

REGIONAL SCHOOL UNIT 1 ATTENDANCE POLICY

Regular attendance is an essential requirement and model for academic and future employment success. Learning experiences that occur in the classroom are meaningful and vital components of the educational process. Time lost from class, whether for legitimate reason or due to a student's intentional decision not to attend, is irretrievable in terms of opportunity for instructional interaction. While make-up assignments and reading may be done independently, many learning experiences (labs, simulations, discussions, etc.) cannot be reproduced outside the milieu of the classroom. Thus, attendance and participation in specific class activities are important factors contributing to academic achievement that may be taken into account along with other performance requirements when determining student grades. Students are expected to take responsibility for attending their classes, engaging in academic learning experiences in and out of class, and keeping their parents informed of any problems related to school attendance.

As long as a student is enrolled in RSU 1 schools, regardless of age, the student's parents (which also includes legal guardians) are responsible for his/her attendance, dismissals and tardiness to school. Exceptions will be made only for students who have been legally emancipated by court decree or for any student who is eighteen years of age, living on his/her own and has prior approval from his/her parents and the Administration.

EXCUSED ABSENCES

The following absences are excused under State law:

1. Personal illness;
2. Observance of a recognized religious holiday when the observance is required during the regular school day;
3. An appointment with a health professional that must be made during the regular school day;
4. Family emergencies;
5. A planned absence for personal or educational purpose which has been approved in advance by the administration; or
6. Education disruption resulting from homelessness, unplanned psychiatric hospitalization, unplanned hospitalization for a medical emergency, foster care placement, youth development center placement or some other out-of-district placement that is not otherwise authorized by either an individual education plan or superintendent's agreement.

In addition, classes missed for the following reasons will be treated as present in school and excused from class:

7. In the case of a disabled student, a reason which the student's IEP or 504 Plan determines the absence is disability related;
8. Absence from class due to participation in a school-sponsored or approved trip or event; and
9. Serving a school-imposed disciplinary suspension.

TRUANCY

Truancy laws vary depending on the grade level of the student. A student who has completed grade 6 is considered “habitually truant” if he or she has the equivalent of ten full days or seven consecutive days of non-excused absences during a school year. A student who is at least seven years old but has not completed grade 6 is habitually truant if he or she has the equivalent of seven full days or five consecutive days of non-excused absences during a school year. (See Habitual Truant Policy JHB).

ABSENCE REPORTING

The student's parent and/or guardian is expected to notify the school on the morning of an unplanned absence. If the notification is not oral, a written note must be received by the school within two (2) school days after the student's return. For illnesses longer than five (5) consecutive days, appropriate documentation from a physician will be required. For planned absences, a student's parent is expected to provide written notification in advance.

All parent notes must include the student's name, date(s) of the absence, the specific reason for the absence and the parent's signature. **Failure to provide acceptable documentation or proper calls to the attendance office will cause the absence to be recorded as UNEXCUSED and any work missed during that period may be subject to consequences.**

MAKE-UP WORK

The amount of time a student has to make up missed work due to an excused absence will be determined by the classroom teacher in a conference with the student. **During this conference the teacher and student can discuss any deadlines and/or help sessions that may be needed to help the student successfully complete the work in the agreed upon timeframe. This conference should happen within the first two (2) days of the student's return from the absence.**

The burden of responsibility for make up is with the student. Work missed due to an UNEXCUSED absence will be provided to the student. If the student completes the work within the agreed amount of time, they will be eligible to receive no more than 60% of the value of the assignment. Students should complete the missed work because a grade of zero on missed work can drastically impact their grade point average and could contribute to course failure.

All excused absences, including absences due to disciplinary actions entitle the student to make up the work for full credit.

If a student has experienced hardships or extenuating circumstances that prevented him or her from being successful in a course due to attendance and missed assignments, he or she may be eligible to have an action plan created to help ensure the success of that student. Administration, guidance, and teachers, in a conference with both student and parent, will develop such a plan in which additional accommodations and/or support can be implemented to ensure the student's completion of coursework. The student will be responsible for completing this plan.

Legal Reference: 20-A M.R.S.A. §5001-A

Adopted: September 10, 2007

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