



Book	WCSD Policy Manual
Section	5000 Students
Title	Attendance
Code	5100
Status	Active
Adopted	April 25, 2023

The Board of Education recognizes that regular school attendance is a major component of academic success. Through implementation of this policy, the Board expects to minimize the number of unexcused absences, tardiness, and early departures (referred to in this policy as "ATEDs"), encourage full attendance by all students, maintain an adequate attendance recordkeeping system, identify patterns of student ATEDs, and develop effective intervention strategies to improve school attendance.

Notice

To be successful in this endeavor, it is imperative that all members of the school community are aware of this policy, its purpose: procedures, and the consequences of non-compliance. To ensure that students, parents, teachers, and administrators are notified of and understand this policy, the following procedures will be implemented.

- A plain language summary of this attendance policy will be included in student handbooks and will be reviewed with students at the start of the school year.
- Parents will receive a plain language summary of this policy at the start of the school year. Parents will be asked to sign and return a statement indicating that they have read and understand the policy.
- When a student is absent, tardy, or leaves early from class or school without excuse, the district will notify the student's parent(s) by phone and/or by mail of the specific ATED, remind them of the attendance policy, and review ATED intervention procedures with them.
- A back-to-school event will be held at the beginning of each school year to emphasize that every day of attendance counts, to explain this policy, and to stress the parent's responsibility for their ensuring their children's attendance.
- School newsletters and publications will include periodic reminders of the components of this policy.
- The district will provide a copy of the attendance policy and any amendments thereto to faculty and staff. New staff will receive a copy upon their employment.
- All faculty and staff will meet at the beginning of each school year to review the attendance policy to clarify individual roles in its implementation.
- Copies of this policy will also be made available to any community member, upon request.
- The district will share this policy with local Child Protective Services (CPS) to ensure a common understanding of excused and unexcused ATED's and to work toward identifying and addressing cases of educational neglect.

Excused and Unexcused Absences

Excused ATEDs are defined as absences, tardiness, and early departures from class or school, each of which must be verified by the student's parent/guardian or school personnel, due to:

- personal illness, illness or death in the family,
- impassable roads or weather,
- religious observance,
- quarantine,
- required court appearances,
- attendance at health clinics,
- approved college visits,

- approved cooperative work programs,
- military obligations,
- if a parent or legal guardian has been called to duty for, is on leave from, or immediately returned from deployment to a combat zone or combat support posting, a student may be granted additional excused absences at the discretion of the Superintendent or designee,
- other excused absence per district discretion, or
- such other reasons as may be approved by the appropriate building administrator (including, but not limited to, absences due to circumstances related to homelessness).

All other ATEDs are considered unexcused absences.

All ATEDs must be accounted for. It is the parent's responsibility to notify the school office within 24 hours of the ATED and to provide a written excuse upon the student's return to school. For homeless students, the homeless liaison will assist the student in providing or obtaining documentation if needed.

General Procedures/Data Collection

- At the elementary level, teachers will take attendance in homeroom on a daily basis.
- At the junior and senior high levels, teachers will take attendance in homeroom and in each class period on a daily basis. A daily attendance bulletin will be published in a timely manner.
- At the conclusion of each class period or school day, all attendance information will be compiled and provided to the building principal and/or designated staff member(s) responsible for attendance.
- The nature of an ATED will be coded on a student's record.
- Where additional information is received that requires corrections to be made to a student's attendance records, such correction will be made immediately. Notice of such a change will be sent to appropriate school personnel subject to applicable confidentiality rules.
- Where consistent with other school practices, teachers and staff will detain students in the hallways who are absent from a class period without excuse and refer the students to the building principal.
- Parents should call or email the school at the opening of school to report their children absent for the day. At the elementary level, the school will make phone calls to the homes of the parents of absent children who have not notified the school of their children's absences. The building administrator will send a letter home if the pattern of excessive or unusual absences occurs.
- The junior and senior high schools use threshold-based period attendance to calculate a daily absence from school. If a high school student were to miss 4 class periods (5 class periods for junior high school students) on the same day, they will be marked absent for the day. Within 24 hours of a marked daily absence an automated phone call will notify parents of the absence for that day. The attendance office pulls attendance reports daily to check for accuracy and reconcile any mistakes. The attendance office will make phone calls home to verify notes received for early pickup, late arrivals, or other attendance related matters.

Distance/Remote Learning - Emergency Protocols

Students learning remotely will need to show daily school participation, which is to be recorded by teachers and reported under the provisions of this policy. Such participation will vary depending on the type of remote learning taking place. This can include: documented participation in online or virtual classes; completion of assignments; documentation of daily school activities and learning; or correspondence via online platform, email, and telephone.

Intervention

- Student ATED data will be available to and should be reviewed by the building principal and/or designated school personnel in an expeditious manner.
- Attendance data will be analyzed periodically to identify patterns or trends in student absences. If patterns emerge, district resources will be targeted to understand and eliminate barriers to attendance. Common barriers to student attendance include the following:

Health & Mental Health Barriers	Personal Barriers
Child abuse and/or neglect	Peer pressure or inability to maintain friendships
Drug or alcohol use and/or abuse	Feelings of rejection and failure
Childhood depression	Embarrassment due to lack of "fashionable" clothing
Asthma or other chronic illness	Children believe the teacher does not like them
Poor nutrition, dental, vision, hearing problems	Low self-esteem
Lack of immunizations	To meet with friends

Financial Barriers	Family Barriers
Insufficient food	Insufficient parental support
Proper clothing not available	Child kept home for babysitting or caring for a sick parent
Homelessness	Family history of dropping out
Parent unemployment	Lack of adult supervision
Problems communicating with social services	Parent addicted to drugs or alcohol
Students needing to work	
Community/Cultural Barriers	School Based Barriers
Lack of safety in the community	Teacher conflict
Insufficient use of community agencies	Inadequate transportation
Bullying due to cultural differences	Fear of being bullied or cyber bullied
Language barriers	Inappropriate programming – either too challenging or not challenging enough

- Continuous monitoring will be conducted to identify students who are absent, tardy, or leave class or school early. A student will be considered chronically absent if they miss ten percent or more of the school year. Satisfactory attendance is missing five percent or less of school over the course of the year. If a pattern of ATED's for an individual student is identified, a designated staff person(s) will follow-up in accordance with this policy.
- The attendance office will call home or send a letter if a pattern of excessive or unusual absences occurs.
 - Parent notification for excessive unexcused absences and tardies will be made through the mail.
 - If a student does not bring in an absence note within seventy-two hours, an unexcused absence will be recorded until an absence note is brought in. The administration will have the right to request a doctor's note for excessive absences.
 - If a student has excessive absences without proper documentation from a doctor, or is believed to be excessively absent without good reason, the parent/guardian will be notified with an explanation of the additional steps the district will take.

Attendance Intervention Teams

Every school as directed by their principal will identify a team that may include: Principal or other administrator in charge of attendance, counselors, nurse, teacher, parent representative, student representative, and additional personnel as designated by the principal to develop and implement a comprehensive plan to record, monitor, improve and maintain student attendance.

- Attendance team should meet regularly throughout the school year.
- The team should use attendance data to guide its decisions.
- At the beginning of every school year (or time of enrollment), students, parents, and staff should be notified of the school-wide attendance policies.

In order to establish your attendance goals a review of your school's attendance data should be examined.

A designated staff member(s) will contact the student's parents and the student's guidance counselor in the event that a student's record reveals excessive ATED's, excused and/or unexcused. Such staff member(s) will remind parents of the attendance policy, explain the ramifications of excessive ATEDs, stress the importance of class attendance, and discuss appropriate intervention strategies to correct the situation. Students identified as chronically absent may be considered for a mentor program.

Students who have been identified as having a pattern of unexcused absences, tardiness, or early departure will be discussed at a team meeting. The members of the team will develop a plan of action for the purpose of improving the student's attendance. Intervention strategies to improve school attendance may include:

- contacting the parent/guardian or person in parental relation;
- referral to a building multidisciplinary team to recommend appropriate steps;
- Youth Services referral;
- Working with the Building Principal for administrative action;
- Involving the school physician;
- Coach and educate parents on the importance of class attendance, and discuss appropriate intervention strategies to correct the situation;
- Filing a PINS petition, with probation if needed; and/or
- Collaboratively work with the Department of Social Services; and/or
- Refer parents to other local service agencies.

Consequences of Excessive ATED's

In addition, unexcused ATEDs may result in disciplinary action consistent with the district's code of conduct. Those penalties may include, for example, detention or denial of the privilege of participating in or attending extracurricular events. However, absences related to homelessness will not result in negative consequences where the district determines that it would be in the best interests of the student in retaining the student in school.

Attendance/Grade Policy

The Board of Education recognizes an important relationship between class attendance and student performance. Consequently, each marking period a student's final grade may be based on classroom participation as well as student performance on homework, tests, papers, projects, etc.

Students are expected to attend all scheduled classes. Consistent with the importance of classroom participation, unexcused ATEDs will affect a student's class participation grade for the marking period.

All students with an ATED are expected upon their return to consult with their teachers regarding missed work. Reference Policy 4710 Grading Systems.

Teachers are not required but are encouraged to provide classwork and homework in advance for planned unexcused absences. The student and parent are responsible to check with the teacher/guidance counselor to determine the class work or homework that must be completed.

Review

The building principal and/or administrative designee will be responsible for reviewing student attendance records and initiating appropriate action consistent with this policy.

The Board will annually review building-level student attendance records and, if such records show a decline in student attendance, the Board will revise this comprehensive attendance policy and make any revisions to the plan it deems necessary to improve student attendance.

Cross ref: 4710, Grading Systems
 5151, Homeless Children
 5300, Code of Conduct
 5460, Child Abuse in a Domestic Setting

Ref: 42 USC §11432(g)(1)(1)(McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act)
 Education Law §§1709; 3024; 3025; 3202; 3205-3213; 3225
 8 NYCRR §§104.1; 175.6
 Social Service Law §34-a