

2900 Attendance

Admission Washington County School District - Adopted 9-8-98; Revised 1-12-99; Revised 2-12-02; Revised 2-13-07; Revised 12-9-08; Revised 10-13-09; Revised 11-8-11; Revised 3-5-13; Revised 6-16-15; Revised 6-25-15; Revised 10-11-16; Revised 08-28-17.

1. Purpose & Philosophy:

The Washington County School Board believes that student learning and achievement is directly related to attendance. WCSD strives to make every effort to be in compliance with state law as well as work proactively together with parents, community resources; ~~including the Fifth District Court~~ to encourage the regular attendance of all Washington County students. The District believes this to be in the best interest of the students and the community. The Board, together with Washington County Schools, is committed to work in harmony with parents/guardian and to assist them with their responsibility to have their children in attendance at school.

2. Policy:

2.1. The "State Compulsory Education Requirements" (Utah Code, Section 53A-11-101) directs parents and schools as follows:

2.1.1. A person having control of a minor who has reached the age of six years, but has not reached the age of eighteen years, shall send the minor to a public or regularly established private school during the school year of the district in which the minor resides.

2.1.2. It is a class B misdemeanor for a person having control of a minor under subsection (1) to intentionally or recklessly fail to comply with the requirements of chapters 53A-11.

2.1.3. A ~~designee for the~~ local board of education shall report ~~qualifying~~ cases of willful noncompliance to the appropriate city, county, or district attorney ~~involving minor's ages 14 and under~~.

2.2. Utah Code 53A-15-1501 Parental Rights in Education grants that the parent or guardian has the right to reasonable academic accommodations. The Washington County School district recognizes that the parent or guardian is the primary person responsible for the education of their student, and the school is in a secondary and supportive role to the parent or guardian. This includes the parent's right to excuse the parent's child from school ~~for valid reasons as per 3.3~~.

2.2.1. Students are responsible for the completion of any work missed due to absence, regardless of the reason for the absence (excused, unexcused, truant). ~~Students with absences prior to the midterm week will be allowed to submit completed make-up work through the midterm grading period. Students with absences following the midterm week will be allowed to submit completed make-up work through the end of the current grading period.~~

~~The school is encouraged to provide opportunities for students to make up lost time and assignments; such as: lunch-time or after school make-up. (not new – moved)~~

~~3.2.3~~ **2.2.2.** A parent, teacher, or a school administrator may request a conference to discuss the attendance of a student whom they deem to have an excessive number of absences; **and** follow the additional steps outlined in ~~2.3.~~ **procedures as per** of this policy.

2.4.3. Policy Dissemination.

~~2.4.1.~~ This policy will be posted in a prominent place at each school within the District. The policy will also be published in student registration materials; student, parent, and employee handbooks; on the school website, and in other appropriate school publications as directed by the Superintendent.

3. Definitions and Explanations: (Re-ordered)

~~3.2.1.~~ **1.** Absences. An absence is defined as any time a student is not in attendance in the classroom to which he or she has been assigned. In order for an absence to be considered an excused absence, the school must be notified by the parent in a timely manner, consistent with state law and this policy.

~~3.2.1.1.~~ **1.** A parent will be notified by automated phone or e-mail every time the parent's student is absent without excuse. A parent is responsible to provide the school with a current phone number. Parents are encouraged to monitor their student's attendance from this notification on, and are invited to call the attendance secretary at the school as often as necessary to improve the student's attendance.

3.2 Chronic absenteeism. Student misses ten (10) percent or more school days. Excessive absences (whether excused or unexcused) are calculated into federal, state, and district chronic absenteeism reports.

~~3.3.2.1.~~ **3.2.1.** Chronic absenteeism ~~that~~ **which** affects the student's academic performance and educational progress at which point the school may provide **will prompt** interventions as per policy procedures.

~~3.3.2.~~ Excused absence. The school shall record ~~and~~ **an** excused absence **for valid reasons, as listed below**, when **the parent/guardian**:

3.3.1. Submits a written statement at least one school day before a scheduled family event (including an extended absence) or a scheduled proactive visit to a health care provider if the student agrees to make up course work for school days missed for the scheduled absence in accordance with this policy 2.2.1.

3.3.2. Excuses the student for illness ~~(including chronic or medical need)~~ **(such as a family death)**, and **or** for a family emergency, both of which may be excused by the parent/guardian via phone, in person or by note within a reasonable timeframe as determined by the individual school, but not to exceed one week after the absence.

3.3.2.1. Illness or accident: A student who is absent for health-related reasons for a period of five (5) or more consecutive days, who is undergoing surgery, or who has been injured in an accident, qualifies for immediate homebound services. School work will be collected for the parent to pick up or an alternative educational program may be developed.

3.3.2.2. Chronic illness. Chronic health problems may or may not interfere with attendance at school and learning in the classroom. It is extremely important that parents notify the school concerning health-related problems that their students may have. **Documentation from a health care provider is required in validating the seriousness of the chronic illness.** If the chronic illness hinders a student's attendance, the parent is invited to meet with a school administrator to formulate an individual attendance plan that will meet the student's needs. It is the responsibility of the parent to schedule such a meeting.

3.3.3. Additional valid excused absences include: an approved school activity; an absence as permitted by a school age minor's Individual Education Plan (IEP) or 504 Plan; or any other excuse established by the school district; such as: office excused (if student is detained in the office by school administration); court/detention absences; or homebound.

3.3.4. Excused absence status will not be considered with regards to implementing the required interventions; *unless* the excused absenteeism becomes so excessive that it impacts the student's ability to progress educationally and/or is affecting the student's academic performance **at which point the school may provide interventions as per policy procedures.**

Moved and clarified Pursuant to a WRITTEN request, a parent has the right to excuse a student from attendance for a scheduled family event, or scheduled proactive visit to a health care provider without requiring a note from the provider. For such an absence to be "excused," (1) the parent must provide the written statement at least one school day prior to the scheduled event, and (2) the student must agree to make up course work for the missed school days consistent with the school/district policy.

~~Students with an excused absence prior to the midterm week will be allowed to submit completed make-up work through the grading period midterm. Students with an excused absence following the midterm week will be allowed to submit completed make-up work through the end of the current grading period.~~

~~In addition, valid excuse means: illness (including chronic or medical need), family emergency, both of which may be excused via phone, in person or note within a reasonable timeframe as determined by the individual school, not to exceed one week after the absence; an approved school activity; an absence permitted by a school age minor's individual education plan or 504 plan; or any other excuse established by the school district; such as: office excused (if student is detained in the office by school administration); court/detention absences; or homebound.~~

~~3.3.2.1. Excused absence status will not be considered with regards to implementing the required interventions; including making a court referral unless it affects the student's academic performance and educational progress~~

~~If excused absenteeism becomes so excessive that it impacts the student's ability to progress educationally and/or is affecting the student's academic performance, the absences may be considered and the school may provide opportunities for students to make up lost time and assignments; such as: lunch time or after school make-up.~~

~~3.2.3. 4.~~ Unexcused absence, excessive excused absences or truancy situations. An unexcused absence is Any absence that is not excused consistent with the definitions and provisions of this policy. A parent, teacher, or a school administrator may request a conference to discuss the attendance of a student whom they deem to have an excessive number of absences; or follow the additional steps outlined in ~~2.3. of this policy.~~ **The school must provide interventions as per policy procedures.**

~~3.2.2.2.~~ Illness or accident: A student who is absent for health-related reasons for a period of five (5) or more consecutive days, who is undergoing surgery, or who has been injured in an accident, qualifies for immediate homebound services. School work will be collected for the parent to pick up or an alternative educational program may be developed.

~~3.2.2.3.~~ Chronic illness. Chronic health problems may or may not interfere with attendance at school and learning in the classroom. It is extremely important that parents notify the school concerning health-related problems that their students may have. Documentation from a health care provider is required in validating the seriousness of the chronic illness. If the chronic illness hinders a student's attendance, the parent is invited to meet with a school administrator to formulate an individual attendance plan that will meet the student's needs. It is the responsibility of the parent to schedule such a meeting.

~~3.1.~~ **5.** Tardy: A tardy is defined as reporting to class after the bell to start class has sounded.

~~3.1.1.~~ **5.1.** Tardy rationale. Tardiness not only hinders a student's ability to profit from instruction at the beginning of class, but it interrupts the work of the other students who made the effort to be on time. Research is abundantly clear that punctual students perform better in school and at work.

~~3.1.2.~~ **5.1.1.** Each school is required to establish a uniform tardy policy for the school – to include consequences. Each school's tardy policy will be included in the school's handbook. All tardies will be recorded on PowerSchool.

~~3.1.3.~~ **5.1.2.** It is the responsibility of the student and/or parent(s) to monitor tardies on PowerSchool, through progress reports, and by communication with the teacher. A tardy may be excused by a parent when an emergency situation results in a student arriving at school late. For secondary students, a student may not be excused for tardiness between classes.

~~3.3~~ **6.** Absences will be assigned the following marks on PowerSchool:

T Tardy

E Excused Absence

X Unexcused Absence

S Truant

M Medical/Chronic Illness

F Flu

H Homebound

C Court/Detention

A School Related Activity

O Office Excused

4. Procedure:

2.3. As per Utah Code Section 53A-11-103, it is the duty of a school board, school district and principal to attempt to resolve attendance problems **by documenting an earnest and persistent effort on the part of the school to implement school-based restorative practices, as reasonably feasible, which limit referrals to court and are designed to help minors take responsibility for and repair their behavior, including the following:**

- Monitor student attendance
- **Provide school/**teacher acknowledgement and reward of appropriate behavior in the area of attendance
- **Provide** counseling **to** the minor by school authorities

4.1. At five unexcused absences, issue a **mandatory** notice of compulsory education violation, by personal service or certified mail, to a parent of a school-age child if the school-age child is absent without a valid excuse, consistent with state law and school/District policy (~~See Attachment #3;~~ Mandatory Parent Notification).

The notice of compulsory education violation shall contain requirements of Section 53A-11-101.5 including:

- a. Statement that refusal to respond to the notice and subsequent follow-up, **including intentionally or recklessly failing to meet with the designated school authorities to discuss the minor's attendance or failing to prevent the minor from being absent without valid excuse five more times throughout the remainder of the school year, is a class B misdemeanor;**
- b. Statement requesting parental involvement and support;
- c. Statement directing the parent of the minor to meet with school authorities to discuss the school-age student's school attendance problems; and **cooperate in** securing regular attendance;
- d. **Designation of school authorities with whom the parent is required to meet**

4.1.1. After the mandatory notice has been received, it is required that the designated school authority meet with the parent and continue to work closely with the ~~parents~~ **them** in providing meaningful and consistent academic and behavioral programming for their child and considering alternatives proposed by the parent.

- **May provide articles, information and research regarding the negative impact that excessive absenteeism (whether excused or unexcused) is having or may have on the student's academic performance, progress and graduation.**
- Make any necessary adjustment(s) to the curriculum and schedule to meet special needs of the minor

- Provide the parent with a list of resources to assist them in resolving the minor's attendance problems, including enlisting the assistance of community agencies as appropriate; such as: voluntary participation in attendance/truancy mediation through Juvenile Justice; Division of Child and Family Services; ~~Child Protective Services~~ and others as listed on the Washington County Child and Family Public Resource Guide or Parent Resources on the WCSD Website: http://counseling.washk12.org/site_file/counseling/files/public_resource_guide2011.jpg http://counseling.washk12.org/site_file/counseling/files/wash_county_resource_list_july2014.pdf

4.2. After meeting with the parents and **after** implementing **and documenting** interventions, if the student is **then** absent without valid excuse five or more times during the remainder of the year, for students under the age of **14**, **make a referral to** the WCSD Dept. of Student Services. ~~shall be made.~~

- The referral shall be reviewed and if it is determined that reasonable efforts have been tried and failed, the department shall proceed in referring/reporting the parent/student to the Office of the Washington County Attorney.

4.3. When a student has chronic absences (10% of the total days missed) whether excused or unexcused which are affecting his educational performance, to further promote and instill positive attendance patterns an optional courtesy/**nudge** letter may be sent explaining the correlation between attendance and academic achievement and educational progression, graduation rates, **as well as an illustration comparing the individual student's attendance vs. students school-wide, state-wide or nationally.**

~~4.~~ 5. Definitions & Procedures Applicable to Only Secondary Schools:

4.5.1. Truancy. A school-age minor who **is at least 12 years old and who** is enrolled in a public school shall attend the public school in which the school-age minor is enrolled. When a student is absent from the assigned class, without parental or school knowledge and this absence does not meet the standard of an excused or exempt absence, that student is considered truant. ~~Administration must meet with parents and the student to make reasonable efforts to resolve the attendance problems as outlined in WCSD Policy 2.3.~~

Truancy is a status offense, i.e.: a noncriminal school-based action prohibited by minors. The minor may not be referred to law enforcement or court, however, may be referred to alternative school-based interventions, including restorative justice programs.

5.1.1. Habitual truant: A school-age minor is at least 12 years old and is truant at least 10 times during one school year.

5.2. Restorative Justice Programs: are school-based programs which are designed to enhance school safety, reduce school suspensions, and limit referrals to court, and more specifically with regards to compulsory education are designed to help minors take responsibility for their behavior/attendance.

Restorative justice programs address the root cause of the behavior and are intended to help students stay in school and deal with their challenges in a healthier and more constructive way.

Examples of restorative justice programs include: Mobile Crisis Outreach Team (MCOT) (i.e.: a Division of Juvenile Justice service for minors or families of minors experiencing behavioral health or psychiatric emergencies); Division of Juvenile Justice Receiving Center; Utah Youth Court (i.e.: an alternative to juvenile court for first-time offenders intended to provide youth with the resources to make better decisions); Truancy Support Centers; or comparable school-based programs which may provide support for the parents and the truant minor through counseling and community programs.

5.3. Taking a Truant Minor into Custody: An individual, such as a peace officer (sheriff or police officer), or school administrator may take a minor into custody if there is reason to believe the minor is a truant minor and release and return the minor to the principal of the minor's school of enrollment. Without unnecessary delay, the minor's parents must be notified.

If it is not appropriate to return the minor to school release the minor into the parent's custody. If the parent cannot be contacted, or is unable or unwilling to accept custody, ensure the student's safety and well-being by placing the child with an alternative restorative justice program. If none of the options mentioned are available the minor shall be referred to the Division of Child and Family Services. A minor taken into custody may not be placed in a detention center or other secure confinement facility.

~~4.1.1.~~ 5.4. Issuing Notices: Truancy prevention and intervention, such as those described in policy, must be attempted and proven unsuccessful, at which point the local school board may impose administrative penalties on a school-age minor who is at least 12 years old and who is truant at least five times during the school year. The board may authorize a school administrator, an administrator's designee, or a law enforcement officer acting as a school resource officer to issue notices or citations of truancy to school-age minors who are at least 12 years old to the minor. Nothing prohibits the local school board or school district from taking action to resolve a truancy problem with a school-age minor who has been truant less than five times, provided that the action does not conflict with the requirements; i.e. interventions/restorative practices. (UCA 53A-11-101.7)

~~Prior to issuance of a notice or citation, truancy prevention and intervention must be attempted and proven unsuccessful, including those described in Section 2.3. The school must notify parents through mail or personal service. The notice must inform the parent of the opportunity to contest the truancy; as well as include the procedure for doing so. No agent of the school may issue a notice of habitual truancy citation:~~

- ~~• Until a student has been truant at least 5 times.~~
- ~~• To a school-age minor who is less than 12 years of age.~~
- ~~• If the student has at least a 3.5 cumulative grade point average and the student is 16 years of age or older.~~

~~4.1.2.~~ **5.4.1.** The school must notify parents through mail or ~~personal service~~ The notice must inform the parent of the opportunity to contest the truancy. The parent shall have the right to appeal a notice of truancy in writing to the building level administrator within ten (10) days of being issued.

~~4.1.3. A student who is issued a truancy notice maybe referred to juvenile court and is subject to the jurisdiction of the juvenile court.~~

~~5.~~ **6.** Definitions & Procedures Applicable for Only Elementary Schools.

5.6.1. A school-age minor under the age of 14 must comply with the requirements of compulsory education as per Utah Code 53A-11-101.5, including the steps outlined in ~~this~~ **as per** policy. ~~2.1—2.4.~~

5.6.2. Parental refusal to comply with the actions taken by school authorities alone does not constitute educational neglect consistent with Utah Code 78A-6-319. In order for educational neglect to be considered by the courts, the following may be used for evidence:

The child has failed to make adequate educational progress, and school officials have complied with the requirements of 53A-11-103; and

The child is two or more years behind his/her age group expectations in one or more basic skills and is not receiving special education services or systematic remediation efforts; and

The child has been absent from school without good cause, for more than 10 consecutive school days or more than 1/16 of the applicable school term (typically between 3.5 and 4 days)

Cut below – included Courtesy/Nudge & Mandatory Letters above for all students

~~5.3. For student ages 14 and younger, to further promote and instill early positive attendance patterns additional steps shall be completed, including sending a Courtesy Parent Notification Letter from the classroom teacher or school counselor via telephone, email, mail or in person. (See Attachment: Courtesy Parent Notification)~~

~~5.3.1. In addition, when a student has accumulated several unexcused absences during the school year, the school will **may** contact parents by: telephone, text, e-mail, mail, or in person. An attendance summary will be provided which includes excused, unexcused absence and tardy totals (See Attachment: Parent Notification with Compulsory Education Requirements). The notice to the parent shall direct the parent to meet with school authorities to discuss the child's school attendance problems and direct the parent to cooperate with school personnel to secure regular attendance by the child. The notice shall provide the parent with the names or titles of the school personnel with whom the parent is directed to meet. The notice shall tell the parent that it is a class B misdemeanor for the parent to intentionally or recklessly fail to meet with school personnel to resolve the problems or fail to prevent further absences without valid excuse by the child.~~

~~5.3.2. If the parent does not attend the meeting, or if the meeting with the parents does not resolve the problem and the student accumulates no less than a total of five (5) unexcused absences, a certified or hand delivered letter home shall be sent to the child's home. The notice shall: (1) describe the problem, (2) describe necessary corrective action, (3) explain attendance mediation options, (4) direct the parents to meet with school personnel to discuss strategies to improve student's attendance, and (5) inform the parent(s) that if the situation is not corrected a referral may be sent to the 5th District Court for violation of compulsory education. (See Attachment: Mandatory Parent Notification)~~

~~5.3.3. If the parent does not meet with designated school personnel or resolve the child's attendance problems following receipt from the certified letter or signed receipt of Mandatory Parental Notification Letter, school personnel shall complete the referral form (See Attachment: Referral for Violation of Compulsory Education & Request for Court Action), attach all required documentation and submit this packet to the Washington County School District Director of Student Services for review, possible resolution and/or referral to the Office of the Washington County Attorney for violation of compulsory education.~~

Optional: Courtesy/**Nudge** Parent Notification.pdf

Optional: ~~Parent Notification Compulsory Ed Requirements.pdf~~

Mandatory: Mandatory Parent Notification Final.pdf

Referral for Violation of Compulsory Education & Request for Juvenile Court Action

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2.2.1