person Learning**

- A. Parents and their student(s) are jointly responsible for ensuring the student's regular attendance at school.
  - 1. Students enrolled in home school or private school may also enroll in a district school for dual enrollment purposes. Students may be enrolled in only one school district; dual enrollment does not include simultaneous enrollment in two school districts.
- B. Students may be excused from school attendance for valid and legitimate reasons, including illness, which may be either mental or physical; the mental or behavioral health of a student; medical appointments; family emergencies; the death of a family member or close friend; observance of religious holidays; family events; an approved school activity; or an absence permitted by a school-age child's individualized education plan, or accommodation plan.
- C. School personnel must provide interpreters, translations, or other necessary services to parents in order to allow them to effectively communicate with the school regarding their students' absence(s). Level of English proficiency or other language barriers should not result in a student's absence being coded as unexcused.
- D. All absences are considered unexcused until the parent communicates with the school regarding the student's absence, and the absence is resolved by the school staff.
- E. Parents are encouraged to submit a written statement at least one school day before the scheduled absence, especially an extended absence.
- F. The school shall record an excused absence for a scheduled family event or a scheduled proactive visit to a healthcare provider when a parent provides the written statement.
  - 1. Documentation from a medical professional is not required to substantiate a valid excuse of a mental or physical illness.
- G. Parents must excuse each day of their student's absence.
- H. Students with excused absences will be allowed the opportunity to make-up work and assignments, however, it is their responsibility to obtain make-up work from their teachers. Teachers will maintain reasonable access and availability for students to obtain their make-up assignments.
- I. A 'no grade' ('NG') can replace a letter grade when a student has a long-term excused absence but cannot be used as a consequence for unexcused absences. An NG does not convey credit or affect a student's grade point average.
- J. Parents wishing to have their student participate in family travel or activities that will require the student to miss between four and 10 consecutive days of school, must notify the principal or designee to make prior arrangements with the principal for the student's absence.
  - 1. The principal will determine if these extended absences will adversely impact the student's education. While some assignments may be made-up, some class experiences cannot be replicated, and a student's progress may suffer. Teachers may offer alternative assignments for classroom activities that cannot be replicated.
  - 2. Regardless of prior arrangements, if a student's excused absence exceeds ten days, at the principal's discretion the student may be withdrawn from school.
    - a. A student who has been withdrawn by the principal may be re-enrolled when the student returns to school.
- K. If a parent fails to make prior arrangements with the principal for extended student absences and if the school cannot locate the parent or student to verify the reason for the student's prolonged absence, the student's absence is unexcused. Under these circumstances, if a student's unexcused absence extends beyond 10 consecutive school days, the student's enrollment at the school will be withdrawn.
  - 1. Schools must send a written 10-day withdrawal notification to parents. This notification must be sent by certified mail or verification of personal delivery.
  - 2. Schools should use the 10-day withdrawal form in PowerSchool to notify parents.
  - 3. Schools must accurately report student membership in the district's student information system.
- L. A student who is currently enrolled in a district school, is confined to home or hospitalized, and has been absent or expects to be absent for more than 10 consecutive school days due to an illness, injury, or disability, may qualify for the district's hospital/homebound program. Parents should provide a written request for services signed by the student's attending physician to the district's student services department as soon as possible.
- M. Upon written request of a parent, a secondary student may be released for one instructional period so that the student may attend classes in religious instruction. Such requests should be provided to principal each school year that a release is being sought.
- N. The district shall annually report the following data to the Utah State Board of Education:
  - 1. absences with a valid excuse; and
  - 2. absences without a valid excuse.

### **III. Attendance in Online Middle School and High School Programs**

- A. State law and the district require that students participate regularly in all instructional activities offered through their online programs.
  - 1. Regular participation in the district's online program is defined as a student logging into the appropriate Learning Management System (i.e., Canvas or SeeSaw) at least every two school days and making academic progress toward completing the course.
- B. If a student is not participating regularly in a particular course, the following will occur:
  - 1. The teacher will inform the appropriate school personnel that the student has not logged into a course for three consecutive days or is falling behind in the expected work.
    - a. The student's parents will be contacted either by phone or email to discuss the student's participation in the program.
      - i. If the parent is unresponsive, a certified letter will be mailed to the parent outlining the situation.
    - b. The student may be connected with a teacher for tutoring, if necessary.
  - 2. If the student does not log in or complete work after five days, the student will be referred to the student's designated case manager.
  - 3. The student will be dropped from the course after ten consecutive days of non-participation.

### **IV. Learner Validated Enrollment Plan**

- A. When a student is being educated through a remote/virtual learning environment at the school the student typically attends in person, the district will track the student's attendance at live or synchronous sessions and through the completion of independent or asynchronous work.
  - 1. Teachers are expected to take and reconcile attendance each day; accurate enrollment data must be maintained in the district's student information system.
  - 2. Students will be required to complete an assignment that demonstrates their understanding of the day's learning.
  - 3. Teachers will record attendance weekly but will be able to update the attendance logs for any student completing the required assignment(s) within ten school days. Once ten school days have passed, the student will be marked absent for any day during which they did not demonstrate attendance.
  - 4. In a hybrid learning environment (both in-person and remote learning environments), we will also include in-person class attendance as part of the measurement.
  - 5. Parents can review their student's attendance record in the PowerSchool Parent Portal and can also observe their student's daily activity in Canvas.

### **V. Efforts to Resolve Chronic Absenteeism**

- A. School administrators will work with students and parents to resolve chronic absenteeism. School administrators will work with office staff, counselors, and classroom teachers to ensure a welcoming environment for students with chronic absenteeism and their parents. School-wide responses should encourage classroom connectedness activities.
- B. Efforts to resolve chronic absenteeism of a school-age child shall include, as reasonably feasible:
  - 1. school-wide responses that encourage classroom connectedness activities;
  - 2. student buddy systems at recess and/or lunch that support building classroom relationships, and increase a student's motivation to attend;
  - 3. counseling of the student by teacher, school counselor, social worker, and/or administrators;
  - 4. consulting with school student services council to design interventions;
  - 5. making any necessary adjustment to the curriculum and schedule to meet special needs of the student;
  - 6. considering alternatives proposed by a parent;
  - 7. monitoring the student's school attendance and providing positive reinforcement for improvement;
  - 8. school administration will schedule a meeting with the parent and student to discuss the attendance issues;
  - 9. voluntary participation in mediation, if available; and
  - 10. providing the student's parent, upon request, with a list of resources available to assist the parent in resolving the student's chronic absenteeism.
- C. In addition to the efforts described above, the district may enlist the assistance of community and law enforcement agencies in resolving attendance problems, only as appropriate and reasonably feasible.
- D. Each school will review attendance data annually to evaluate whether the school is effectively implementing attendance interventions.

**VI. Truancy Notification and Peer Court Referral Process**

- A. In accordance with state law, a school administrator, his or her designee, or a truancy specialist (hereafter collectively referred to as "school administrator") may issue a truancy notification to a student and the student's parent for chronic unexcused absences.
- B. A school/district administrator may impose administrative penalties on a school-age child who is:
  - 1. in grade 7 or above, unless the child is less than 12 years old; and
  - 2. truant.
- C. The school administrator may issue a First Truancy Notification to students in grades 7 and above, who are at least 12 years old, and who have been truant at least five times during the school year.
  - 1. Weekly attendance reviews through PowerSchool and PowerBI will identify students who have accumulated five unexcused absences.
  - 2. The list should be reviewed to verify the accuracy of the information regarding student absences, and to determine whether a First Truancy Notification should be sent.
  - 3. Student attendance will be monitored for students who receive a truancy notification and the school administrator will implement interventions as designated in the school plan.
- D. The school administrator will issue a Second Truancy Notification to students who have 10 or more days of unexcused absences.
  - 1. The school administrator will implement at least three interventions (see, section III.B.) as designated in the school plan.
  - 2. School student services council meetings and peer court may be utilized if this intervention is deemed appropriate for the student and family.
- E. The school administrator will issue a Third Truancy Notification to students who have 15 or more days of unexcused absences. This notification will be sent by certified mail or verification of personal delivery.
  - 1. School administration will meet with parent and student to develop an attendance plan and monitor for 14 school days.
    - a. School administration will contact the district family school collaboration coordinator to review interventions and determine next steps if the final intervention was unsuccessful.
  - 2. School administration and/or counselors will attempt at least one home visit prior to a court referral or a 10 day withdrawal.
  - 3. If a student under the age of 18 continues to be absent after meeting with the school administrator, a court referral may be filed with assistance from the district family and school collaboration coordinator.

**VII. Compulsory Education Violations for Students In Grades 1 through 6**

- A. In accordance with state law, parents of a school-age child may be issued a notification of a compulsory education violation if the school age child is:
  - 1. in grade 1 through 6; and
  - 2. Truant at least five times during the school year..
- B. Compulsory education notifications will be sent out on the same schedule and follow the same process as the attendance notifications outlined in Section IV above.
  - 1. All interventions and procedures required before issuance of truancy notifications must be followed prior to issuing a compulsory education notification.
  - 2. A notice of compulsory education violation issued to a parent:
    - a. shall direct the parent to:
      - i. meet with school authorities to discuss the school-age child's school attendance and problems; and
      - ii. cooperate with the district in securing regular attendance by the school-age child;
    - b. shall designate the school/district administrator with whom the parent is required to meet;
    - c. shall state that it is a class B misdemeanor for the parent to intentionally or without good cause:
      - i. fail to meet with the designated school/district administrator to discuss the school-age child's school attendance problems; or
      - ii. fail to prevent the school-age child from being truant five or more times during the remainder of the school year;
    - d. shall be served on the parent by personal service or certified mail; and
    - e. may not be issued unless the school-age child has been truant at least five times during the school year.
- C. If school/district administrators have reason to believe that, after a notice of compulsory education violation is issued, the parent has failed to make a good faith effort to ensure that the school-age child receives an appropriate education, the issuer of the compulsory education violation shall report to the Division of Child and Family Services and the appropriate district attorney in accordance with state law.

**VIII. Appeals Process for Truancy and Compulsory Education Notifications**

- A. The student and parent will have the right to appeal any truancy notification or compulsory education notification by requesting a hearing with the school's Student Services Council (SSC). This request must be made in writing and mailed or delivered to the school principal where the student is enrolled within 10 school days of receipt of the notification.
- B. The SSC will hold a hearing within 20 school days and render a decision within 20 school days following the hearing.
- C. If the decision of the SSC is not satisfactory to the student and/or parent, the decision may be appealed to a review committee appointed by the director of student services.
  - 1. This appeal must be made in writing and mailed or delivered to the director of student services within 20 school days of the decision of the school SSC.
  - 2. A review committee appointed by the director of student services may, at its option, hold a second hearing. A final administrative decision on the appeal will be rendered within 20 school days.

**IX. Exemption from School Attendance - Home Schooling - Parent or Guardian Affidavit**

- A. A student shall be excused from attendance if the student's parent files a signed and notarized affidavit with the school district of residence, consistent with state law and board policy.
- B. The affidavit must include the following affirmations of the parent:
  - 1. The school-age child will attend a home school.
  - 2. The parents assume sole responsibility for the education of the school-age child, except to the extent that a student is dual enrolled.
  - 3. The parents are solely responsible for the selection of instructional materials and textbooks, the time, place, and method of instruction, and the evaluation of the home school instruction.
- C. Affidavits should be submitted to the executive director of educational equity and student support for authorization of the exemption.
- D. A copy of the authorized exemption will be sent to the appropriate school principal(s).
- E. Schools will not enter a student on their attendance rolls if the student is exempted from school attendance.
- F. The signed and notarized affidavit filed with the district shall remain in effect as long as the school-age child attends a home school, and the district will remain the school-age child's district of residence.
- G. The student services department shall issue a certificate stating the school-age child is excused from attendance for the specific school year:
  - 1. within 30 days after receipt of a signed and notarized affidavit filed; and
  - 2. on or before August 1 each year thereafter unless the school-age child enrolls in a district school, the parent notifies the student services department that the school-age child no longer attends a home school or the district of residence has changed.

**X. Exemption from School Attendance - Other**

- A. A parent of a student over the age of 16 and who has completed the eighth grade may request that the student be granted a partial release or exemption from attending school by submitting a request to the principal. The student must attend school for part of the day or be home schooled.
- B. On an annual basis, the parent of a student over the age of 16 may request that the student be granted a full release from attending school or the principal may recommend such an exemption for any one of the following reasons:
  - 1. The student has already completed the work required for graduation from high school, or has demonstrated mastery of the required skills and competencies.
  - 2. The student is employed, and the employment provides proper influences and adequate opportunities for his or her education.
  - 3. The student has a physical or mental condition that renders the student's attendance impracticable, as certified by a physician.
  - 4. Proper influences and adequate opportunities for education are provided in connection with the school-age child's employment.
  - 5. The student is unable to benefit from attendance at school because of inability or a continuing negative attitude toward school regulations and discipline.
- C. Before recommending a student's exemption or full release from school, the school's student services committee (SSC) must review the exemption request to ensure that interventions to help the student remain in school have been attempted and documented.
- D. When a parent requests an exemption or when a principal recommends that a student be exempt, the principal or designee must contact the student's parent and attempt to schedule a parent conference.
- E. A copy of all student exemption forms must be sent to the family school collaboration coordinator or director of educational equity and access.

- F. If an exempted student later wishes to return to a district school and the student's class has not yet graduated, the student must contact the principal to gain readmission.
  - 1. If the student or parent is not satisfied with the principal's decision, the student or parent may appeal the principal's decision to the director of student services.
- G. Students 16 to 18 years old must withdraw permanently from school and be exempted from school attendance in order to take a high school equivalency exam. See, Board Policy I-2: Credit and Graduation Requirements, and its accompanying administrative procedures for details.
- H. If the superintendent determines that a student over the age of 16 is unable to profit from attendance at school because of inability or a continuing negative attitude toward school regulations and discipline, the student may be exempt from school attendance.

**XI. Students with Qualified Disabilities**

If students with disabilities under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, or students protected under either Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act or the Americans with Disabilities Act have excessive absences and fall within the criteria of these procedures, the appropriate team will ensure that these procedures are applied in a manner consistent with all applicable state and federal laws and regulations.