Excused and Unexcused Absences

Upon enrollment and at the beginning of each school year, the District shall inform students and their parents/guardians that students are expected to attend classes each day, the benefits of regular school attendance, the consequences of truancy, the role and responsibility of the District in regard to truancy, and resources available to assist the student and their parents and guardians in correcting truancy.

The superintendent will enforce the District's attendance policies and procedures. Because the full knowledge and cooperation of students and parents are necessary for the success of the policies and procedures, procedures will be disseminated broadly and made available to parents and students annually.

The District will also make this information available online and will take reasonable steps to ensure parents can request and receive such information in languages in which they are fluent. Parents will be required to date and acknowledge review of this information online or in writing.

The District Must Take Attendance Daily

The District will take daily attendance for all enrolled students whether the instructional modality is in-person, synchronous, or asynchronous. When instruction is synchronous online or asynchronous, secondary schools will take attendance daily in each course with planned instruction and elementary schools will take attendance at least twice a day.

What Constitutes an Absence?

Absence Defined

Absence from in-person learning

A student is absent from in-person instruction when they are neither physically present on school grounds nor participating in instruction, any instruction-related activity, or any other district- or school-approved activity that is regulated by an instructional or academic accountability system, such as participation in district-sponsored sports, at an approved location.

A full-day absence is when a student is absent for fifty percent or more of their scheduled day.

A student shall be considered absent if they are on school grounds but not in their assigned setting.

<u>Absence from Synchronous Online Instruction</u>

A student is absent from synchronous online instruction when the student does not log in to the synchronous meeting or class.

<u>Absence from Asynchronous Online Instruction</u>

A student is absent from asynchronous instruction when there is no evidence that the student accessed the planned asynchronous activity. Evidence of student participation in asynchronous

activities must occur daily, within a twenty-four-hour time frame of when the participation is planned or expected.

Students Must Be in Attendance for a Minimum Time for Being Considered Present
The District has authority to establish minimum thresholds similar to in-person attendance for the time in which a student must be logged in to be considered present. The Superintendent will develop a consistent and equitable approach that is documented in the student handbook and communicated clearly to all students and families. Determining a threshold for when a student is present or absent should not be left to individual teachers.

Similar to local determinations on what constitutes presence for synchronous online instruction, the Superintendent will develop a consistent and equitable approach to asynchronous online instruction that establishes what constitutes "evidence of participation."

This approach will be documented in the student handbook and communicated clearly to all students and families. Determining what constitutes "evidence of participation" should not be left to individual teachers.

Participation, such as turning video on and participating in discussion or chat, are not to be considered when determining if a student is present or not. These are examples of participation and should be considered distinct from attendance.

The District has the flexibility to determine what constitutes a tardy in synchronous online settings. The District differentiates a tardy from an absence (where the student does not attend at all) and will exclude tardies from any reports that tally absences for the purposes of filing a truancy petition. A school shall not convert or combine tardies into absences that contribute to a truancy petition.

When Is an Absence Excused?
Regular school attendance is necessary for mastery of the educational program provided to students of the district. At times, students may be absent from class or not able to participate remotely. School staff will keep a record of absence and tardiness, including a record of excuse statements submitted by a parent/guardian, or in certain cases, students, to document a student's excused absences.

Absences due to the following reasons are excused:

1. Physical health or mental health symptoms, illness, health condition or medical appointment for the student or person for whom the student is legally responsible. Examples of symptoms, illness, health conditions, or medical appointments include, but are not limited to, medical, counseling, mental health wellness, dental, optometry, pregnancy, and behavioral health treatment (which can include in-patient or out-patient treatment for chemical dependency or mental health);
2. Family emergency including, but not limited to, a death or illness in the family;

3. Religious or cultural purpose including observance of a religious or cultural holiday or participation in religious or cultural instruction;
4. Court, judicial proceeding, court-ordered activity, or jury service;
5. Post-secondary, technical school or apprenticeship program visitation, or scholarship interview;
6. State-recognized search and rescue activities consistent with RCW 28A.225.055;
7. Absence directly related to the student's homeless or foster care/dependency status;
8. Absences related to deployment activities of a parent or legal guardian who is an active duty member consistent with RCW 28A.705.010;
9. Absences due to suspensions, expulsions or emergency expulsions imposed pursuant to chapter 392-400 WAC if the student is not receiving educational services and is not enrolled in qualifying "course of study" activities as defined in WAC 392-121-107;
10. Absences due to student safety concerns, including absences related to threats, assaults, or bullying;
11. Absences due to a student's migrant status;
12. An approved activity that is consistent with district policy and is mutually agreed upon by the principal or designee and a parent, guardian, or emancipated youth; and
13. Absences due to the student's lack of necessary instructional tools, including internet access or connectivity.

In the event of emergency school facility closure due to a global pandemic, other communicable disease outbreak, natural disaster, or other event when districts are required to provide synchronous and asynchronous instruction, absences due to the following reasons are excused:

1. Absences related to the student's illness, health condition, or medical appointments due to communicable disease;
2. Absences related to caring for a family member who has an illness, health condition, or medical appointment due to communicable disease, or other emergency health condition related to school facility closures;
3. Absences related to the student's family obligations during regularly scheduled school hours that are temporarily necessary because of school facility closures, until other arrangements can be made; and
4. Absences due to the student's parent's work schedule or other obligations during regularly scheduled school hours, until other arrangements can be made.

When Is an Absence Unexcused?
Any absence from school for the majority of hours or periods in an average school day is unexcused unless it is for any reason identified as an excused absence above or in administrative procedure for an excused absence.

Disciplinary Actions

Students will not be counted absent for purposes of attendance or truancy when the student:

1. Have been suspended, expelled, or emergency removed pursuant to chapter 392-400 WAC;
2. Are receiving educational services as required by RCW 28A.600.015 and chapter 392-400 WAC; and
3. Is enrolled in qualifying "course of study" activities as defined in WAC 392-121-107. Course of study activities do not include sending homework packets home.

Tiered response system for student absences
The District must maintain a multi-tiered system of support for attendance to address barriers to student attendance, provide timely interventions and best practices to reduce chronic absenteeism and truancy. Multitiered systems of support include:

- Monitoring daily attendance data for all students who are absent, whether the absence is excused or unexcused;
- A process to contact families and verify current contact information for each enrolled student that includes multiple attempts and modalities in the parent's home language;
- Differentiated supports that address the barriers to attendance and participation that includes universal supports for all students and tiered interventions for students at-risk of and experiencing chronic absence, including school and district attendance or engagement teams, connecting to community resources, and community engagement boards; and
- A process for outreach and reengagement for students who have been withdrawn due to nonattendance and there is no evidence that the student is enrolled elsewhere. This outreach and reengagement process must include:

    - A school and/or district point person/people to maintain the list, keep it updated, and coordinate the outreach;
    - School or district staff assigned to conduct the outreach and attempts at reengagement in coordination with community partners or other programs;
    - Multiple methods of communication and outreach in a language or mode of communication that the parent understands including phone calls, texts, letters, and home visits;
    - Referral to community-based organizations;
    - Documentation of the attempts to reach student and family; and
    - Follow the required steps to address unexcused absences in chapter 28A.225 RCW, including early communication to parents, holding parent conferences and administering a truancy screener to understand the underlying reasons for the absences, and providing evidence-based or best practice interventions, even if the student has been withdrawn due to nonattendance.

Students dependent pursuant to Chapter 13.34, RCW
A school district representative or certificated staff member will review unexpected or excessive absences of a student who has been found dependent under the Juvenile Court Act with that student and adults involved with that student. Adults includes the student's caseworker, educational liaison, attorney if one is appointed, parent or guardians, foster parents and/or the

person providing placement for the student. The review will take into consideration the cause of the absences, 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 must proactively support the student's management of their school work.

Migrant Students
The district, parent/guardian and student are encouraged to work to create an Extended Absence Agreement with the school to decrease the risk of an adverse effect on the student's educational progress.

Legal References:
- Chapter 28A.225 Compulsory school attendance and admission
- RCW 13.34.300 Relevance of failure to cause juvenile to attend school to neglect petition
- Chapter 392-401 WAC Statewide definition of absence for the 2020-21 school year

Management Resources:
- 2023 - July Issue
- 2022 - June Issue
- 2021 - June Issue
- 2020 - September Alert
- 2018 - August 2018 - August Policy Issue
- 2017 - July Policy Issue
- 2016 - July Issue
- 2015 - June Issue
- 2012 - December Issue
- 2011 - December Issue
- 2011 - June Issue
- Policy News, June 2001 More Tweaking of Becca Petitions

Cross References:
- 3120 - Enrollment
- 3230 - Searches of Students and Student Privacy
- 3241 - Student Discipline
- 4218 - Language Access

Last Revised: **10.26**
Classification: **Critical**
Prior Revised Dates: **12.06; 06.11; 12.12; 06.15; 07.16; 09.17; 01.19; 10.20; 01.22; 10.23**

Financial Aid Advising Day

Purpose:
To increase financial aid application completion rates, especially among underrepresented students. Research has shown that increased completion of student aid applications in other states has led to increases in high school graduation and college matriculation, especially for students in underrepresented groups. Washington's new Financial Aid Advising Day, in conjunction with related High School and Beyond Plan requirements, provides districts with a framework for improving Washington's low financial aid application completion rates and better supporting students' post-high school goals to attend college.

Scope of financial aid advising day(s):
Between September 1 and December 1 each year, all districts with a high school must provide both a financial aid advising day and notification of financial aid opportunities to parents and guardians of any student entering the twelfth grade. The notification must include information regarding:

- The location of financial aid data maintained by the Washington Student Achievement Council where students, parents or guardians, and authorized school staff may view a student's progress and completion status of financial aid applications;
- The eligibility requirements of the Washington College Grant;
- The eligibility requirements of the financial aid advising day;
- Any community-based resources available to assist parents and guardians in understanding the requirements of and how to complete the free application for federal student aid and the Washington application for state financial aid.

Student Information Requirements
Per current High School and Beyond Plan requirements, all students must show evidence of receiving the following information about the federal and state financial aid programs, as applicable:

- Documentation necessary for completing federal and state applications;
- The importance of application timeliness (need to submit early) and submission deadlines;
- Information specific to students who are, or have been, in foster care;
- Information specific to students who are, or are at risk of experiencing, homelessness;
- Information specific to students whose family member or guardian(s) will be required to provide financial and tax information necessary to complete applications, and
- Opportunities to participate in sessions that assist students and, when necessary, their family member(s) or guardian(s), fill out financial aid applications.
- Relevant resources and information provided on the Washington Student Achievement Council's website
- Information on the College Bound Scholarship
- Information on the Washington Opportunity Scholarship program
- Information on other scholarship opportunities

Districts may choose to combine offering the financial aid advising day(s) with concurrently ensuring all seniors have completed this required component of their High School and Beyond Plan.

Financial Aid Advising Day Activities
A "financial aid advising day" means a day or series of days occurring by December 1st of each year that includes, but is not limited to, dedicated time during regular school hours for staff to:

- Provide information to twelfth grade students on the free application for federal student aid (FAFSA), the Washington application for state financial aid (WASFA), and the college board's CSS profile;
- Identify whether students have completed state or federal financial aid applications;
- As appropriate and whenever possible, assist twelfth grade students in completing the FAFSA and WASFA;
- Designate an appropriate staff member to meet with students to review information after the student has indicated they have completed an applicable postsecondary financial aid application and determine whether the student is or may be eligible for the College Bound Scholarship program, the Washington College Grant, the Washington Opportunity Scholarship, or other scholarship opportunities;
- In conjunction with the Washington Student Achievement Council, distribute information on the Washington college grant and demonstrate the use of the college financial aid calculator.

The district may choose the date, or series of dates, on which to hold a financial aid advising day.

Additional Financial Aid Advising Day Requirements
Whenever possible, districts shall provide language access services, including interpretation/translation for families with limited English proficiency.

In accordance with District procedure, schools must allow students over the age of eighteen to opt out and parents or guardians of students under the age of eighteen to opt their student out of scheduled financial aid advising day activities.

A student may not be penalized for failing to complete financial aid applications or for opting out of activities under subsection of this section. Educational staff, including instructional, administrative, and counseling staff, may not be assessed or penalized on the basis of students' completion of financial aid forms or students' decisions to opt out under subsection of this section.

In the administration of the financial aid advising day, personally identifiable student or family information must be protected in accordance with state and federal privacy laws.

Legal References:

- RCW 28A.230.212 - High school and beyond plans—Substantive requirements.
- RCW 28A.230.215 - High school and beyond plans—Universal online platform.

- RCW 28A.230 Compulsory Coursework and Activities;
- RCW 28A.300 Superintendent of Public Instruction
- RCW 28B.77 Student Achievement Council
- WAC 180-51 High School and Beyond Plan

Management Resources:

- 2020 - August Issue

Last Revised: **10.26**
Classification: **Important**
Prior Revised Dates: **03.21**

Limiting Immigration Enforcement in Schools

Applicability of Policies to Immigration Enforcement

- The district adheres to all requirements of federal and state law.

- The provisions of this policy shall apply to The district and all school facilities, which include (but are not limited to) adjacent sidewalks, parking areas, sports facilities, playgrounds, and entrances and exits from said building spaces.

- The district's policies prohibiting participation or aid in immigration enforcement shall apply for enforcement activity against students and their families, staff, and volunteers.

- The district personnel shall presume that activities by federal immigration authorities, including surveillance, constitute immigration enforcement

Access to Schools

- The district has a responsibility to ensure that all students who reside within their boundaries can safely access a free public K-12 education.

- The district does not exclude students from receiving an education or unlawfully discriminate against anyone because of their race, color, national origin, age, disability, gender identity, immigration or citizenship status, sex, creed, use of a trained dog guide or service animal by a person with a disability, sexual orientation, or on any other basis prohibited by federal, state, or local law.

- The district will uphold its responsibility to all students and ensure that all staff and volunteers are aware of the rights of immigrant students to an education

Immigration Enforcement on School Campus

1. The district does not grant permission for any person engaging in, or intending to engage in, immigration enforcement, including surveillance, to access the nonpublic areas of district facilities, property, equipment, databases, or otherwise on school grounds or their immediate vicinity. District staff shall direct anyone engaging in, or intending to engage in, immigration enforcement, including federal immigration authorities with official business that must be conducted on district property, to the school principal or authorized designee prior to permitting entrance to school grounds.District staff shall presume that activities by federal immigration authorities, including surveillance, constitute immigration enforcement.

2. If anyone attempts to engage in immigration enforcement on or near district grounds, including requesting access to a student, employee, or school property:
    a. District staff shall immediately alert and direct the person to the school principal or authorized designee, who shall: verify and record the person's credentials (at least, name, agency, and badge number), record the names of all persons they intend to contact, collect the nature of the person's business at the school, request

a copy of the court order or judicial warrant, log the date and time, and forward the request to the Superintendent and/or legal counsel for review.

b. District staff shall request that any person desiring to communicate with a student, enter school grounds, or conduct an arrest first produce a valid court order or judicial warrant.
c. The superintendent or authorized designee and/or legal counsel shall review the court order or judicial warrant for signature by a judge and validity. For the district to consider it valid, any court order or judicial warrant must state the purpose of the enforcement activity, identify the specific search location, name the specific person to whom access must be granted, include a current date, and be signed by a judge.
d. The superintendent or authorized designee and/or legal counsel shall review written authority signed by an appropriate level director of an officer's agency that permits them to enterdistrict property, for a specific purpose. If no written authority exists, the superintendent or authorized designee and/or legal counsel shall contact the appropriate level director for the officer's agency to confirm permission has been granted to enter district property for the specific purpose identified.
e. Upon receipt and examination of the required information, the superintendent or authorized designee and/or legal counsel will determine whether the district shall allow access to contact or question the identified individual and will communicate that decision to the school principal or authorized designee.
f. The superintendent or authorized designee and/or legal counsel shall make a reasonable effort, to the extent allowed by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), to notify the parent/guardian of any immigration enforcement concerning their student, including contact or interview.
g. The superintendent and/or legal counsel or authorized designee shall request the presence of a district representative to be present during any interview. The district shall not permit access to information, records, or areas beyond that specified in the court order, judicial warrant, or other legal requirement.

Gathering Immigration Related Information

1. District staff may review, but shall not inquire about, request, or collect any information about the immigration or citizenship status or place of birth of any person. District staff shall not seek or require, to the exclusion of other sufficient and permissible information, information regarding a student's or his/her parent or guardian's citizenship or immigration status.

2. The district's policies and procedures for gathering and handling student information during enrollment or other relevant periods shall be delineated in writing and made available to students and their parent or guardian(s) at least once per school year in a manner for households with individuals that have limited English proficiency (LEP) to understand.

3. If the district is required to collect information related to a student's national origin (e.g., information regarding a student's birthplace, or date of first enrollment in a U.S. school) to satisfy certain federal reporting requirements for special programs, staff shall:
    a. If feasible, consult with legal counsel to seek alternative, including alternatives to the specific program or documents accepted as adequate proof for the program;
    b. Explain to the student and student's parent(s) and/or guardian(s), in their requested language, the reporting requirements, including possible immigration enforcement impact;
    c. Provide notice to the student's parent(s) and/or guardian(s); and
    d. Mitigate deterring school enrollment of immigrants or their children by collecting this information separately from the school enrollment process.

The district superintendent and/or legal counsel or authorized designee shall request the presence of a district representative to be present during any interview. The district shall not permit access to information, records, or areas beyond that specified in the court order, judicial warrant, or other legal requirement

Responding to Requests for Information

1. District staff shall not share, provide, or disclose personal information about any person for immigration enforcement purposes without a court order or judicial warrant requiring the information's disclosure or approval by school principal or authorized designee. Requests by federal immigration authorities shall be presumed to be for immigration enforcement purposes.

2. District staff shall immediately report receipt of any information request relating to immigration enforcement to the school principal or authorized designee, who shall document the request and refer the request to the superintendent and/or legal counsel or authorized designee. The superintendent and/or legal counsel or authorized designee shall review the request to ensure compliance with FERPA, KWW, the Public Records Act (PRA), and other relevant federal and state laws. This review shall be conducted expeditiously, but before any production of information is granted to the requesting party.

3. The district shall, to the extent allowed by FERPA, notify an affected student's parent(s) and/or guardian(s) immediately of any request for information relating to immigration enforcement unless advised otherwise by the district's legal counsel.

Use of School Resources

1. District resources shall not be used for immigration enforcement.

2. District's resources and policies regarding immigration enforcement shall be published and distributed to parent(s) and/or guardian(s) on an annual basis. These resources shall include, at minimum:
    a. The right of immigrant students to receive an education, including accommodations for limited English proficiency and special education programs;
    b. General information policies including the types of records maintained by the district and a list of the circumstances or conditions under which the district might

release student information to third parties, including limitations under FERPA and other relevant law;

c. Policies regarding the retention and destruction of personal information;
d. The process of establishing notice and/or consent from parent(s) and/or guardian(s), as permitted under federal and state law, prior to releasing a student's personal information for immigration enforcement purposes;
e. Name and contact information for the district's designated point of contact on immigration related matters; and
f. Know Your Rights" resources and emergency preparedness forms to be completed in the event of a family separation.

Definitions

- "Civil immigration warrant" means any warrant for a violation of federal civil immigration law issued by a federal immigration authority. A "civil immigration warrant" includes, but is not limited to, administrative warrants entered in the National Crime Information Center database, warrants issued on ICE Form I-200 (Warrant for Arrest of Alien), Form I-205 (ICE Administrative Warrant), or prior or subsequent versions of those forms, which are not court orders.
- "Court order" and "judicial warrant" mean a directive issued by a judge or magistrate under the authority of Article III of the United States Constitution or Article IV of the Washington Constitution or otherwise authorized under the Revised Code of Washington. A "court order" includes, but is not limited to, judicially authorized warrants and judicially enforced subpoenas. Such orders, warrants, and subpoenas do not include civil immigration warrants or other administrative orders, warrants, or subpoenas that are not signed or enforced by a judge or magistrate as defined in this section.
- "De-identified" means information that does not identify an individual and with respect to which there is no reasonable basis to believe that the information can be used to identify an individual.
- "F-1 Visa" is a United States (U.S.) visa for foreign national students who wish to attend educational institutions in the U.S., of these levels:
    - Private elementary school (non-U.S. citizens are not allowed to attend U.S. public elementary schools on an F-1 visa);
    - High school;
    - Seminary;
    - Conservatory;
    - University and college; and
    - Other institutions, such as a language training program.

- "Federal immigration authority" means any on-duty officer, employee, or person otherwise paid by or acting as an agent of the United States Department of Homeland Security (DHS) including, but not limited to, its sub-agencies, Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), Customs and Border Protection (CBP), United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS), and any present or future divisions thereof charged with immigration enforcement. "Federal immigration authority" includes, but is not limited to, the Enforcement & Removal Operations (ERO) and Homeland Security Investigations (HSI) of ICE, or any person or class of persons authorized to perform the functions of an immigration officer as defined in the Immigration and Nationality Act.

- "Immigration or citizenship status" means as such status as has been established to such individual under the Immigration and Nationality Act.
- "J-1 Visa" is the visa designated for students and exchange program participants who belong to: Au Pairs, Camp Counselor, Government Visitors, Interns, International Visitors, Interns, International Visitors, Physicians, Professors and Research Scholars, Short-term scholars, specialists in different areas, university students, secondary school students, teachers, trainees, work and travel participants. Those who come to the U.S. under this visa program cannot bring dependents to the U.S.
- "Language services" includes but is not limited to translation, interpretation, training, or classes. "Translation" means written communication from one language to another while preserving the intent and essential meaning of the original text. "Interpretation" means transfer of an oral communication from one language to another.
- "Law enforcement agency" or "LEA" means any agency of the state of Washington (state) or any agency of a city, county, special district, or other political subdivision of the state (local) that is a "general authority Washington law enforcement agency," as defined by RCW 10.93.020, or that is authorized to operate jails or maintain custody of individuals in jails; or to operate juvenile detention facilities or to maintain custody of individuals in juvenile detention facilities; or to monitor compliance with probation or parole conditions.
- "Local government" means any governmental entity other than the state, federal agencies, or an operating system established under chapter 43.52 RCW. It includes, but is not limited to, cities, counties, school districts, and special purpose districts. It does not include sovereign tribal governments.
- "Notification request" means a federal immigration authority's request for affirmative notification from a state or local law enforcement agency of an individual's release from the LEA's custody. "Notification request" includes, but is not limited to, oral or written requests, including DHS Form I-247A, Form I-247N, or prior or subsequent versions of those forms.
- "M-1 Visa" is designed for students enrolled in vocational and non-academic education, excluding language courses. This includes, but is not limited to, technical courses, cooking classes, flight school, cosmetology, etc.
- "Personal information" means names, date of birth, addresses, GPS (global positioning system) coordinates or location, telephone numbers, email addresses, social media handles or screen names, social security numbers, driver's license numbers, parents' or affiliates' names, biometric data, or other personally identifiable information. "Personal information" does not include immigration or citizenship status.
- "Public schools" or "Local education agency" means any and all public elementary and secondary schools under the jurisdiction of local governing boards or a charter school board and all institutions of higher education as defined in RCW 28B.10.016.
- "Sensitive location" refers to the 2011 U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and 2013 Customs and Border Enforcement (CBP) policies which categorize certain locations as sensitive locations that should generally be avoided for immigration enforcement purposes. Accordingly, "sensitive location" includes health facilities, places of worship, and schools.
- "School resource officer" means a commissioned law enforcement officer in the state of Washington with sworn authority to uphold the law and assigned by the employing police

department or sheriff's office to work in schools to ensure school safety. By building relationships with students, school resource officers work alongside public school administrators and staff to help students make good choices. School resource officers are encouraged to focus on keeping students out of the criminal justice system when possible and not impose criminal sanctions in matters that are more appropriately handled within the educational system.

- "State agency" has the same meaning as provided in RCW 42.56.010.

Legal References:

- RCW 43.10.310 - Immigration enforcement model policies - Adoption by schools, health facilities, courthouses

Management Resources:

- 2020 - August Issue
- 2020 - December Issue

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