

***Board File: JH***

## **STUDENT ATTENDANCE**

Attendance in class is an integral part of the educational process and students are required to be in attendance every day school is in session each academic year.

### **Compulsory Attendance Ages**

Every child who has attained the age of six years on or before August 1 of each year and is under the age of seventeen is required to attend public school with such exceptions as provided by law. It is the parents' responsibility to ensure attendance.

The courts may issue orders against the child, child's parent, or both compelling the child to attend school or the parent to take reasonable steps to assure the child's attendance. The order may require the parent, child, or both to follow an appropriate treatment plan that addresses problems affecting the child's school attendance and that ensures an opportunity for the child to obtain a quality education.

Nothing in this policy shall be interpreted to require a child who begins attending preschool or kindergarten at five or six years of age to advance to first grade in the following school year. A parent of a child who began attending preschool or kindergarten at five or six years of age may notify the child's school of the parent's wish that the child not advance to first grade in the following school year, and a school that receives such notice shall not advance the child to first grade in the following school year.

### **Absences**

An absence consists of failure to appear at the assigned school and remain there throughout the entire school day unless dismissed earlier by proper authority. Failure to appear and remain throughout the entire time of a scheduled class period shall also constitute an absence from the class unless dismissed earlier by proper authority.

### **Excused Absences**

Excused absences are those resulting from: temporary or extended illness, injury or physical, mental, or emotional disability; family emergencies; absences excused by the principal through prior requests of parents or guardians; absences approved by the superintendent or designee due to inclement weather; absences pursuant to school release permits under District policy JHD; absences which occur when a student is in the custody of a court or law enforcement authority; absences due to suspension or expulsion; and any other absence approved by the principal. If a student is in out-of-home placement as defined by C.R.S. 22-32-138(1)(e), absences due to court appearances and participation in court-ordered activities shall be excused.

## **Unexcused Absences**

Unexcused absences are those with or without prior knowledge and approval of the parents but for reasons not acceptable to the principal.

In accordance with law, the district may impose appropriate penalties that relate directly to classes missed while unexcused. Penalties may include a warning, school detention or in-school suspension. Academic penalties, out-of-school suspensions or expulsion shall not be imposed for any unexcused absence.

The administration shall develop regulations to implement appropriate penalties. The administration shall consider the correlation between course failure, truancy and a student dropping out of school in developing these regulations and shall implement research-based strategies to re-engage students with a high number of unexcused absences.

## **Make-up Work**

Credit for work missed during excused absences will be allowed when the required work has been satisfactorily completed within the time specified, unless the absence is due to the student's expulsion from school. When a student fails to complete course requirements, or when the principal considers a student's absences so excessive as to prevent that student from meeting course requirements, credit for the course may be denied. Make-up work shall be allowed following an unexcused absence with the goal of providing the student an opportunity to keep up with the class and an incentive to attend school. Credit for make-up work will be awarded at the building level based upon a clearly articulated building plan.

Unless otherwise permitted by the building principal, make-up work shall not be provided during a student's expulsion. Rather, the district shall offer alternative education services to the expelled student in accordance with state law. The district shall determine the amount of credit the expelled student will receive for work completed during any alternative education program.

## **Tardiness**

In accordance with 1 Colo. Code Regs. 301-78 "tardies" may be defined by the local school district. Douglas County School District defines tardiness as a failure to appear on time and is considered a form of absence. Repeated tardiness shall be reported to the building attendance officer. For Department reporting purposes, a student who is present 50 percent or more of any Attendance Period during a scheduled school day shall be considered present for that entire recorded and reported period. Tardies shall not be included in the calculation of Habitually Truant students for Department reporting purposes.

## **Readmission**

Students will be readmitted to school after an absence. A written or telephone message should be received from a parent or guardian explaining the student's absence at the time of readmission or as soon after that time as stipulated by the building principal. An absence not so clarified

within the time limit will be treated as an unexcused absence. When a physician has been treating the student, the physician's statement that the student is well enough to return to school should be presented.

### **Closed Campus**

Freshman students may not enter cars or leave the school grounds during school hours without advance permission from the Principal, inclusive of lunch periods.

Other students, who do not have a regularly scheduled class period, may leave campus without advanced permission of the Principal. This flexible schedule option for students is a privilege and subject to revocation based on grades, attendance and/or disciplinary action.

### **Notification of Absences**

Schools shall make a reasonable effort to notify parents, guardians, or legal custodians by telephone as soon as possible when students are absent from school or from assigned classes without acceptable excuse. If students stand to lose course credit because of absence, reasonable effort shall be made to notify the parents, guardian, or legal custodian in advance so that remedial action can be taken.

At the beginning of each school year, and upon the enrollment of a new student, a telephone number or other means for contacting each student's parents, guardian, or legal custodian during the day shall be obtained by the school.

Principals or their designees should contact parents to determine the reasons for excessive absences and shall attempt to work with parents to encourage good attendance.

### **Enforcement of Compulsory School Attendance**

Secondary school assistant principals and elementary school principals are designated as attendance officers. As such, the Board of Education authorizes these attendance officers to represent the school district in truancy proceedings.

It is the duty of attendance officers to investigate the causes of nonattendance, counsel with students and parents, and to take action necessary to enforce the compulsory school attendance laws of Colorado in the District, including initiating proceedings to compel attendance and proceedings for enforcement of court orders compelling school attendance.

### **Habitually Truant Student**

If a student is absent without an excuse signed by the parent/guardian or if the student leaves school or class without permission of the teacher or administrator in charge, the student shall be considered truant. A "habitual truant" shall be defined as a student of compulsory attendance age who has four total days of unexcused absences from school in any one month or 10 total days of unexcused absences during any school year. Absences due to suspension or expulsion

shall not be counted in the total of unexcused absences for purposes of defining a student as a “habitual truant.”

The school shall establish a system of monitoring individual unexcused absences. When a student fails to report on a regularly scheduled school day and school personnel have received no indication that the parent/guardian is aware of the absence, school personnel or volunteers under the direction of school personnel shall make a reasonable effort to notify the parent/guardian by telephone. A plan shall be developed for a student who is at risk of being declared habitually truant with the goal of assisting the child to remain in school. The plan shall also include strategies to address the reasons for the truancy. When practicable, the student’s parents, guardian or legal custodian shall participate with district personnel during the development of the plan. Appropriate school personnel shall make reasonable efforts to meet with the parent, guardian or legal custodian to review and evaluate the reasons for the student’s truancy.

### **Notification to and Acknowledgement by Parents of Obligation**

At the beginning of each school year, and upon enrollment of each new student subject to the compulsory attendance laws, parents, guardians, and legal custodians shall be notified in writing of their legal obligation to ensure their child’s attendance at school and shall be requested to sign and return to the school a written acknowledgement of such obligation and to furnish the school with a telephone number or other means of contacting them during the school day.

In addition, the District will notify parents of students who have dropped out of the District but who are not subject to compulsory attendance laws (such as student’s age seventeen or older) of the long-term ramifications of dropping out of school, and encourage the student to return to school. The Board authorized the Superintendent or designee to develop a notice and notification procedures to achieve this objective.

Portions adopted prior to 1974

Revised: February 5, 1985

Revised: October 5, 1993

Revised: August 20, 1996

Revised: October 15, 2002

Revised: June 21, 2005 to conform to current law

Revised: June 5, 2007 to conform to current law

Revised: June 3, 2008 to conform to current law

Revised: February 17, 2009

Revised: September 21, 2010 to conform to current law

Revised: March 15, 2011 to add absences due to inclement weather

**LEGAL REFS.:**

C.R.S. 22-33-101 et. seq. (*School Attendance Law of 1963*)

C.R.S. 22-33-104 (*compulsory school attendance ages*)

C.R.S. 22-33-104(1)(d) (*non-advancement effective July 1, 2008*)

C.R.S. 22-33-104.5 (*home-based education*)

C.R.S. 22-33-107 (*enforcement of school attendance laws*)

C.R.S. 22-33-108 (*judicial proceedings to enforce school attendance laws*)

C.R.S. 22-14-101 et. seq. (*dropout prevention and student re-engagement*)

C.R.S. 22-33-203 (*educational alternatives for expelled students and determination of credit*)

1CCR 301-67 Rule 2.01(7) (*definition of “dropout” student*)

1CCR 301-78 Rules 1.00 et. seq. (*standardized calculation for counting student attendance and truancy*)

*NOTE: Beginning in 2009-10, district must report the number of students identified as “habitually truant” to CDE in accordance with the State Board of Education’s rules regarding the calculation of student attendance and truancy, 1CCR 301-78. CDE must then make this information accessible to the public by posting it on its website. The State Board’s rules also specify how districts shall record and aggregate student absences.*