



BLAINE SCHOOL DISTRICT

Home of the Borderites

Attendance Guidelines

Showing up for school has a huge impact on a student's academic success starting in kindergarten and continuing through high school. Even as children grow older and more independent, families play a key role in making sure students get to school safely every day and understand why attendance is so important for success in school and in life.

We realize some absences are unavoidable due to health problems or other circumstances. We also know that when students miss too much school, regardless of the reason, it can cause them to fall behind academically.

Washington State has recently adopted permanent absence rules (Chapter 392-401 WAC) to provide greater consistency across the state and align with the federal education plan, ESSA (Every Student Succeeds Act).

Attendance Rules

Students are expected to attend all assigned classes each day. Blaine School District is required by regulation to monitor, record, and report student attendance. We are also required to take action when attendance issues arise. The following guidelines will help you avoid the pitfalls of chronic absenteeism. Chronic absenteeism is defined as missing just 18 days per school year (or 10%), whether excused or unexcused.

Excused Absences: Absences due to illness, health condition, health appointment (including dental, vision, medical, mental health), family emergency, religious or cultural purpose, court or judicial proceeding, post-secondary school or apprenticeship program visitation, scholarship interview, state-recognized search and rescue activities, homeless or foster care/dependency status, parent/guardian deployment activities for active duty military, migrant status, safety concern, *principal approved activity. Absences due to disciplinary action will only be excused when the student participates in the educational services provided by the school or is enrolled in a qualifying "course of study".

All other absences shall be considered unexcused.



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Students shall be permitted to make up all missed assignments under reasonable conditions and time limits if the absence is excused. However, participation or performance classes such as music or CTE may be impossible to make up. The school attendance office must receive notification from student's parent/guardian of an excused absence from any class, otherwise the student's absence will be considered unexcused. The notification must meet the criteria for excused absence.

Planned Absence: If the family wishes to plan for a prearranged absence, the parent or guardian must **submit a request to the school at least 5 days in advance and must agree to an educational plan to prevent the child from falling behind academically.** Approval is at the discretion of the school Principal or designee. If the student is struggling academically, this request may not be approved and the child will be considered unexcused.

Blaine School District is committed to combatting chronic absenteeism. When students are absent for any reason (excused or unexcused) and near the threshold of chronic absenteeism, measures will be taken to identify the barriers to regular attendance. If a student has 5 or more excused absences in a single month or 10 or more excused absences in the current school year, the school will require a conference, a doctor's note, or both.

Unexcused Absences: As required by RCW 28A.225.010, the parent/guardian will be notified whenever the student has failed to attend school after any unexcused absence. A conference must be held with the parent or guardian after 3 unexcused absences within any month. Not later than the student's 5th unexcused absence in a month a petition will be filed with the Whatcom County Juvenile Court and student and parents/guardians will be referred to the state mandated truancy board and must enter into an attendance contract with the school. Attendance records are required to follow students who transfer districts. Absences from the prior district will be considered when taking any absenteeism actions.