

ATTENDANCE:
COMPULSORY ATTENDANCE

FEA
(REGULATION)

Compulsory attendance laws require that a student attend school each school day for the entire period the program of instruction is provided. Excused absences do not count against a student for compulsory attendance purposes although excessive absences for personal illness will result in the need for verification of additional absences. Violations occur when the student accumulates unexcused absences. (See Exhibit A for a chart of attendance codes.)

Compulsory attendance applies to students who are at least six (6) years old as of September 1 of the current school year and until the student's 18th birthday unless the student is exempt. Although students are not required to enroll in prekindergarten or kindergarten, once enrolled in these programs, students are expected to be in attendance and are subject to compulsory attendance laws. The same applies to a student after his/her 18th birthday.

COMPULSORY
ATTENDANCE
EXEMPTION

Students under the age of five (5) are exempt from the compulsory attendance **filing process**. Students will not have legal action taken for non-attendance if they are younger than five (5) years of age.

EXCUSED ABSENCES

Student absences are considered excused for the following reasons:

1. Personal illness – parent note or phone call required;
2. Death of an immediate family member (immediate family is defined as parent, guardian, grandparent, sibling of the student or parent, or a person living in the home) -- parent note required;
3. Emergency in immediate family (as defined at item #2);
4. Illness of the student's child with note;
5. School-imposed absence necessary to treat lice;
6. Ongoing medical or psychiatric treatment (chemotherapy, radiation, dialysis, etc. with a doctor note indicating specific timeframes and anticipated absences);
7. Olympic-caliber competition [with application approved by principal; up to ten (10) days per school year];
8. Removal by CPS/law enforcement and related days [including an arrest or incarceration for nonschool-related matters or incarceration beyond three (3) days for school-related matters (if not withdrawn)];
9. Homeland security and visa appointment (passport/INS/visa/residency; with documentation requiring appearance and proof of attendance);
10. Sounding taps for a military honor funeral;
11. Mandated court appearance with documentation of requirement (subpoena/court order) and attendance;
12. Appointment with health care professional such as a doctor, dentist, psychiatrist, or licensed professional psychologist;

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- Partial day, or
- Full day;

An appointment with a health care professional would include a visit to a doctor or dental office, a speech therapist, a master's level social worker, a psychologist, or a professional under the order of a medical doctor. An appointment with a dietician, nutritionist, family therapist, family counselor, recreational therapist, etc. would not be considered a health care professional for excused absence purposes.

13. Mentorship absence required to complete DAP or high school graduation;
14. Homebound instruction (CEHI-approved, including PEP students);
15. Medicaid-eligible; participating in Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnosis, and Treatment Program (with documentation);
16. Nurse sent home from school;
17. Out-of-school suspension for disciplinary reason [including an arrest or incarceration for school-related matters for up to three (3) days];
18. Observance of a religious holy day of obligation including a maximum of one day travel to and one day travel from the site if applicable (requires all missed assignments to be successfully completed within the timeframe established by the teacher);
19. School-sponsored curricular or extracurricular activity that is NOT UIL related;
20. UIL activity (requires principal approval);
21. College visit -- one in junior year; one in senior year (with prior approval and appropriate verification);
22. Activity required by a probation officer (other than court appearances) or Human Services activity required by a caseworker (with documentation; requires all missed assignments to be successfully completed within the timeframe established by the teacher).

UNEXCUSED
ABSENCES

If an absence does not meet the criteria for an excused absence or one of the extenuating circumstances specified in Board policy, the absence will be considered unexcused for attendance accounting purposes. Examples of unexcused student absences include the following reasons:

1. Any "excused" absence (including personal illness) without required documentation;
2. Failure to bring required doctor's note;
3. Nonschool-sponsored activity (sports, competitions);
4. Family illness (non-emergency);

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5. Death other than immediate family (as defined under EXCUSED ABSENCES at item #2);
6. Family trip/vacation;
7. Welfare and WIC visit;
8. College visit (beyond limit; without prior approval or appropriate verification);
9. Homeland security and visa appointment (passport/INS/visa/residency; without documentation required for an excused absence as specified above);
10. Private lesson, tutoring, counseling, and other services;
11. Religious retreat or other church-related event other than a holy day;
12. Runaway; and
13. Truancy.

OLYMPIC-CALIBER
COMPETITIONS

Students participating in nonschool-related, Olympic-caliber competitions are allowed a total of ten (10) excused absences per year. Documentation of the designation as an Olympic-level competition must be presented to the principal for consideration under this provision. (See Exhibit B for an application.)

An Olympic-caliber competition is one in which a student participates in a regional, national or international contest representing the United States or any other country that can be reasonably expected to lead to participation in the Olympics. To qualify for excused absences, the student athlete must be taking part in a contest or individual tryout sanctioned by the Olympic Committee.

COLLEGE VISITS

High school students who meet the following criteria will be allowed to have one (1) excused day of absence for a college visit during their junior year and one (1) excused day of absence for a college visit during their senior year:

1. The student must have passed the required parts of the TAKS test for the previous year.
2. The student must be on track to graduate on time.
3. The student is classified as a junior or senior based upon credits earned.
4. The student is passing all course work.
5. The student has no truancy or other attendance problems.
6. The student is not in a DAEP placement or assigned to a JJAEP.

Students must submit a written request (Exhibit C) at least two days prior to the day requested for a college visit so that eligibility criteria for an excused day of absence can be verified and approval granted prior to the student participating in a college visit. Approval will not be granted for a college visit on a day when major exams are scheduled, and no partial days will be approved. If prior

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approval is granted, verification of the visit must be submitted in order for the absence to be recorded as excused and to not be counted against exam exemptions.

If the college visit cannot be made on the date specified on the approved written request, a new request form must be submitted for consideration.

PRE-ARRANGED
ABSENCES

If a student (or the student's parents) notifies the school of an absence that will occur in the future, the principal shall notify the student/parent how the absence will be classified and explain ramifications of absences by completing the *Pre-arranged Absences -- Decision and Acknowledgment* form (Exhibit D).

EXTRACURRICULAR
ABSENCES

There is no distinction between absences for UIL activities and absences for other approved extracurricular activities. A student shall be allowed:

- a maximum of ten (10) extracurricular absences not related to post-district competition,
- a maximum of five extracurricular absences for post-district competition prior to state, and
- a maximum of two extracurricular absences for state competition.

[See Board Policy FM (LOCAL)]

FAILURE TO ATTEND
SCHOOL

A student commits an offense if he/she fails to attend school on ten (10) or more days or parts of days within a six-month period in the same school year **OR** on three (3) or more days or parts of days within a four-week period. (See the policies and regulations at FEC regarding attendance for credit issues.)

WARNING NOTICE

Parents shall be notified in writing, by the Superintendent or Superintendent's designee, at the beginning of the school year that if a student is absent from school on ten (10) or more days or parts of days within a six-month period in the same school year **OR** on three (3) or more days or parts of days within a four-week period:

1. The student's parent is subject to prosecution under *TEC 25.093*; and
2. The student is subject to prosecution under *TEC 25.094*.

This notice along with an attendance acknowledgment form is published in the Board-approved *Discipline Management Plan and Student Code of Conduct* that is distributed to all students at the beginning of each school year and to new students upon enrollment.

COMPULSORY
ATTENDANCE LETTER
FOR UNEXCUSED
ABSENCES

A compulsory attendance notification letter (Exhibit E) to the parent/guardian is required prior to initiating a final court warning (Exhibit F). These letters will automatically be generated by the computer and will be sent by the District's Attendance Office at the Katy ISD Police Department.

The compulsory attendance notification allows the parent/guardian a five-day grace period to correct any discrepancies. (For purposes related to this process, "day" shall be defined as a school day unless otherwise noted.) The court warning will notify the parent of the potential of being filed on in court when one of the compulsory attendance statutes is violated.

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FAILURE TO ATTEND
SCHOOL NOTICE FOR
EXCESSIVE
ABSENCES FOR
PERSONAL ILLNESS

When a student has **excessive absences for personal illness** that EXCEED five (5) consecutive days, or a total of eight (8) days within a six-month period, the principal or principal's designee shall notify the student's parents of the compulsory attendance requirements by sending the Failure to Attend School letter (Exhibit G). This notice shall be sent when the student is absent for the sixth consecutive day or a total of eight (8) cumulative days for personal illness. Absences for any reason other than personal illness should not be used when calculating the number of days absent for inclusion in the Failure to Attend School notification letter (Exhibit G). If the student continues to be absent for personal illness without providing a doctor's note or being seen by the nurse to determine whether any symptoms of communicable illness exist that would prevent the student from attending class in order for the absence to be considered excused, unexcused absences will begin accumulating and could result in the student receiving a compulsory attendance notification (Exhibit E).

DOCTOR'S NOTE
REQUIRED

The warning notifications (Exhibits E and G) shall inform parents that future absences or late arrivals by the student must be accompanied by a statement from a doctor or health clinic verifying that the student was seen or the student may be taken to the school to be assessed by the nurse in an effort to determine whether any symptoms of communicable illness exist that would prevent the student from attending class in order for the absence to be considered excused. [Due to confidentiality issues in the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA), students are not required to disclose the nature of the illness for which they have been to a doctor or health clinic, nor should employees ask.] The "Doctor's Note Required" stipulation for verification of future absence(s) will remain in effect for the remainder of the school year in which it is initiated.

GRACE PERIODS

The warning notifications (Exhibits E and G) allow parents five (5) school days, as a grace period, to correct discrepancies.

For the compulsory attendance notification (Exhibit E), once the five-day grace period has elapsed, the parents are considered to be on notice regarding future violations. An unexcused absence that occurs during the five-day grace period shall not be used to initiate a court warning. Unexcused absences occurring during this 5-day grace period, however, shall be used to calculate the student's overall attendance record. The intent of the compulsory attendance notification is to allow parents the opportunity to correct the student's attendance record and/or modify the student's behavior to avoid future unexcused absences from school.

Unexcused absences occurring after the five-day grace period will be used to determine when the student will be filed on in court. Any time after the grace period expires and the student receives an unexcused absence, the student may be given one (1) school day as a grace period to bring appropriate documentation to change the unexcused absence. After the one-day grace period elapses, the computer record should not be altered at the home campus.

For the failure to attend school notification (Exhibit G), absences for personal illness during the five-day grace period may still be considered excused with a parent note rather than being considered unexcused if a doctor's note was not provided. However, after the five-day period, the student will begin

accumulating unexcused absences if a doctor's note is not provided or the school nurse's approval is not obtained.

DISCREPANCIES AND
CORRECTIONS

The attendance warning notifications (Exhibit E and G) issued by the District allows the parent five (5) school days from the date of the letter to contact a campus administrator to discuss any discrepancies in the attendance record and/or provide appropriate documentation (doctor note, note regarding religious holy day observance, etc.). If the campus administrator accepts the parent's reason(s)/documentation for changing the attendance record, the record must be changed at the home campus before the end of the last day of the five-day grace period.

Corrections to the attendance record may result in nullifying the initial reason for sending the attendance warning notification. If a review of the student's corrected attendance record indicates that the record no longer reflects a reason for receiving a warning notification, the student/parent is no longer under the obligations of the initial warning notification. If the student's future absences result in an attendance record that reflects the need for a warning notification, the appropriate warning notification will be sent to the student/parent at that time.

Once the five-day grace period has elapsed, the student's attendance record which serves as the basis for the court case shall not be altered in the computer system at the home campus. Unexcused absences recorded after the five-day grace period has elapsed may be corrected within a one-day grace period. After the one-day grace period, the student's unexcused absence may not be altered at the home campus. If special circumstances arise that require an unexcused absence to be changed, the campus principal should contact the District's Attendance Office to discuss a possible change. If it is determined that a correction will be made, the District's Attendance Office will authorize the change. These restrictions are necessary to ensure that the District's Attendance Office has accurate records when presenting a case in court.

COURT WARNING
NOTICE

The court warning notice (Exhibit F) will be sent on the 6th business day after the compulsory attendance notification is sent if no corrections were made during the five-day grace period.

ATTENDANCE
RECORDS

A student's attendance records shall be cumulative across the District for the entire school year in regards to unexcused absences, absences for personal illness, and extracurricular absences.

CALCULATION
PERIODS

The calculation periods begin on the first day of absence for the type of warning notice (Exhibit E or G) being considered and ends based on the following:

1. A six-month period begins with the actual date of the student's first unexcused absence **OR** absence for personal illness, as appropriate. For example, if the first absence is on Sept. 17, calculate six (6) calendar months from Sept. 17 to determine the six-month period (Sept. 17 through March 16).
2. A four-week period is calculated as four (4) calendar weeks from the actual date of the student's first unexcused absence. For example, if the first

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unexcused absence is on a Wednesday, begin with Wednesday and calculate forward four (4) weeks ending on a Tuesday to determine the four-week period.

Holidays, including Winter Break, are counted when determining a six-month or four-week period.

In either case, from the actual date of the first absence in question, if the six-month or four-week period ends without a violation, the timeframe rolls forward to the next absence in question and a new six-month or four-week period is used for calculation.

Once the compulsory attendance notification (Exhibit E) is sent to the parent, the five-day grace period elapses without corrections, and the court warning is sent, the District Attendance Office may file on the student in court upon the NEXT unexcused absence regardless of when it occurs during the remainder of the school year.

TRUANCY

Truancy is defined as an absence of a student from school for other than excused reasons without the knowledge of a parent or guardian. Truancy may be for a full day or for any part of a day including an individual class period or for leaving campus during the school day without permission.

TARDIES

Tardies for unexcused reasons may be used by the District's Attendance Officer as further validation of a student's lack of attendance.

PRINCIPAL'S
RESPONSIBILITIES

The principal or designee is responsible for:

1. Ensuring that students do not exceed the maximum number of absences for extracurricular activities.
2. Notifying the parent of a student who fails to attend school [excessive absences for personal illness (Exhibit G)]. [This may also impact attendance for credit (see Administrative Regulation FEC).]
3. Addressing any issues regarding discrepancies in the attendance record of each student who qualifies for a compulsory attendance notification or a failure to attend school notice within the five-day grace period.

The principal is ultimately responsible for accurate and timely submission of PEIMS attendance data. The principal shall appoint a Campus PEIMS Administrator to ensure that PEIMS attendance data is reported accurately and in a timely manner. The principal shall consider this area of responsibility in the performance evaluation of the person assigned.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF
CAMPUS PEIMS
ADMINISTRATOR

The Campus PEIMS Administrator is delegated responsibility for monitoring personnel who input PEIMS attendance data, ensuring the data is entered in a timely manner, and verifying the data on a six-week basis. This person will also be the contact person for the District's PEIMS department when questions arise about the campus' data.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF
EXECUTIVE
DIRECTORS

The Executive Director for Student Support and Campus Administration shall hold the campus principal responsible for the accurate reporting of attendance data and truanancies, as well as meeting time frames established by the District for reporting data. Feedback regarding the fulfillment of these responsibilities

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will be communicated to the Executive Directors for Secondary and Elementary Instruction for consideration in each principal's performance evaluation.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF
DISTRICT
ATTENDANCE OFFICE

The District's Attendance Office is responsible for monitoring all students with unexcused absences for which a compulsory attendance notification is sent. If the principal or designee contacts the District's Attendance Office regarding a possible correction to an attendance record after the appropriate grace period has elapsed, the District's Attendance Office will be responsible for authorizing any needed corrections. The District's Attendance Office is also responsible for filing on the student/parent in a timely manner and for entering the court's action in the system which prompts the campus assistant principal to create the required PEIMS truancy record.

FILING IN A COURT

The District's Attendance Office **shall** file a complaint against the student or the student's parent or both in a justice or municipal court for an offense under *TEC 25.093* or *25.094* or refer the student to a juvenile court for conduct indicating a need for supervision under *Family Code 51.03(b)(2)* if a student is absent ten (10) or more days or parts of days within a six-month period without excuse. The District's Attendance Office must file the complaint in a justice or municipal court or refer the student to a juvenile court, for failing to attend school without excuse on 10 or more days or parts of days within a six-month period, within ten (10) school days of the student's 10th absence.

The District's Attendance Office **may** file a complaint against the student or student's parents if the student fails to attend school without excuse on three (3) or more days or parts of days within a four-week period.

PEIMS RECORD OF
COURT DECISION

The District's Attendance Office shall notify the campus assistant principal of the judge's decision regarding a student's excessive unexcused absences. The assistant principal will create a PEIMS discipline record, as specified in the PEIMS data requirements, to indicate whether or not the student was assessed a fine for truancy.

WITHDRAWAL FOR
NONATTENDANCE

Students under the age of eighteen (18) may be administratively withdrawn for nonattendance if:

1. The student has ten (10) consecutive school days of absence; **and**
2. The District (campus and District Attendance Office) has been unsuccessful in locating the student.

Students eighteen (18) years of age and older may be administratively withdrawn if the student has more than five (5) unexcused absences in a semester. However, this authority to revoke enrollment does not override the District's responsibility to provide a free appropriate public education to a student who is eligible for special education.

A student whose enrollment is revoked under these provisions is considered a dropout for accountability purposes; therefore, the campus principal must authorize an administrative withdrawal.

VERIFICATION OF
RESIDENCE

If school personnel suspect a student is not a legal resident of the school's attendance zone or of the District, the school can put the parent/guardian on notice of a pending withdrawal of the student at the end of the next three-week or six-week grading period unless the parent/guardian provides up-to-date

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evidence as proof of legal residency. After receiving the new proof of residency, if a school believes that the student does not live at the residence, a referral can be made to the District's Attendance Office. The District's Attendance Office will attempt to determine if the parent/guardian resides at the address listed on the enrollment card. [See FD (REGULATION) for a definition of a bona fide residence and recommendations for methods to determine if a student has a bona fide residence as specified at VERIFICATION OF RESIDENCY.]

NONENROLLMENT

School employees who become aware of school-age children who are not enrolled in school should make a referral to the District's Attendance Office immediately.

UNUSUAL
CIRCUMSTANCES

Campus personnel should make every effort to ensure students attend school. When all efforts fail, the District's Attendance Office may be asked by the principal or principal's designee to make a home visit for the following reasons:

1. If school personnel have been unable to contact the parents of a student who is absent;
2. If school personnel suspect the family has moved without withdrawing the student;
3. If school personnel suspect the parents have withdrawn the student but failed to move;
4. If the student fails to return to school after one day's absence when excluded due to head lice;
5. If students are withdrawn for failure to provide immunization records and do not enroll with the proper documentation within one week;
6. If transfer students have accumulated excessive absences in their previous school or have excessive days of nonenrollment; or
7. If other unusual circumstances arise.