

## EXCUSED AND UNEXCUSED ABSENCES: 3122P

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Students are expected to attend all classes each day. Teachers shall keep an accurate record of absences and tardiness. Schools shall compile and maintain such records.

### 1. Excused Absences

The following are valid excuses for absences and tardiness:

- A. Participation in District or school-approved activity or instructional program. To be excused, a staff member must authorize this absence and the affected teacher(s) must be notified prior to the absence unless it is clearly impossible to do so;
- B. Illness, health condition or medical appointment (including but not limited to medical, counseling, dental or optometry). When possible, the parent/guardian is expected to notify the school office on the morning of the absence or before and send a signed note of explanation with the student upon his/her return to school. To be excused, an absence of this type must be verified as explained in Section (4) below;
- C. Family emergency, including but not limited to a death or illness in the family;
- D. Religious or cultural purpose including observance of a religious or cultural holiday or participation in religious or cultural instruction. A student, upon the request of his/her parent/guardian, may be excused for a portion of a school day to participate in religious instruction provided such is not conducted on school property or otherwise involves the school to any degree;
- E. Court, judicial proceeding or serving on a jury;
- F. Post-secondary, technical school or apprenticeship program visitation, or scholarship interview;
- G. State-recognized search and rescue activities consistent with RCW 28A.225.055;
- H. Absence directly related to the student's homeless status;
- I. Absence resulting from a disciplinary/corrective action. (e.g., short-term or long-term suspension, emergency expulsion). As required by law, students who are removed from a class or classes as a disciplinary measure or students who have been placed on short-term suspension will be required to make-up assignments or tests missed during the time they were denied entry to the classroom if such work has a substantial effect upon the student's semester grade, or if failure to complete the work would preclude the student from receiving credit for the course;
- J. Principal (or designee) and parent, guardian, or emancipated youth mutually agreed upon approved activity. An absence for parent-approved activities may not be approved if it causes a serious adverse effect on the student's educational progress. For activities

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approved by parent/guardian of greater than two (2) days (pre-arranged absences), the adverse effect on the educational progress may be minimized by requesting approval for the absence in writing at least three (3) days prior to the absence, requesting make-up work from the student's teachers at least three (3) days in advance, and following established timelines to return the completed work;

- K. Extended illness or health condition. If a student is confined to home or hospital for an extended period, the school will arrange for the accomplishment of assignments at the place of confinement whenever practical. If the student is unable to do his/her schoolwork, or if there are major requirements of a particular course which cannot be accomplished outside of class the student may be required to take an incomplete or withdraw from the class without penalty.

The school principal (or designee) has the authority to determine if an absence meets the above criteria for an excused absence. For all requests for an excused absence, the parent/guardian is asked to make the request or notify the school regarding the absence in advance when possible.

### 2. Unexcused Absences

All absences, which are not authorized by the principal/designee, or that do not meet the criteria in this policy or procedure (3122, 3122P), or in State law, are counted as unexcused.

### 3. Tardiness

Students are expected to be in class on time. Students arriving late for school or class for any reason not described as an excused absence above will be counted as unexcused tardy. Secondary students arriving later than one-third of the class shall be counted as absent for the class and not tardy.

### 4. Verification

- A. Excused absences and tardies must be verified by a parent, guardian, emancipated student or adult student in a manner prescribed by the principal within two (2) school business days of the absence. After five (5) consecutive days of absence due to a health condition, or an accumulation of ten (10) absences during a single semester due to illness or a health condition, a note of explanation signed by a doctor may be required, unless the absence was pre-arranged.
- B. Even when verification is received, school officials have the discretion to investigate the circumstances surrounding an absence to determine the validity of the excuse and the effect of such absence upon the student's education progress before or after excusing such absence.

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### Procedures for Promoting Regular School Attendance

#### 1. Communication

- A. The District will provide a copy of the District’s attendance procedures to all students through the “Student Rights and Responsibilities” handbook. Such handbook will be provided to all students at the beginning of the school year and to new students entering later in the school year upon enrollment.
- B. For each class, the teacher will explain the relationship between attendance and other instruction objectives of the particular class.

#### 2. Tardiness

Each unexcused tardy will result in discipline (a corrective action other than suspension or expulsion) as determined by school administrators or delegated to teachers. In addition, after three (3) unexcused tardies, parents/guardians will be contacted in writing or by telephone. When a student's tardiness becomes frequent or disruptive, the student will be referred to the principal or counselor.

#### 3. Unexcused Absences

An absence of any duration (greater than a tardy) shall be addressed with the consequences set forth in section (a) below. For the purposes of the notice, conference, and truancy petition described below, the failure to attend the majority of hours or periods in an average school day shall be counted as one unexcused absence.

##### A. Consequences

All sanctions imposed for failure to comply with the attendance policies and procedures will be implemented in conformance with State and District regulations regarding corrective action or punishment (See Policy – 3241, Discipline and Corrective Action for Student Misconduct.)

Students may be responsible for making up time missed in a manner determined by the school. Examples of such discipline may include, but not be limited to, after-school or recess detention, school or community service hours, or exclusion from an activity conducted by the school other than actual class time. The length of the discipline assigned shall, whenever reasonably possible, bear an equivalent relationship to the time missed during the unexcused absence. In no instance shall the discipline be an out of school suspension.

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### B. Notice

The school shall notify a student's parent/guardian in writing or by telephone whenever the student has failed to attend school after one (1) unexcused absence within any month in the current school year. Such notification shall include an explanation of the potential consequences of additional unexcused absences.

### C. Conference/Agreement

A conference with the parent or guardian will be held after two (2) unexcused absences within any month during the current school year. The school shall schedule a conference with the parent/guardian and student at a time reasonably convenient to all persons involved for the purposes of analyzing the causes of the student's absences and identifying interventions which may be helpful in reducing such absences. Such interventions may include, where appropriate in the judgment of the school officials:

- 1) adjusting the student's educational program;
- 2) providing more individualized or remedial instruction;
- 3) transferring the student to another school;
- 4) assisting the student in obtaining supplementary services that might eliminate or ameliorate the causes for absences;
- 5) imposing discipline that motivates the student to attend school; and
- 6) making a student a focus of concern for placement in special education or other special program designed for educational success.

In all cases, the participants in the conference shall enter into a written agreement that establishes school attendance requirements and outlines the interventions identified as appropriate.

If the parent/guardian does not attend the scheduled conference, the conference may be conducted with the student and the school official. However, the parent/guardian shall be notified of the steps taken or proposed to reduce the child's absences.

Not later than the student's fifth (5<sup>th</sup>) unexcused absence in a month the District will enter into an agreement with the student and parents/guardians that establishes school attendance requirements, and outlines steps to avoid having a petition filed with the juvenile court alleging violation of state school attendance laws (RCW 28A.225.010).

### D. Truancy Petition

If the interventions identified above are not successful in substantially reducing the student's absences, not later than the seventh (7<sup>th</sup>) unexcused absence in a month, or tenth (10<sup>th</sup>) unexcused absence in the school year, the school shall contact the District official

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responsible for the truancy to initiate the filing of a petition with the juvenile court alleging a violation of RCW 28A.225.010 by the student, the parent/guardian or both the student and the parent/guardian.

### 4. Excused Absences

#### A. Consequences

Work assignments and the activities portion of the grade missed during an excused absence may be made up in the manner provided by the teacher.

#### B. Conference

After five (5) or more excused absences within any month, or ten (10) or more excused absences within the school year, the school may schedule a conference with the parent and student at a time reasonably convenient to all persons involved for the purposes of analyzing the causes of the student's absences and identifying interventions which may be helpful in reducing such absences, as described above for unexcused absences.