

JE © STUDENT ATTENDANCE

Attendance enforcement is a shared responsibility between the Fredonia-Moccasin School District and the student's parent or legal guardian. The parent, legal guardian, or other person in the state of Arizona having control or charge of any student is required to send the student to school during all times that the public school is in session. The District requires that students enrolled for school within the District attend school regularly in accordance with the Arizona Revised Statutes. Each student is expected to attend school for the entire school day.

Student Tardiness

Student tardiness is a serious disruption to the educational process. Tardiness interferes with time to teach and infringes on the educational rights of other students. Each school shall develop and implement a well-communicated tardy procedure.

- A student who is not physically present in the classroom at the start of the instructional period but reports to the classroom after that time is to be marked tardy. Teachers shall mark any student who is not physically present in the classroom at the start of the instructional period as absent in the school's Student Information System (SIS). Students who are tardy are required to report to the school office prior to reporting to the classroom. If secondary student misses more than twenty (20) minutes of the instructional period, the student has missed an essential part of the learning experience. Therefore, for purposes of attendance enforcement, a secondary student who is more than twenty (20) minutes late to any class period shall be counted absent from that class. The school office will determine if the student will be officially marked tardy or absent, and will make the necessary change in the SIS depending on when the student reports to the office.
- The first three (3) tardies ensue no consequences; the fourth (4th) tardy will be equivalent to one (1) absence and each subsequent tardy is equivalent to one-third (1/3) of an absence.

Recording Daily Attendance

The District is responsible for maintaining an accurate attendance record for each student enrolled.

Elementary:

- An elementary student shall be recorded as absent for half (1/2) of the day if more than one (1) hour and fifty-five (55) minutes of the instructional day are missed and recorded as absent for the entire day if more than three (3) hours and forty-five (45) minutes of the instructional day are missed.

Secondary:

- A secondary student shall be marked absent for the entire day if the student is absent every class period.
- A secondary student who is absent less than a full day shall be marked absent only in those classes from which the student was absent (see student tardiness above).

Limitation of Absences

Regular student attendance is critical to the student completing course work required for earning credit and/or being promoted to the next grade. Both in-school and out-of-school learning activities and assignments contribute to a student's ability not only to attain a passing grade in a course, but also to master the standards for each course of study.

Excessive Absenteeism; Denial of Credit; Retention:

- The federal Every Student Succeeds Act requires that in order to achieve adequate yearly progress (AYP), schools must attain a standard of ninety percent (90%) attendance. Individual student absences should be limited to a maximum of five (5) total absences per term.
- A student's medical illnesses or conditions may prevent a student from meeting the above goal, and absences which are due to the student's physical or mental inability to attend school, if properly documented and submitted to the school within the timelines defined by this regulation, will not be included in the determination of a student's denial of credit or retention if the student has completed course-work requirements.
- For the purpose of this subsection, all arranged absences must be made up before the next term ends. All arranged absences for which the makeup work was not completed and submitted as specified by the teacher shall be considered unapproved.
- A letter will be sent home to the parent/guardian after the third (3rd) absence, in order to allow the parent/guardian time to avoid loss of credit (secondary).
- A required parent conference is to be scheduled by the principal or the principal's designee when the following occurs due to excessive absenteeism:
 - A student has been identified for possible retention;
 - A student may be denied course credit;
 - A student is deemed to be a habitual truant; and/or
 - A referral for educational neglect is contemplated (elementary).

Schools may investigate, in cooperation with the parent and student, the cause of absences and the principal or the principal's designee may determine a course of action to address excessive absenteeism.

Elementary students who exceed five (5) absences per term may be retained in the current grade.

Secondary students who exceed five (5) absences in a single term will lose credit for the class, or classes, in which the absences occurred. A student must then petition for credit by completing a Petition for Credit Form (See Form JE-E), meeting with the School Attendance Committee (SAC), and fulfill the requirements set forth by the SAC.

Absence Documentation/Explanation - Re-admittance to Class

Each school will include specific directions and/or procedures relative to the manner in which students will be re-admitted to class subsequent to an absence in the student/parent handbook or

other written communication to the parent/guardian. For purposes of consistency, schools may require parental/guardian confirmation of the reason for the absence in writing prior to or upon return from each absence. Verified medical appointments, medical excuses, medical documentation and/or other explanations must be presented in writing by the student from the parent/guardian or personally by the parent/guardian within three (3) days directly following the absence.

Classification of Absences

The determination of the proper classification of an absence requires the exercise of judgment on the part of the principal or the principal's designee. To evaluate the proper classification of the absence, the school may reasonably inquire, investigate, and/or request further documentation from the parent/guardian.

Absences from class or school due to a student's participation in a school sanctioned activity or absences from class or school resulting from a student's suspension or required parent conference shall not be counted as absences for the purpose of attendance enforcement.

Approved Absences

Explanations by the parent, legal guardian, or physician stating the reason the student was absent within the meaning listed below must be presented to the principal or designee not later than three (3) days after the student returns to school. Absences shall be approved for the purposes of attendance enforcement within the meaning of the Arizona Revised Statutes when:

- The student is physically or mentally unable to attend school, or the absence is related to the student's disability and the course work has been completed.
- The approval of the principal or the principal's designee has been given for an unavoidable absence due to an emergency.
- The student is absent due to a required court appearance or a religious holiday.
- The absence has been arranged pursuant to the request of a parent or legal guardian prior to the absence.

Unapproved Absences

Within the meaning of the Arizona Revised Statutes an absence is unapproved when:

- The absence was not due to the physical or mental inability of the student to attend school, the student's disability, an emergency, a required court appearance, or religious holiday;
- The absence from class or school was without written permission from the principal or the principal's designee or teacher;
- The parent/guardian or person in charge of the student failed to notify the school of the reason the student was physically or mentally unable to attend, or the nature of the emergency, court appearance or religious holiday within three (3) days after the student returned to school;
- The student failed or refused to attend school when so directed by the parent or legal guardian or school official; or

- The parent or legal guardian or person having charge of the student failed or refused to require the student's attendance at school.

Truancy:

- An unapproved absence for one (1) or more class periods or the equivalent of one (1) or more class periods during a school day shall be deemed a truancy.
- If a student has been declared truant three (3) times for unapproved absences, the principal of the school, or the principal's designee, shall may report the student to a school police officer or the local law enforcement agency for investigation of habitual truancy and issuance of a citation, if warranted, in accordance with Arizona Revised Statutes.
- The Arizona Revised Statutes do not distinguish between truancy resulting from an action of the student and that of the parent or legal guardian.
- Any child who has once been declared a habitual truant and who in an immediately succeeding year is absent from school without a valid excuse may again be declared a habitual truant.

Notification of Absence

The school, in which the pupil is enrolled, within two (2) hours after the first class in which the pupil is absent, shall make a reasonable effort to promptly telephone and notify the parent/guardian.

In the event of a student being declared habitual truant, the attendance clerk, or other school official shall deliver or cause to be delivered a written notice of truancy to the parent, legal guardian, or other person having control or charge of the child.

Makeup Work

Teachers shall provide an opportunity for a student to make up missed work due to any absence, and students shall be held accountable for the work. When a student is absent, however, the educational experiences lost during that absence might be irretrievable because the instruction and interaction in the instructional setting cannot be duplicated through makeup work. Instructional days must be made up before the next term ends.

After any absence, a student is required to initiate contact with the teacher(s) to obtain appropriate makeup work within three (3) school days immediately following the absence. Once contact has been made with the teacher(s), specific makeup work must be completed and returned to the teacher(s) within a reasonable length of time, to be determined by the teacher and communicated to the student/parent or legal guardian. The makeup work must be returned to the teacher(s) by the specified due date if it is to be acknowledged. Students shall be allowed a minimum of three (3) days to complete makeup work.

Due Process

After receipt of notification of the impending denial of credit or retention in the current grade, the parent/guardian or student may request a hearing with the principal or the principal's designee if there is reason to believe an error in the attendance record or an extenuating circumstance exists. Before a student is denied credit for failure to comply within the attendance requirements prescribed, the principal or the principal's designee shall provide written notice of the intended denial to the parent/guardian of the student. The notice must include a statement indicating that

the student and parent/guardian may request a review of the absences of the student and a statement of the procedure for requesting such review. Upon the request for review by the parent/guardian, the principal or the principal's designee shall review the reason for each absence of the student upon which the intended denial of credit is based. After the review, the principal or the principal's designee shall credit towards the required days of attendance each day of absence for which:

- there is evidence or written affirmation by the parent/guardian of the student being physically or mentally unable to attend school on the day of the absence; and
- the pupil has completed course work requirements.

If the parent/guardian disagrees with the decision of the principal or the principal's designee, the parent may appeal to the District Superintendent or the Superintendent's designee. The District Superintendent or the Superintendent designee's decision is final.

Attendance Incentives and Interventions

Incentive programs designed to promote and enforce the good attendance of students shall be developed and implemented at each school. Attendance incentive plans are to be developed with input from parents, students, and teachers and must be reviewed by each school's principal.

Each incentive program will also include an intervention component.

- The intervention component will be developed with the involvement of school personnel.
- The interventions will be designed to address issues that affect students' regular attendance.

This policy is applicable to students participating in a program of special education or a Section 504 Plan resulting from a student's disability, but subject to the student's individualized education program or 504 Plan, and in accordance with the Individual with Disabilities Education Act.

Adopted: August 1, 2017

LEGAL REF.:

A.R.S.
15-346
15-771
15-802
15-804
15-805
15-806
15-807
15-826
15-843
15-872
15-873

CROSS REF.:

JH - Student Absences and Excuses

