

STUDENT ABSENCES AND EXCUSES

The Board recognizes the importance of regular student attendance to a successful learning experience. Research supports the fact that attendance is crucial to improving student achievement. At least one (1) study identified attendance as the single greatest indicator of student achievement. The Board further recognizes that:

1. Frequent absences of students from regular classroom learning experiences disrupt the continuity of the instructional process.
2. The benefits of classroom instruction, once lost, cannot be entirely regained.
3. The entire process of education requires a regular continuity of instruction, classroom participation, learning experiences and study in order to meet the district's student achievement goals.
4. Holding students and their parents/guardians responsible for attendance is part of the district's larger mission to train students to be productive citizens and employees.
5. State law reflects the importance of regular attendance by establishing compulsory school attendance and charging this Board to enforce that law.
6. State law authorizes school boards to make all needful rules for organization and government in the district.

Therefore, regular and punctual patterns of attendance will be expected of each student enrolled in the Columbia School District.

Development of Rules and Procedures

The superintendent, with the assistance of building-level administrators and other administrative and professional staff, shall establish rules and procedures for student attendance within the district. The primary purpose of the district's attendance rules and procedures shall be to change behavior, not to punish students. Such rules and procedures shall be published on the district's website and in appropriate handbooks and shall be subject to review by the Board of Education. The administration will develop rules and procedures that minimally include:

1. Clear and reasonable attendance standards with consistently enforced consequences for violating those standards.
2. Early intervention strategies for students in primary and elementary grades.

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3. Targeted intervention strategies.
4. Strategies to increase engagement with students and families.

No rule or procedure will preclude a student from making up work missed due to any type of absence, including absences due to suspension. Procedures and rules must include a due process component that includes notice before consequences are imposed and that allows students and their parents/guardians to appeal any imposed consequence to the superintendent. The Board will not hear appeals of consequences for excessive absences.

The district will maintain a comprehensive system of attendance records for each student. Each teacher is responsible for the accurate reporting of daily attendance in the classroom. The building principal is responsible for supplying information to parents/guardians about student absences and for submitting attendance information to the superintendent's office.

The district will contact the Children's Division (CD) of the Department of Social Services or the local prosecutor in cases where the district has a reasonable suspicion that a student's lack of attendance constitutes educational neglect on the part of the parents/guardians or that parents/guardians are in violation of the compulsory attendance law. No such action will be taken unless other strategies and interventions have been implemented and proven ineffective.

If a student in foster care is absent from school due to a decision by a court or child-placing agency to change the student's placement or due to a verified court appearance or related court-ordered activity, the grades and credit of the student will be calculated as of the date the student left school, and no lowering of the student's grades shall occur as a result of the absence under these circumstances.

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Note: The reader is encouraged to check the index located at the beginning of this section for other pertinent policies and to review administrative procedures and/or forms for related information.

Adopted: 03/03/1997
Revised: 06/09/2008; 05/10/2010
MSIP Refs: 6.3, 6.5, 7.7, 8.6, 8.7, 9.6

Legal Refs: §§ 167.018 - .019, .031 - .111, 171.011, .053, .151, RSMo.

Columbia School District No. 93, Columbia, Missouri