

FERNDAL SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 502  
ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES

No. 3122 P-1

EXCUSED AND UNEXCUSED ABSENCES

I. BACKGROUND

- A. Washington State Law concerning pupil attendance states that "pupils shall be punctual and regular in attendance." (WAC 180-40-010)
- B. The Compulsory Attendance Law, Chapter 28A.225 RCW, requires all parents, guardians, and Washington residents having custody of any child between and including the ages of eight and eighteen to "cause such child to attend the public school of the district in which the child resides" unless the child attends a private school for the same time or unless other enumerated exceptions are present. RCW 28A.225.010 states any person violating this requirement "shall be fined not more than twenty-five (\$25.00) dollars for each day of unexcused absence from school, unless the person charged can show the exercise of reasonable diligence in attempting to get the juvenile to attend school, or that the school district failed to discharge its statutory responsibilities. RCW 28A.225.090 stated alternatively, the court may order the parent to provide community service at the child's school instead of imposing a fine.
- C. Regular school attendance is a vital part of preparation for business, personal, and social life. Therefore, it is important that the school encourage students to develop responsible attitudes for regular attendance.

II. EXCUSED ABSENCES

- A. An absence shall be excused when the absence is due to:
  - 1. illness
  - 2. health condition
  - 3. school approved activity
  - 4. family emergency
  - 5. religious observance
  - 6. disciplinary actions or short-term suspensions.
- B. Temporary absences for agreed activities upon parental request shall be excused if the following conditions are met:
  - 1. parent made request in writing stating reason and duration
  - 2. principal approves the request and the proposed absence is not likely to cause a serious adverse effect on the student's educational progress.

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- C. For all excused absences, the student shall be allowed to make up assignments and tests if:
1. such assignments or tests have a substantial effect on the student's grade(s) or causes the student not to receive credit.
  2. the assignments or tests are not part of a participation type class, for example music, physical education, labs, etc. The student will not be able to make-up these classes and in such a case, an excused absence would have an adverse effect on the student's educational progress which could ultimately be reflected in the grade.

III. UNEXCUSED ABSENCES

- A. Any absence where a legitimate excuse, as defined above, is not adequately documented shall be deemed unexcused. Adequately documented means a telephone call or a written note to the school within two school days following the absence. If the parent provides the school with an excuse after the two-day deadline, the school shall record the absence as unexcused.
- B. Each day a student misses the majority of a school day and does not provide the school with an excuse it will be recorded as an unexcused absence for purposes of notifying parents, conferencing with parents and student, and filing petitions with the court.
- C. Specific procedures for unexcused absences are as follows:
1. First unexcused absence within a month—the school shall notify the parents by telephone or in writing and document the notification. Within this written or telephone correspondence, the school official shall inform the parent of potential consequences of additional unexcused absences (see Attachment 1).
  2. Second unexcused absence within a month—the principal shall conduct a conference call with the parent (see Attachment 3) or conduct a meeting (see Attachment 2) with the parents and student at a time (between 7:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. on school days) and place (school) reasonably convenient for all persons. The school shall document the disposition of the scheduled conference. (see Attachment 3)

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- a. adjusted school program, school, or course assigned
  - b. provided more individualized or remedial instruction
  - c. provided appropriate vocational courses or work experience
  - d. referred student to a community truancy board
  - e. assisted parents or child in obtaining supplementary services
  - f. other
3. If parents fail to attend the scheduled conference, the school will send a third letter advising the parents of the district's intention of filing a petition if the unexcused absences continue and attach a copy of Attachment 3, Documentation of Truancy Conference (see Attachment 4).
4. If parents or the child fail to carry out the steps agreed to at the conferencing for eliminating the truancy, the school will send a fourth letter. (see Attachment 5)
5. Seventh unexcused absence within a month or the tenth unexcused absence during the current school year—the school shall provide the district attendance officer with documentation of the absences, completed form Documentation of Truancy Conference Attachment 3, Attachments 4 and 5 if appropriate, and a completed petition (see Attachment 6). The attendance officer will file the petition.
6. If the student is court ordered to attend school and has one more unexcused absence, the principal completes an affidavit and sends it to the district's attendance officer, assistant superintendent for educational services, for signature and notarizing (see Attachment 7). The assistant superintendent will file the affidavit. If the student is six or seven years of age and found to be in contempt of the court order to attend school, the parents shall appear before the judge not the student.
7. If the district is notified by the court that a student between the ages of 8 and 17 is found to be *in contempt of the court order to attend school*, the student shall appear before the judge and the principal will complete and send to the court the Juvenile Information Sheet (see Attachment 8).
8. Since accumulated unexcused absences remain with the student when transferring to another district, all truancy records shall be forwarded to the receiving district.

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IV. COMPLETING SPI FORM 1302A REPORT ON EXCUSED AND UNEXCUSED ABSENCES/TRUANCY PETITIONS

- A. At the end of each school year, the schools shall submit the completed Superintendent of Public Instruction Form 1302A/B, BLDG (see Attachment 15, page one) to the attendance officer, assistant superintendent for educational services.
- B. At the end of each school year, the attendance officer will compile the data on Superintendent of Public Instruction Form 1302A/B DIST (see Attachment 15, page two) and send it to the legislative center in Olympia, Washington, by June 30.

V. LOSS OF CREDIT DUE TO LACK OF ATTENDANCE—  
REGULAR EDUCATION

A. Introduction

No Ferndale High School teacher shall grant credit to a student who has missed more than ten (10) days during the semester. A student must be in attendance eighty (80) days of a ninety (90) day semester, with the exception of school approved activities, illness, health conditions, family emergency, religious observance and suspension days. However, if the course goals and instructional objectives of the course permit, a staff member may work with the student to provide opportunities to make up missed time and assignments. Staff members will provide in writing to each student enrolled in the course the specific attendance requirements and the methods by which missed time and assignments may be made up and directs the students to inform their parents of the attendance requirements of the course that the student is enrolled.

Under no circumstances will a teacher's attendance procedures be more restrictive than the district's policy and procedures No. 3122 excused and unexcused absences nor will the teacher's attendance procedures be used as a form of discipline.

B. Procedures for Notification

As a student's absences accumulate during the semester, the student and parent will be notified as described below.

<u>Number of Absences</u>	<u>Procedure</u>	<u>Responsibility Of</u>
Four	Letter sent to parent indicating four absences in one or more classes. (see Attachment 8) Copy	Attendance Office

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	sent to Indian Education staff when a Native American student is involved	
Eight	Counsel with student	Attendance Office
	Letter sent to parent indicating that class credit may be in jeopardy due to number of absences. (see Attachment 9) Copy sent to Indian Education staff when a Native American student is involved.	Attendance Office
	The Parent is invited to invited to set a conference, for assistance in improving attendance.	Assistant is Principal / & Indian Education Staff when a Native American student is involved.
Ten or More	Letter to parent about loss of credit and appeal process. (see Attachment 10) Copy sent to Indian Education staff when a Native American student is involved.	Attendance Office
	Contact with student	Assistant Principal / & Indian Education Staff when a Native American student is involved.

C. Appeal Process

If a student and/or parent feels that extenuating circumstances (serious illness, hospitalization, etc.) exist such that loss of credit should not occur, they may appeal the decision of loss of credit to the assistant principal.

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VI. LOSS OF CREDIT DUE TO LACK OF ATTENDANCE—  
SPECIAL EDUCATION

A. Introduction

In order to fulfill the credit requirements for a class at Ferndale High School, a student must be in attendance eighty (80) days of a ninety (90) day semester, with the exception of school-sponsored activities (interscholastic athletics, field trips, etc.) and suspension days. Any student who misses more than ten (10) days in a semester may not be eligible to receive credit(s).

B. Procedures for Special Education Attendance

1. Four-day Notice

- a. Attendance office will mail original special education attendance letter, with attached history, to parents. (see Attachment 12)
- b. Attendance office will provide a copy of the letter to the special education department. When a Native American student is involved, an additional copy will be sent to the Indian Education department.
- c. Special education and Indian education (Native American students) staff will contact parents by telephone, letter, or in person. These contacts will be documented.

2. Eight-day Notice

- a. Attendance office will mail original special education attendance letter, with attached history, to parents. (see Attachment 13)
- b. Attendance office will provide a copy of the letter to the special education department. When a Native American student is involved, an additional copy will be sent to the Indian Education department.
- c. Special education and Indian Education staff will contact parents by telephone, letter, or in person. These contacts will be documented.

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3. Ten-day Notice

- a. Attendance office will mail original special education attendance letter, with attached history, to parents. (see Attachment 14)
- b. Attendance office will provide a copy of the letter to the special education department. When a Native American student is involved, an additional copy will be sent to the Indian Education department.
- c. Special education and Indian Education (Native American students) staff will contact parents by telephone, letter, or in person. These contacts will be documented.

4. Eleven-day Notice

- a. Before the high school denies credit to a special education student for lack of attendance, the administration will request an individual education program committee (IEP) meeting. The IEP Committee shall be composed of an administrator, the parent, special education teacher, regular class teachers, school psychologist, director of special education, and, when any Native American student is involved, the Indian Education coordinator.
- b. The IEP Committee will meet and make a decision about credit for special education students. Possible options include:
  - (1) Waive the ten-day attendance requirement;
  - (2) Deny credit and allow student to continue attending classes on audit status;
  - (3) Change the student's schedule and IEP where appropriate;
  - (4) Suspend the continuing alternative education programs made available; or
  - (5) An alternative determined by the IEP Committee and parents.
- c. If student is to be suspended, the principal will send a copy of "Summary of Safeguards and Due Process", and "Ferndale High School Appeal Letter" to parents.

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C. Appeal Process

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