
EXCUSED AND UNEXCUSED ABSENCES

The Bainbridge Island School District will annually inform parents on the value of regular school attendance and the consequences of chronic absences. In compliance with Washington State attendance requirements, an annual attendance letter will be posted on each family's Family Access account each August, prior to the start of the school year. Parents/guardians will be required to read and indicate they have received and read the attendance information on the Family Access account by September 30 of each school year.

Excused Absences

Each teacher is responsible for taking attendance and recording absences and days tardy according to the district attendance procedure. Students late for the start of the school day will be recorded as tardy. Students absent for more than 50% of the school day, will be recorded as absent. Absences will be categorized as excused or unexcused. Parents/guardians are responsible for notifying the student's school office on the day of the absence or tardy according to the school attendance reporting procedure stating the student's name, the day/time of absence, and the specific reason for the absence. The following are valid excuses for absences.

- A. Participation in a district or school approved activity or instructional program;
- B. Illness, health condition or medical appointment, including, but not limited to, medical, counseling, dental or optometry;
- 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;
- 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, including, but not limited to, short-term or long-term suspension, emergency expulsion; and
- J. Principal or designee and parent, guardian, or emancipated youth mutually agreed upon approved activity. The parent/guardian or an emancipated or appropriately aged student may request prior principal approval of excused absences for a planned trip or activity. The parent/guardian is required to submit the Pre-arranged Absence Request and Plan for Missed Learning form (available on the district website) to the principal for approval as an excused absence. This form should be submitted to the principal at least one week in

advance of the planned absence. The principal will make the decision to approve the absence as excused. The principal may deny the request if there is a history of excessive absences or if a satisfactory plan is not in place for the child to not fall behind academically during the period of the absence. Teachers are not required to provide different work or have assignments prepared in advance before those same assignments are introduced in class. Absences not approved by the principal will be categorized as unexcused.

If an absence is excused, the student will be permitted to make up all missed assignments outside of class under reasonable conditions and time limits established by the appropriate teacher; except that in participation-type classes, a student's grade may be affected because of the student's inability to make up the activities conducted during a class period.

Excessive Excused Absences

- A. If an elementary student in kindergarten through grade 6 has five (5) or more excused absences in a single month during the school year or ten (10) or more absences in the current school year, the principal or designee will schedule a conference with the student and his/her parent/guardian at a reasonably convenient time. The school will make reasonable efforts to provide this information in a language in which the parent/guardian is fluent. The conference is intended to identify reasons for the student's absences and identify supports and resources so the student may regularly attend school.
- B. This attendance conference will take place within thirty (30) days and may be included in a previously scheduled parent conference or meeting if held within thirty (30) days.
- C. The conference must include at least one school district employee, preferably a nurse, counselor, social worker, teacher or community human services provider.
- D. If the student has an Individualized Education Program (IEP) or a Section 504 Plan, the team that created that program must reconvene.
- E. A conference is not required if a doctor's note is provided to the school or the principal has approved the excused absence after the parent/guardian has submitted the Pre-arranged Absence Request and Plan for Missed Learning form and there is an academic plan in place to ensure the student does not fall behind.

Unexcused Absences

Unexcused absences occur when the parent/guardian or an adult, emancipated or appropriately aged child fails to submit an excuse, submits an excuse which does not meet the definition of excused absences defined above, or the request for a pre-approved activity was not approved by the principal. A student whose absence is not excused will experience the consequences of the absence. A student's grade may be affected if a graded activity or assignment occurs during the period of time when the student is absent. A student's grade will not be affected if no graded activity is missed during such an absence.

In the case of one unexcused absence, the school will notify a student's parent or guardian in writing, telephone, or electronically that the student has failed to attend school. The school will make reasonable efforts to provide this information in a language in which the parent/guardian is fluent. The notification will include the potential consequences of additional unexcused absences.

After three unexcused absences within any month during the current school year, a conference will be scheduled with the principal or designee, student and parent/guardian. The conference is intended to identify reasons for the student's absences and identify supports and resources so the student may regularly attend school. The attendance conference will take place within 30 days and may be included in a previously scheduled parent conference or meeting if held within 30 days. The conference must include at least one school district employee, preferably a nurse, counselor, social worker, teacher or community human service provider. If the student has an Individual Education Program (IEP) or a Section 504 Plan, the team that created the plan must reconvene. The district will designate a staff member to apply the Washington Assessment of the Risks and Needs of Students (WARNS) or other state approved assessment and, when appropriate, provide the student with the best practice or research-based intervention consistent with WARNS.

No later than the fifth unexcused absence in a month, the district will:

- A. Enter into an agreement with the student and parent/guardian that establishes school attendance requirements which may include, but is not limited to: adjusting the student's course assignments; providing the student more individualized instruction; providing appropriate vocational courses or work experiences; requiring the student to attend an alternative school or program; assisting the parent or student to obtain supplementary services; or
- B. Refer the student to a community truancy board; or
- C. File a petition to juvenile court alleging a violation of RCW 28A.225.010.

If such an action is not successful to substantially reduce the student's absences and if the student is under the age of seventeen, not later than the student's seventh unexcused absence within any month during the current school year, or tenth unexcused absence during the school year, the district will file a petition and supporting affidavit for a civil action with the juvenile court alleging a violation of RCW 28A.225.010.

All suspensions and/or expulsions will be reported in writing to the superintendent within 24 hours after imposition.

Community Truancy Board

A community truancy board will be established prior to the 2017-2018 school year with the purpose of working with families to identify the reasons for excessive absences and identifying supports and resources so the student may regularly attend school. The truancy board will be established pursuant to a memorandum of understanding (MOU) between the district and the juvenile court of Kitsap County and will be composed of the local community trained as members of the Community Truancy Board. Membership will include district and community representatives to be determined by the Superintendent or designee.

The district will designate and identify to the juvenile court, and update as necessary, a staff member to coordinate district efforts to address excessive absenteeism and truancy, including outreach conferences, coordinating the MOU, establishing protocols and procedures with the court, coordinating trainings, and sharing evidence-based and culturally appropriate promising practices. This principal, or designee, will serve as the school contact regarding excessive absenteeism and truancy and assist in the recruitment of community truancy board members.

Transfer Students

In the case of a student who transfers out of the district, the district is required to provide the receiving district the most recent truancy information on the student including a copy of the WARNS assessment or other state approved assessment and any interventions provided to the student. This information will include the online or written acknowledgement of the beginning of the year district attendance letter.

Parents enrolling in the district after the beginning of the year will be required to read and acknowledge the reading of the annual attendance letter available in Family Access.

Students dependent pursuant to Chapter 13.34.RCW

The principal, or designee, will review unexpected or excessive absences of a student who has been found dependent under the Juvenile Court Act with the students and adults involved with that student. Adults include the student's caseworker, educational liaison, attorney if one is appointed, parent or guardians, foster parents or the person providing placement for the student. The review will take into consideration the cause of the absence, unplanned school transitions, periods of running from care, in-patient treatment, incarceration, school adjustment, educational gaps, psychosocial issues, and the student's unavoidable appointments that occur during the school day. The representative or staff member will proactively support the student's management of the school work.

Cross Reference:

Board Policy

3120 Enrollment

3230 Student Privacy and Searches
3240 Student Conduct and Expectations and Reasonable Sanctions
3241 Classroom Management, Discipline and Corrective Action
4218 Language Access Plan

Legal References:

RCW:

13.34.300 Relevance of failure to cause juvenile to attend School
as evidence under neglect petition

28A.225.010 Attendance mandatory – Age – Exceptions

28A.225.015 Attendance mandatory – Six or seven year olds –
Unexcused absences – Petition

28A.225.020 School's duties upon child's failure to attend School

28A.225.023 Youth dependent pursuant to chapter

13.34 RCW – Review of unexpected or excessive absences –
Support for youth's school work

28A225.055 Excused absences – Search and rescue activities

WAC 392-400-325

Statewide definition of excused and unexcused daily absences.

State Senate House Bill 1170, July 2017