STUDENT ABSENCES AND EXCUSES

One criteria of a student's success in school is regular and punctual attendance. Frequent absences may lead to poor academic work, lack of social development and possible academic failure. Regular attendance is of utmost importance for school interest, social adjustment and scholastic achievement. No single factor may interfere with a student's progress more quickly than frequent tardiness or absence.

According to state law, it is the obligation of every parent/guardian to ensure that every child under their care and supervision receives adequate education and training and, if of compulsory attendance age, attends school.

Continuity in the learning process and social adaptation is seriously disrupted by excessive absences. In most situations, the work missed cannot be made up adequately. Students who have good attendance generally achieve higher grades, enjoy school more and are more employable after leaving school. For at least these reasons, the Board believes that a student must satisfy two basic requirements in order to earn full class credit: (1) satisfy all academic requirements and (2) exhibit good attendance habits as stated in this policy.

EXCUSED ABSENCES

The following shall be considered excused absences:

1. A student who is temporarily ill or injured or whose absence is approved by the administrator of the school of attendance on a prearranged basis. Prearranged absences shall be approved for appointments or circumstances of a serious nature only which cannot be taken care of outside of school hours.

2. A student who is absent for an extended period due to physical, mental or emotional disability.

3. A student who is pursuing a work-study program under the supervision of the school.

4. A student who is attending any school-sponsored activity or activities of an educational nature with advance approval by the administration.

5. A student who is suspended or expelled.

As applicable, the district may require suitable proof regarding the above exceptions, including written statements from medical sources.

If a student is in out-of-home placement (as that term is defined by C.R.S. 22-32-138(1)(e)), absences due to court appearances and participation in court-ordered activities shall be excused. The student’s assigned social worker shall verify the student’s absence was for a court appearance or court-ordered activity.

UNEXCUSED ABSENCES

An unexcused absence is defined as an absence that is not covered by one of the foregoing exceptions. Each unexcused absence shall be entered on the student's record. The parents/guardians of the student receiving an unexcused absence shall be notified orally or in writing by the district of the unexcused absence.

In accordance with law, the district may impose appropriate penalties that relate directly to classes missed while unexcused.

The administration shall develop regulations to implement appropriate penalties. Students and parents/guardians may petition the Board of Education for exceptions to this policy or the accompanying regulations provided that no exception shall be sustained if the student fails to abide by all requirements imposed by the Board as conditions for granting any such exception.

The maximum number of unexcused absences a student may incur before judicial proceedings are initiated to enforce compulsory attendance is 10 days during any calendar year or school year.

CHRONIC ABSENTEEISM

When a student has an excessive number of absences, these absences negatively impact the student's academic success. For this reason, a student who has 15 total absences in a school year, whether the absences are excused or unexcused, may be identified as "chronically absent" by the principal or designee. Absences due to suspension or expulsion shall not be counted in the total number of absences considered for purposes of identifying a student as "chronically absent."

If a student is identified as "chronically absent," the principal or designee shall develop a plan to improve the student's attendance. The plan shall include best practices and research-based strategies to address the reasons for the student's chronic absenteeism. When practicable, the student's parent/guardian shall participate in the development of the plan.

Nothing herein shall require the principal or designee to identify a student as "chronically absent" prior to declaring the student as a "habitual truant" and pursuing court proceedings against the student and his or her parents/guardians to compel the student's attendance in accordance with state law.

MAKE-UP WORK

Make-up work shall be provided for any class in which a student has an excused absence unless otherwise determined by the building administrator or unless the absence is due to the student's expulsion from school. It is the responsibility of the student to pick up any make-up assignments permitted on the day returning to class. There shall be one day allowed for make-up work for each day of absence.

Make-up work shall be allowed following an unexcused absence or following a student's suspension from school with the goal of providing the student an opportunity to keep up with the class and an incentive to attend school. This work may receive full or partial credit to the extent possible as determined by the building administrator.

Unless otherwise permitted by the building administrator, make-up work shall not be provided during a student's expulsion. Rather, the district shall offer alternative education services to the expelled student in accordance with state law. The district shall determine the amount of credit the expelled student will receive for work completed during any alternative education program.

TARDINESS

Tardiness is defined as the appearance of a student without proper excuse after the scheduled time that a class begins. Because of the disruptive nature of tardiness and the detrimental effect upon the rights of the non-tardy student to uninterrupted learning, appropriate penalties may be imposed for excessive tardiness. Parents/guardians shall be notified of all penalties regarding tardiness.

In an unavoidable situation, a student detained by another teacher or administrator shall not be considered tardy provided that the teacher or administrator gives the student a pass to enter the next class. Teachers shall honor passes presented in accordance with this policy. The provisions of this policy shall be applicable to all students in the district, including those above and below the age for compulsory attendance as required by law.

ADOPTED: August 10, 1986

REVISES: December 13, 1988
August 16, 1994
November 9, 1999
September 28, 2000 (Board action not required)

LEGAL REFS.: C.R.S. 22-14-101 et seq. (dropout prevention and student re-engagement)
C.R.S. 22-32-109 (1)(n) (length of school year, instruction & contact time)
C.R.S. 22-32-109.1 (2)(a) (conduct and discipline code)
C.R.S. 22-32-138 (6) (excused absence requirements for students in out-of-home placements)
C.R.S. 22-33-101 et seq. (School Attendance Law of 1963)
C.R.S. 22-33-105 (3)(d)(III) (opportunity to make up work during suspension)
C.R.S. 22-33-108 (judicial proceedings to enforce school attendance laws)
C.R.S. 22-33-203 (educational alternatives for expelled students and determination of credit)
1 CCR 301-78 Rules 1.00 et seq. (standardized calculation for counting student attendance and truancy)

CROSS REFS.: IC/ICA, School Year/School Calendar/Instruction Time
JEA, Compulsory Attendance Ages
JF-R, Admission and Denial of Admission (Procedures for Students in Out-of-Home Placements)
JFC, Student Withdrawal from School/Dropouts
JHB, Truancy
JK, Student Discipline
JKD/JKE, Suspension/Expulsion of Students
JLIB, Student Dismissal Precautions