

STUDENT ABSENCES AND EXCUSES - REGULATION

Purpose:

Compulsory education is essential to the preservation of the rights and liberties of the people and continued prosperity of our society and our nation. Maintaining regular student attendance is necessary to achieve the goal of an educated citizenry. (MSRA 20A, section 5001A)

Mt. Blue High School

The Mt. Blue Regional School District Board of Directors has approved a policy establishing attendance requirements at Mt. Blue High School.

ABSENCES

Any student who accumulates 6 (alternate course days) or 8 (courses that meet daily) or more **UNEXCUSED** absences in a class, in one (1) semester will not receive credit for that class. Students may receive a numerical grade if they complete the course.

1. The following do not count as an absence toward the six (6) or eight (8) unexcused absences.
 - a.a. **Excused absences** are for personal illness, an appointment with a health professional that must be made during the regular school day, observance of a recognized religious holiday when the observance is required during the regular school day, family emergency, or a planned absence for a personal or education purpose which has been approved.

Note: Excused absences must be documented by a parent/guardian phone call the day of the absence (preferably), a note from a parent/guardian or doctors office presented to the office within 2 days of the student=s return to school.

2. **Unexcused absences** are being absent from school for reasons other than mentioned previously (i.e. skipping school). Time will be made up after school for unexcused absences.

Note: All students must report to the office before the start of the school day after an absence to get an excused absence or unexcused absence slip to present to teacher each period.

TARDIES

1. Students will be given two warnings for being tardy to class or school. On the third and every one thereafter, a detention will be assigned.
2. Students are considered absent if they miss more than 15 minutes of the class without appropriate documentation.

MAKE UP WORK

1. Students who have an unexcused absence **WILL NOT** be allowed to make up any work or exam assigned on the day in question.
2. Students who have excused absences will be given the same number of days to make up work as were missed.

APPEALS PROCESS

Students may request to meet with the Appeals Committee to discuss extenuating circumstances by submitting a letter to the Appeals Committee through the assistant principal who chairs the committee.

NOTIFICATION PROCEDURE

Parents and students will be notified of attendance problems at the following intervals:

1. 3 or 4 unexcused absences - letter sent
2. 6 or 8 unexcused absences - notification of loss of credit

Early Dismissals

Early dismissals will be allowed for a professional appointment provided evidence (such as an appointment card) is presented prior to leaving. In case of illness, parents or an approved adult must be notified by office personnel before students will be allowed to leave.

Tardy

Tardiness is defined as an unexcused arrival of a student later than the scheduled time that class begins. When a student is late for school, he/she is to report directly to the main office to sign in.

Green Slips

Parents may request permission for excused absences in advance by submitting the request in writing to the high school office. Any request must be approved by the administration. Students may obtain green slips in the main office and submit completed forms two weeks in advance.

Truancy

Any student is determined to be a habitual truant if he or she is absent from school, for other than excusable absences, the equivalent of ten full days or for one-half of a day for seven (7) consecutive school days within any six (6) month period. (MESA Title 20-A, Sec. 5050)

EXCHANGE TRIPS

Mt. Blue Regional School District is especially proud of the various opportunities it affords students to participate in educational exchanges with partner schools in foreign countries. The Foreign Language Department currently sponsors three (3) group exchanges for qualified students enrolled in French, German and Spanish courses. In addition, Mt. Blue High School has recently established an exchange with the Soviet Union. It is undeniable that students experience tremendous personal and academic growth resulting from participation in such exchanges. However, students who are selected for such exchanges must be fully aware of their responsibility for making up school work missed as a result of absences from regular classes. Students involved in the group exchange program will be expected to sign a contract.

Field Trips

For any trip that is class period blocks or longer, students must complete and turn in a green slip two weeks in advance in order to attend. If a student is failing any course that would be missed by attending the field trip, he/she will not be allowed the field trip and will be assigned a study hall in place of the class on the field trip.

Early Release for Athletics/Co-Curricular

A student leaving school early for any event must demonstrate that he/she is passing classes affected by the dismissal in order to go. Coaches or advisors will make a form available.

Legal Reference: Title 20 A MESA Sec. 5001-A

Mt. Blue Middle School

Students are expected to attend classes regularly and to be on time in order to benefit from the instructional program and develop habits of punctuality, self-discipline and responsibility.

Absences as described in this policy are to used for the following reasons:

- A. Personal illness;
- B. Professional appointments that cannot be made outside of the school day;
- C. Serious personal or family problems; and/or,
- D. Recognized religious holidays.

Parents or guardians should make every effort to call and provide a valid excuse when their child is absent. A written excuse must also be provided. An Absence will be considered unexcused until a valid excuse is received, and a detention could be issued for not bringing a note. Students are to report directly to the office following an absence.

PLANNED ABSENCES - Planned absences of five (5) days or less for other reasons will be excused with the approval of the principal. Planned absences for more than five (5) days must be approved by the Superintendent. Absences that are approved by the parent but not by the school will be classified as unexcused. All other absences will be excused at the discretion of the principal or his assistant.

Students seeking permission for planned absence are to fill out the Planned Absence Form, have parents and teachers sign the form, and return it to the office at least three (3) days in advance for approval by the principal.

UNEXCUSED ABSENCES - When a student has an unexcused absence or suspension s/he may appeal to the principal in writing by the end of the second day after returning to school to be allowed to make up the work missed. The principal will review the circumstances and will decide whether the student shall have the option of making up the work. Tests, quizzes and assignments will be made up at the convenience of the teacher and at an assigned time. Failure to make up the work at the times assigned shall result in a "0" grade for the work. For those teachers who give credit for class participation it is recommended that two (2) points per day missed due to unexcused absence be reduced from that portion of the final grade assigned for class participation.

ARRIVAL - Prior to 7:35 a.m. students should report to designated areas. Walking students are requested not to arrive at school until 7:45 a.m., at which time they are requested to go directly to their homerooms.

TARDY - Tardiness is defined as an unexcused appearance of a student beyond the scheduled time that school or class begins.

When a student is late for school he or she is to report directly to the school and sign in. Three (3) incidents of tardiness to school without acceptable excuses will result in disciplinary action.

Tardiness to class and homeroom will be handled in a similar manner by the classroom teacher.

Students and parents are requested to make every effort to schedule appointments outside of school hours.

EARLY DISMISSAL - Once a student is on the school grounds he or she cannot leave without permission from the principal or the assistant principal. Failure to follow this procedure will result in an unexcused absence and possible disciplinary action.

To be excused for appointments, the student should bring a note from the parents to the office before 7:55 a.m.. The student will be given an early dismissal slip which should be submitted to the teacher from whose class he or she will be leaving.

If a student is ill, he or she should report to the principal or assistant principal.

A student who misses any part of the school day due to illness will not be allowed to participate in any extra-curricular activity that day except on an appeal granted by the principal. Any student who is tardy may not participate on that day unless the tardiness is excused by the principal. The above participation applies to all regularly scheduled activities, curricular and extra-curricular.

WITHDRAWAL FROM SCHOOL - Students who are moving and plan to transfer to another school should meet with the principal in order to obtain an outline of the proper withdrawal/transfer procedures.

Elementary Schools

Students are expected to attend school regularly and to be on time in order to benefit from the instructional program and to develop habits of punctuality, self-discipline and responsibility.

Absences as described in this policy are to be used for the following purposes:

- a. Personal illness
- b. Professional appointments that cannot be made outside the regular school day
- c. Serious personal or family problems
- d. Recognized religious holidays

Planned absences for other reasons can be excused with approval of the principal. In general, the school discourages extended absences for vacation trips and the like because of the possible negative effect on the child's academic program. Requests for approval of a planned absence for vacation trips, etc., must be made in writing five days before the absence. Absences that are approved by the parent but not the school will be classified as unexcused. All other absences will be excused at the discretion of the principal.

A review of the student's attendance will take place if a student reaches seven (7) absences in a semester. If a student's absences become excessive, a conference with the parent will be called.

Unexcused Absence:

An absence will be considered unexcused until a valid excuse is received. In the case of an unexcused absence the parents will be notified of each offense. The third unexcused absence may require a parental conference with the principal and/or the superintendent. A fourth may require a conference with the Board of Directors, and a fifth unexcused absence may result in a charge of habitual truancy against the parent and/or the child.

Tardiness:

Tardiness is defined as being late for school. It is the responsibility of the parents to see that a child is on time each day. Repeated tardiness may result in a meeting with the Superintendent and/or an appearance before the Board of Directors. The parents should send a note to school for each instance of tardiness.

Early Personal Dismissal:

All dismissals must be cleared through the office before a student leaves school.

Absence/Tardiness Notes:

These notes serve two purposes. First, they fulfill the requirements of this policy concerning valid/excused absences. Second, they are a double check for you and the school that your child is where he/she is supposed to be when he/she is supposed to be there.

Absence notes must include the specific reason a child missed school, the dates of absence, and the parent's signature. A tardiness note should contain similar information.

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