

Policy Reference No. 4075
Title: STUDENT RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES: ATTENDANCE
Section: STUDENTS

STUDENT ATTENDANCE

PROCEDURE

The following procedures are to implement Policy 4075, Student Rights and Responsibilities: Attendance. All authority granted to principals by this procedure shall also be granted to assistant principals, administrative assistants and head teachers.

1.0 District commitment

The Bellevue School District is concerned that all students of school age develop a positive attitude toward attending school. When attendance problems begin to occur, teachers and administrators are expected to work cooperatively with the student and parents/guardians to attempt to resolve the problems. Although the learning pattern of each student will vary, assisting students to meet the established attendance requirements of the district, school and teacher will provide the basis of education to occur. Students and parents/guardians must be informed of the manner in which each school and teacher deals with attendance. Schools are to inform parents/guardians at least annually about compulsory education requirements. First language translations will be provided whenever possible.

2.0 Excuses for absence

In order for an absence to be considered excused, a written or oral excuse from a parent/guardian, the adult student or a school official will be required not later than the day following the student's return to school following each absence. Each school will determine whether it will accept oral excuses and will notify students and parents/guardians of its policy.

3.0 Makeup work

Each school will develop a procedure for permitting students to make up class work missed because of excused absences, discipline or short-term suspensions from school. The principal may allow work to be made up in other circumstances. Teachers will be expected to provide makeup work that is as meaningful as possible; however, it is recognized that the makeup work may not be able to provide the same kind and quality of instruction as the student would have received in class. Students should understand that it is their responsibility to complete the makeup work in a reasonable time as established by the teacher.

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3.1 If students request and receive permission from the principal or a designee to count family vacations as an excused absence (see Policy 4075, page 1, item #6), teachers will not be expected to spend extra time recreating the instruction missed. Students shall acquire from the teacher information about what assignments will be missed during the vacation and will be expected to submit required work either prior to leaving or immediately upon return from vacation.

4.0 Unexcused absence (truancy)

If a written or oral excuse is not provided by the parent/guardian or adult student within the limit established by each school, the absences will be considered unexcused. In accordance with procedures in RCW 28A.225, schools will notify parents/guardians when a student has one (1) unexcused absence within any month during a school year. After two (2) unexcused absences within any month, the school will schedule a conference with the parent/guardian within thirty (30) days of the unexcused absence. At this conference, the school, parents/guardians and student shall plan steps that will reduce the child's unexcused absences. A student who, following such conference, continues to accumulate unexcused absences, and who accumulates either seven unexcused absences in any one month, or 10 unexcused absences during the school year will be prosecuted for truancy in accordance with regulations as set forth in RCW 28A.225. An absence under this provision is when a student is truant the majority of his or her class schedule. Schools should make efforts to communicate in the language understood by the parents/guardians. Each school may develop additional procedures for dealing with unexcused absences. These procedures must comply with the requirements of WAC 180-40-235(1), 180-40-245(3), 180-40-260(3), and 180-40-275(3) regarding discipline, short-term suspension, long-term suspension and expulsion.

5.0 Procedure review

- 5.1 The principal will review district and building attendance procedures with teachers at the beginning of each school year and impress upon them the requirement to record accurately all absences in the teacher's grade book and to report them to students and parents/guardians in the manner prescribed by district and building procedures.
- 5.2 The teacher will discuss with students the established class attendance procedure, as well as the building procedures and district policy and procedures. Discussion should include the relationship of attendance to the student's academic progress and the

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development of the student's own sense of responsibility. Attendance procedures for each school shall be included in the student handbook or parent/guardian notices as appropriate for each level.

6.0 Record keeping

Every absence, for whatever reason, that removes the student from the supervision of the assigned teacher will be recorded by the teacher in the grade book and will be reported to the administration in the manner prescribed by the principal.

7.0 Parent/guardian contact

7.1 Students and/or parents/guardians must prearrange anticipated absences from school supported with a note from the parent/guardian in order to have those absences excused.

7.2 Parents/guardians will be informed that they may call the school office for information and assistance when they have questions concerning their child's attendance.

7.3 Since absences, whether excused or unexcused, can affect a student's school performance, parents/guardians will be notified no later than after the fifth accumulative absence from school or from a class within a school semester. This notification may be made by telephone, mail, e-mail or conference. A school's procedure may require earlier notification, and unexcused absences require the notification set forth under 4.0 above.

8.0 Continuing attendance problems and possible interventions

8.1 School counseling will be made available to students and parents/guardians in an effort to eliminate continuing attendance problems. At the time of parent/guardian conferences regarding a student's excessive absences, school officials shall inform the student and the parents/guardians about alternative options for schooling. Such options may include, but are not limited to, transfer to an alternative program within Bellevue School District, application to a community college or to a technical college as a Running Start student, reduction of a student's class schedule, availability of

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tutorial assistance, home schooling assistance available to parents/guardians and students in the Bellevue School District, and any other appropriate efforts applicable to the specific student's situation. Students shall not be obligated to pursue these options, but should be informed of their existence.

- 8.2 When feasible, attendance-monitoring procedures will be arranged with parents/guardians for students who have continuing attendance problems after notifications have been made as provided for in 4.0 and 7.0.
- 8.3 The school staff will attempt to provide appropriate educational opportunities. This includes referrals to any district alternative program which may meet the student's needs, and for special education students, to the multidisciplinary team to determine whether or not modifications should be made to the student's program and/or IEP.
- 8.4 For students covered by the compulsory attendance laws who are truant, and for whom the efforts of parents/guardians and school officials to encourage good attendance have failed, a truancy petition shall be filed in accordance with procedures set forth in RCW 28A.225. The school district's Truancy Coordinator shall assist the school in filing the petition with the court and in processing said petition. The school officials and the Truancy Coordinator shall monitor the attendance of students who have had court orders compelling school attendance and the Truancy Coordinator, the school principal and/or the principal's designee shall institute additional court proceedings as necessary and as set forth in RCW 28A.225.

9.0 Credits

- 9.1 High school or middle school students taking classes for high school credit who are absent from a class 10 times in a semester shall be subject to potential loss of credit for that class unless a review of the absences would not merit such loss or unless they succeed in appealing the threatened loss of credit. Absences caused by a student's observance of established religious holidays or by a student's participation in school-sponsored activities shall not be counted among the 10 absences.

There will be districtwide rules and guidelines prepared at the Superintendent's direction which will set forth how any loss of credit for 10 or more absences will be implemented. These rules and guidelines will include that the principal of each

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school will determine which students will be given notice of the loss of credit sanction, and matters such as how the 10 absences will be counted, what criteria will be used, how students' absences for illness or other reasons will be counted, and how to appeal such notice.

#### 10. Attendance and Participation in Extracurricular Activities

10.1 Students who are absent from two or more hours of classes in a school day because of illness or because of unexcused absence(s) shall not participate in any after-school or evening extracurricular activities on the same date as the absences. Coaches and activity advisors will be charged with the responsibility to monitor the attendance of their student participants by checking the daily attendance bulletin and will be required to enforce this rule unless the school principal makes other provisions for such monitoring. School administrators shall notify and educate coaches and activity advisors about this rule. Schools shall make the daily attendance bulletin available to coaches and activity advisors.

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