The RCW Chapter 28.A.225 of the Washington State Compulsory Attendance Law specifies that parents/guardians have the primary responsibility for ensuring the attendance of their children at school. The law further states that students shall be regular and punctual in attendance. The attendance procedures at White River School District are designed to assist parents/guardians in carrying out this responsibility.

Missing school for any reason negatively affects learning, achievement, and grades. Daily attendance is imperative to a student’s effective and productive learning experience. The sequential presentation of school learning requires a continuity of instruction. The maximum benefits for each individual child can be achieved only from participation and interaction in daily activity. Regular school attendance is both encouraged and mandated. The primary responsibility for adherence to regular attendance rests with the student’s parents/guardians and the individual student.

White River School District is committed to supporting students and families in attending school regularly and will therefore adhere to its legal obligation to report all parents/guardians and/or students who fail to abide by Washington State Compulsory Attendance Law (Becca Bill- SB 5439).

**ABSENCES**
Absences from school shall be classified as either excused or unexcused absence.
Elementary School: More than 30 minutes late to school and leaving more than 30 minutes early from school will constitute a half-day absence.
Middle & High School: Four or more absences from our six-period day will constitute a full-day absence.

**EXCUSED ABSENCES**
- An excused absence is any absence that has the approval of both the parent/guardian and the school.
- To excuse an absence, the parent/guardian must call or send a note to the Main Office within **48 hours** of the absence. Please give the following information: student’s full name, date of absence(s), reason for absence, and parent/guardian signature (if a note).
- A written statement from a doctor will be required on the 5th consecutive day of absence.
- If a parent/guardian does not phone or send a written note of clearance within 48 hours, the absence is considered unexcused.
- An excused absence shall not be granted if the school deems the absence(s) may cause a serious adverse effect upon the student’s academic progress.
- If the parent/guardian and the school are not in agreement or the school/district deems an absence to cause serious adverse effect upon the student’s educational progress, the absence shall be considered unexcused.
- After an excused absence, it is the student’s responsibility to make up missing work with the teacher(s).

The following are valid reasons for an excused absence:
- Illness/Medical Appointments- Bring **verification from the medical provider. Doctors notes may be required if the student does not attend school regularly. Assignments can be picked up 24 hours after requested.**
- Family Emergencies
- Court Appearances
- Religious Holiday
- School Sponsored Activities
- Funeral
- Disciplinary Action or Suspension
- Dangerous Weather and Road Conditions
- Directly related to homeless status
- Chronic health conditions or extended illness- **Contact the school counselor and notify teachers.**
EXCESSIVE EXCUSED ABSENCE PATTERN
♦ A student who is absent from school for part of all of 12 or more days on which school is held during a semester may be required to bring a written statement from a doctor.
♦ In situations where a pattern of excessive excused absences from school has occurred.
♦ Students who meet these criteria will be required to have a parent attendance meeting with the school administrator and counselor to develop an Attendance Contract.

UNEXCUSED ABSENCES (TRUANCY)
Unexcused absences will follow state mandatory attendance guidelines for referral to the prosecuting attorney.
♦ A student whose absences are not excused counts as truancy and will be subject to disciplinary action.
♦ A student is considered truant if he/she misses any part of a school day without the school’s permission and without the parent’s prior knowledge.
♦ Excessive unexcused absences will be filed under the BECCA Bill to Pierce County Prosecuting Attorney’s Office.

BECCA Bill (RCW 28A.225.010)
In accordance with the state’s mandatory “BECCA” attendance laws and District attendance policies, if a student is absent without legitimate excuse for one third of the student’s educational program day on seven (7) or more occasions in a calendar month and/or ten (10) in a year, the School District may file a petition with the juvenile court seeking the court’s jurisdiction over the student’s attendance in school. Any parent found to have violated the law may be fined up to $25.00 per day of unexcused absence and the student will be ordered to attend school. The court may also order the parent and/or guardian to provide community service at the student’s school in lieu of imposing a fine. A student who fails to comply with a court order to attend school may be found in contempt of court and may be placed in juvenile detention or receive alternative sentencing from the court.

LATE ARRIVAL (TARDY)
It is vital that student be on time to every class every day; when students are late to class, they disrupt the instruction in the classroom.
♦ Elementary Schools: Your teacher will take attendance every morning.
♦ Middle and High Schools: Your teacher will take attendance every period.
If you arrive after the start time, you MUST report to the office for an admission slip to class.
♦ Students who are not in class when the bell rings are tardy.
♦ Elementary- When a student has been tardy five times; it will be recorded in our system as an unexcused absence.
♦ Middle & High School- A student who arrives 10 minutes after class starts is considered absent rather than tardy.
♦ Discipline will apply to students who are tardy.

PLANNED ABSENCES
If you know in advance that your child will be absent from school, please stop by the office to get a “Planned Absence Form”. Please complete the form and return to school at least three (3) days prior to the absence. These absences may be excused, depending on the reason for the absence if all make-up work is turned in on time, with approval from the teacher and principal. If the student has already missed several days of school, the absence may be marked as unexcused. Unexcused absences may result in the filing of a Becca Petition. There are a maximum of 5 days of excused planned absences in a school year. Any planned absences beyond 5 days in a school year must be approved by administration in advance or could be considered unexcused.
DISMISSAL PROCEDURES
♦ If you must pick-up your child before school ends, please come to the office and your child will be called out of class. Teachers will release students from their classroom to the office only under direct request from the office staff.
♦ If the school has not received a note or phone call from a parent/guardian prior to the end of the day, the student will go home in their routine manner.

ATHLETIC ATTENDANCE POLICY
♦ The athlete must attend all periods on the day of the sporting event. Only exceptions granted by an administrator will be honored. Students who have been absent during any portion of the day will no be allowed to participate/attend without written authorization from an administrator.
♦ Athletes who have missed school and/or were seen by a physician, dentist, or other medical personnel for any reason must receive a written note from the medical provider indicating the athlete is medically able to compete during the day.
♦ Athletes understand that their participation on a day in which they have missed one or more class periods without proper written authorization will result in their suspension from the next contest at the level in which they participated.
♦ Athletes must be in attendance the complete school day before being allowed to attend practice.

INFORMING THE SCHOOL
Please notify the school if your child is going to be absent, including the reason for the absence so we can determine whether the absence is excused or unexcused.

Our voicemail system is available 24 hours a day.
Elk Ridge Elementary, #360-829-3354
Foothills Elementary, #360-829-3355
Mountain Meadow Elementary, #360-829-3356
Wilkeson Elementary, #360-829-3357
Glacier Middle School, #360-829-3395
White River High School, #360-829-3352.

Please visit our school website for information, including our school events calendar at
http://elkridge.whiteriver.wednet.edu/
http://mountainmeadow.whiteriver.wednet.edu/
http://foothills.whiteriver.wednet.edu/
http://wilkeson.whiteriver.wednet.edu/
http://glacier.whiteriver.wednet.edu
http://wrhs.whiteriver.wednet.edu
Please pay particular attention to our arrival and dismissal times. We appreciate you having your children here on time in order to keep each classroom free of disruption during role call and to ensure they do not miss important instruction at the start of the day.

**SCHOOL SCHEDULES**

Elk Ridge, Foothills, Mountain Meadow, and Wilkeson Elementary Schools

**Full Day Kindergarten & 1st through 5th Grades**
- Late Start Mondays 10:00 a.m. - 3:25 p.m.
- Tuesday through Friday 9:00 a.m. - 3:25 p.m.
- Half Day Early Release: 11:55 am

**Early Kindergarten**
- Late Start Mondays 10:00 a.m.- 12:00 p.m.
- Tuesday through Friday 9:00 a.m. - 11:40 a.m.
- Half Day Early Release: 11:55 am

**Glacier Middle School**
- Late Start Mondays: 8:55 am to 2:30 pm
- Tuesday through Friday: 7:55 am to 2:30 pm
- Half Day Early Release: 10:55 am

**White River High School**
- Late Start Mondays: 8:35 am - 2:05 pm
- Tuesday through Friday: 7:35 am - 2:05 pm
- Half Day Early Release: 10:35 am
Chapter 28a.225 RCW
COMPULSORY SCHOOL ATTENDANCE AND ADMISSION

RCW Sections
28A.225.005 Compulsory education, requirements -- Informing students and parents annually.
28A.225.010 Attendance mandatory -- Age -- Exceptions.
28A.225.015 Attendance mandatory -- Six or seven year olds -- Unexcused absences -- Petition.
28A.225.020 School's duties upon child's failure to attend school.
28A.225.023 Youth dependent pursuant to chapter 13.34 RCW -- Review of unexpected or excessive absences -- Support for youth's school work.
28A.225.025 Community truancy boards.
28A.225.030 Petition to juvenile court for violations by a parent or child -- School district responsibilities.
28A.225.031 Alcohol or controlled substances testing -- Authority to order.
28A.225.035 Petition to juvenile court -- Contents -- Court action -- Referral to community truancy board -- Transfer of jurisdiction upon relocation.
28A.225.055 Excused absences -- Search and rescue activities.
28A.225.060 Custody and disposition of child absent from school without excuse.

RCW 28A.225.005
Compulsory education, requirements — Informing students and parents annually.
Each school within a school district shall inform the students and the parents of the students enrolled in the school about the compulsory education requirements under this chapter. The school shall provide access to the information at least annually. Providing online access to the information satisfies the requirements of this section unless a parent or guardian specifically requests information to be provided in written form.

RCW 28A.225.010
Attendance mandatory — Age — Exceptions.
(1) All parents in this state of any child eight years of age and under eighteen years of age shall cause such child to attend the public school of the district in which the child resides and such child shall have the responsibility to and therefore shall attend for the full time when such school may be in session unless:
   (a) The child is attending an approved private school for the same time or is enrolled in an extension program as provided in RCW 28A.195.010(4);
   (b) The child is receiving home-based instruction as provided in subsection (4) of this section;
   (c) The child is attending an education center as provided in chapter 28A.205 RCW;
   (d) The school district superintendent of the district in which the child resides shall have excused such child from attendance because the child is physically or mentally unable to attend school, is attending a residential school operated by the department of social and health services, is incarcerated in an adult correctional facility, or has been temporarily excused upon the request of his or her parents for purposes agreed upon by the school authorities and the parent: PROVIDED, That such excused absences shall not be permitted if deemed to cause a serious adverse effect upon the student's educational progress: PROVIDED FURTHER, That students excused for such temporary absences may be claimed as full time equivalent students to the extent they would otherwise have been so claimed for the purposes of RCW 28A.150.250 and 28A.150.260 and shall not affect school district compliance with the provisions of RCW 28A.150.220;
or
(e) The child is sixteen years of age or older and:
   (i) The child is regularly and lawfully employed and either the parent agrees that the child should not be
       required to attend school or the child is emancipated in accordance with chapter 13.64 RCW;
   (ii) The child has already met graduation requirements in accordance with state board of education rules
       and regulations; or
   (iii) The child has received a certificate of educational competence under rules and regulations
       established by the state board of education under RCW 28A.305.190.

(2) A parent for the purpose of this chapter means a parent, guardian, or person having legal custody of a
child.

(3) An approved private school for the purposes of this chapter and chapter 28A.200 RCW shall be one
approved under regulations established by the state board of education pursuant to RCW 28A.305.130.

(4) For the purposes of this chapter and chapter 28A.200 RCW, instruction shall be home-based if it
consists of planned and supervised instructional and related educational activities, including a curriculum
and instruction in the basic skills of occupational education, science, mathematics, language, social studies,
history, health, reading, writing, spelling, and the development of an appreciation of art and music, provided
for a number of hours equivalent to the total annual program hours per grade level established for approved
private schools under RCW 28A.195.010 and 28A.195.040 and if such activities are:
   (a) Provided by a parent who is instructing his or her child only and are supervised by a certificated
       person. A certificated person for purposes of this chapter and chapter 28A.200 RCW shall be a person
       certified under chapter 28A.410 RCW. For purposes of this section, "supervised by a certificated person"
       means: The planning by the certificated person and the parent of objectives consistent with this subsection;
       a minimum each month of an average of one contact hour per week with the child being supervised by the
       certificated person; and evaluation of such child's progress by the certificated person. The number of
       children supervised by the certificated person shall not exceed thirty for purposes of this subsection; or
   (b) Provided by a parent who is instructing his or her child only and who has either earned forty-five
       college level quarter credit hours or its equivalent in semester hours or has completed a course in home-
       based instruction at a postsecondary institution or a vocational-technical institute; or
   (c) Provided by a parent who is deemed sufficiently qualified to provide home-based instruction by the
       superintendent of the local school district in which the child resides.

(5) The legislature recognizes that home-based instruction is less structured and more experiential than
the instruction normally provided in a classroom setting. Therefore, the provisions of subsection (4) of this
section relating to the nature and quantity of instructional and related educational activities shall be liberally
construed.

RCW 28A.225.015
Attendance mandatory — Six or seven year olds — Unexcused absences — Petition.
(1) If a parent enrolls a child who is six or seven years of age in a public school, the child is required to attend
and that parent has the responsibility to ensure the child attends for the full time that school is in session. An
exception shall be made to this requirement for children whose parents formally remove them from
enrollment if the child is less than eight years old and a petition has not been filed against the parent under
subsection (3) of this section. The requirement to attend school under this subsection does not apply to a
child enrolled in a public school part-time for the purpose of receiving ancillary services. A child required to
attend school under this subsection may be temporarily excused upon the request of his or her parent for
purposes agreed upon by the school district and parent.

(2) If a six or seven year old child is required to attend public school under subsection (1) of this section
and that child has unexcused absences, the public school in which the child is enrolled shall:
   (a) Inform the child's custodial parent, parents, or guardian by a notice in writing or by telephone
whenever the child has failed to attend school after one unexcused absence within any month during the
current school year;
   (b) Request a conference or conferences with the custodial parent, parents, or guardian and child at a
time reasonably convenient for all persons included for the purpose of analyzing the causes of the child's absences after two unexcused absences within any month during the current school year. If a regularly scheduled parent-teacher conference day is to take place within thirty days of the second unexcused absence, then the school district may schedule this conference on that day; and

(c) Take steps to eliminate or reduce the child's absences. These steps shall include, where appropriate, adjusting the child's school program or school or course assignment, providing more individualized or remedial instruction, offering assistance in enrolling the child in available alternative schools or programs, or assisting the parent or child to obtain supplementary services that may help eliminate or ameliorate the cause or causes for the absence from school.

(3) If a child required to attend public school under subsection (1) of this section has seven unexcused absences in a month or ten unexcused absences in a school year, the school district shall file a petition for civil action as provided in RCW 28A.225.035 against the parent of the child.

(4) This section does not require a six or seven year old child to enroll in a public or private school or to receive home-based instruction. This section only applies to six or seven year old children whose parents enroll them full time in public school and do not formally remove them from enrollment as provided in subsection (1) of this section.

RCW 28A.225.023
Youth dependent pursuant to chapter 13.34 RCW — Review of unexpected or excessive absences — Support for youth's school work.
A school district representative or school employee shall review unexpected or excessive absences with a youth who is dependent pursuant to chapter 13.34 RCW and adults involved with that youth, to include the youth's caseworker, educational liaison, attorney if one is appointed, parent or guardians, and foster parents or the person providing placement for the youth. The purpose of the review is to determine the cause of the absences, taking into account: Unplanned school transitions, periods of running from care, in-patient treatment, incarceration, school adjustment, educational gaps, psychosocial issues, and unavoidable appointments during the school day. A school district representative or a school employee must proactively support the youth's school work so the student does not fall behind and to avoid suspension or expulsion based on truancy.

RCW 28A.225.025
Community truancy boards.
(1) For purposes of this chapter, "community truancy board" means a board composed of members of the local community in which the child attends school. Juvenile courts may establish and operate community truancy boards. If the juvenile court and the school district agree, a school district may establish and operate a community truancy board under the jurisdiction of the juvenile court. Juvenile courts may create a community truancy board or may use other entities that exist or are created, such as diversion units. However, a diversion unit or other existing entity must agree before it is used as a truancy board. Duties of a community truancy board shall include, but not be limited to, recommending methods for improving school attendance such as assisting the parent or the child to obtain supplementary services that might eliminate or ameliorate the causes for the absences or suggesting to the school district that the child enroll in another school, an alternative education program, an education center, a skill center, a dropout prevention program, or another public or private educational program.

(2) The legislature finds that utilization of community truancy boards, or other diversion units that fulfill a similar function, is the preferred means of intervention when preliminary methods of notice and parent conferences and taking appropriate steps to eliminate or reduce unexcused absences have not been effective in securing the child's attendance at school. The legislature intends to encourage and support the development and expansion of community truancy boards and other diversion programs which are effective in promoting school attendance and preventing the need for more intrusive intervention by the court. Operation of a school truancy board does not excuse a district from the obligation of filing a petition within the requirements of RCW 28A.225.015(3).

RCW 28A.225.030
Petition to juvenile court for violations by a parent or child — School district responsibilities.
(1) If a child under the age of seventeen is required to attend school under RCW 28A.225.010 and if the actions taken by a school district under RCW 28A.225.020 are not successful in substantially reducing an enrolled student's absences from public school, not later than the seventh unexcused absence by a child within any month during the current school year or not later than the tenth unexcused absence during the current school year the school district shall file a petition and supporting affidavit for a civil action with the juvenile court alleging a violation of RCW 28A.225.010: (a) By the parent; (b) by the child; or (c) by the parent and the child. Except as provided in this subsection, no additional documents need be filed with the petition. Nothing in this subsection requires court jurisdiction to terminate when a child turns seventeen or precludes a school district from filing a petition for a child that is seventeen years of age.

(2) The district shall not later than the fifth unexcused absence in a month:
(a) Enter into an agreement with a student and parent that establishes school attendance requirements;
(b) Refer a student to a community truancy board, if available, as defined in RCW 28A.225.025. The community truancy board shall enter into an agreement with the student and parent that establishes school attendance requirements and take other appropriate actions to reduce the child's absences; or
(c) File a petition under subsection (1) of this section.
(3) The petition may be filed by a school district employee who is not an attorney.
(4) If the school district fails to file a petition under this section, the parent of a child with five or more unexcused absences in any month during the current school year or upon the tenth unexcused absence
during the current school year may file a petition with the juvenile court alleging a violation of RCW 28A.225.010.

(5) Petitions filed under this section may be served by certified mail, return receipt requested. If such service is unsuccessful, or the return receipt is not signed by the addressee, personal service is required.

**RCW 28A.225.035**

**Petition to juvenile court — Contents — Court action — Referral to community truancy board — Transfer of jurisdiction upon relocation.**

(1) A petition for a civil action under RCW 28A.225.030 or 28A.225.015 shall consist of a written notification to the court alleging that:

(a) The child has unexcused absences during the current school year;

(b) Actions taken by the school district have not been successful in substantially reducing the child's absences from school; and

(c) Court intervention and supervision are necessary to assist the school district or parent to reduce the child's absences from school.

(2) The petition shall set forth the name, date of birth, school, address, gender, race, and ethnicity of the child and the names and addresses of the child's parents, and shall set forth whether the child and parent are fluent in English, whether there is an existing individualized education program, and the child's current academic status in school.

(3) The petition shall set forth facts that support the allegations in this section and shall generally request relief available under this chapter and provide information about what the court might order under RCW 28A.225.090.

(4) When a petition is filed under RCW 28A.225.030 or 28A.225.015, the juvenile court shall schedule a hearing at which the court shall consider the petition, or if the court determines that a referral to an available community truancy board would substantially reduce the child's unexcused absences, the court may refer the case to a community truancy board under the jurisdiction of the juvenile court.

(5) If a referral is made to a community truancy board, the truancy board must meet with the child, a parent, and the school district representative and enter into an agreement with the petitioner and respondent regarding expectations and any actions necessary to address the child's truancy within twenty days of the referral. If the petition is based on RCW 28A.225.015, the child shall not be required to attend and the agreement under this subsection shall be between the truancy board, the school district, and the child's parent. The court may permit the truancy board or truancy prevention counselor to provide continued supervision over the student, or parent if the petition is based on RCW 28A.225.015.

(6) If the truancy board fails to reach an agreement, or the parent or student does not comply with the agreement, the truancy board shall return the case to the juvenile court for a hearing.

(7)(a) Notwithstanding the provisions in subsection (4) of this section, a hearing shall not be required if other actions by the court would substantially reduce the child's unexcused absences. When a juvenile court hearing is held, the court shall:

(i) Separately notify the child, the parent of the child, and the school district of the hearing. If the parent is not fluent in English, the preferred practice is for notice to be provided in a language in which the parent is fluent;

(ii) Notify the parent and the child of their rights to present evidence at the hearing; and

(iii) Notify the parent and the child of the options and rights available under chapter 13.32A RCW.

(b) If the child is not provided with counsel, the advisement of rights must take place in court by means of a colloquy between the court, the child if eight years old or older, and the parent.

(8)(a) The court may require the attendance of the child if eight years old or older, the parents, and the school district at any hearing on a petition filed under RCW 28A.225.030.

(b) The court may not issue a bench warrant for a child for failure to appear at a hearing on an initial truancy petition filed under RCW 28A.225.030. If there has been proper service, the court may instead enter a default order assuming jurisdiction under the terms specified in subsection (12) of this section.

(9) A school district is responsible for determining who shall represent the school district at hearings on a...
petition filed under RCW 28A.225.030 or 28A.225.015.

(10) The court may permit the first hearing to be held without requiring that either party be represented by legal counsel, and to be held without a guardian ad litem for the child under RCW 4.08.050. At the request of the school district, the court shall permit a school district representative who is not an attorney to represent the school district at any future hearings.

(11) If the child is in a special education program or has a diagnosed mental or emotional disorder, the court shall inquire as to what efforts the school district has made to assist the child in attending school.

(12) If the allegations in the petition are established by a preponderance of the evidence, the court shall grant the petition and enter an order assuming jurisdiction to intervene for the period of time determined by the court, after considering the facts alleged in the petition and the circumstances of the juvenile, to most likely cause the juvenile to return to and remain in school while the juvenile is subject to this chapter. In no case may the order expire before the end of the school year in which it is entered.

(13)(a) If the court assumes jurisdiction, the school district shall periodically report to the court any additional unexcused absences by the child, actions taken by the school district, and an update on the child's academic status in school at a schedule specified by the court.

(b) The first report under this subsection (13) must be received no later than three months from the date that the court assumes jurisdiction.

(14) Community truancy boards and the courts shall coordinate, to the extent possible, proceedings and actions pertaining to children who are subject to truancy petitions and at-risk youth petitions in RCW 13.32A.191 or child in need of services petitions in RCW 13.32A.140.

(15) If after a juvenile court assumes jurisdiction in one county the child relocates to another county, the juvenile court in the receiving county shall, upon the request of a school district or parent, assume jurisdiction of the petition filed in the previous county.
Parents of any child eight years of age and under eighteen years of age shall cause such child to attend school and such child shall have the responsibility to and therefore shall attend for the full time when such school may be in session unless the child is enrolled in an approved private school, an educational center as provided in chapter 28A.205 RCW or is receiving home-based instruction. Parents of any child six or seven years old, who have enrolled the child in school, shall cause the child to attend school for the full time when such school may be in session, unless the child is formally withdrawn from enrollment by the parents.

Exception may be granted by the superintendent in the following circumstances:

A. The student is physically or mentally unable to attend school;

B. The student is attending a residential school operated by the Department of Social and Health Services;

C. The student’s parents have requested a temporary absence for purposes agreed to by the district and which will not cause a serious adverse effect on the student’s educational process;

D. The student is sixteen years of age, regularly and lawfully employed and either has parent permission or is emancipated pursuant to chapter 13.64 RCW;

E. The student has met graduation requirements;

F. The student has received a certificate of educational competence (GED).

Cross References:
Board Policy 3114 Home-based Instruction
Board Policy 3122 Excused and Unexcused Absences

Legal References:
RCW 28A.225.010, Attendance mandatory — Age — Persons having custody shall cause child to attend public school — When excused
RCW 28A.225.080 Employment permits
RCW 28A.225.090 Penalties in general — Defense-Suspension of fine — Complaints to court
WAC 180-51-020 Additional local standards

Original Adoption: November 25, 1985
Revised: November 12, 2003
Admissions and Attendance

3122 – Excused and Unexcused Absences

Students are expected to attend all assigned classes each day. Teachers shall keep a record of absence and tardiness.

Excused Absences

Regular school attendance is necessary for mastery of the educational program provided to students of the district. Students at times may appropriately be absent from class. The following principles shall govern the development and administration of attendance procedures within the district:

A. Excused Absence – An excused absence shall be defined as any absence which has the approval of both the parent/guardian and the school. An excused absence shall not be granted if the school/district deems the absence to cause a serious adverse effect upon the student’s educational progress. If the parent/guardian and the school are not in agreement or the school/district deems an absence to cause a serious adverse effect upon the student’s educational progress, the absence shall be considered unexcused. The principal may, upon request by a parent, grant permission in advance for a student’s absence providing such absence does not adversely affect the student’s educational progress.

B. If an absence is excused, the student shall be permitted to make up all missed assignments outside of class under reasonable conditions and time limits established by the appropriate teacher except that in participation-type classes a student's grade may be affected because of the student's inability to make up the activities conducted during a class period.

C. An excused absence shall be verified by the parent; adult, emancipated or appropriately aged student; or school authority responsible for the absence. If a student is to be released for health care related to family planning or abortion, the student may require that the district keep the information confidential. Students thirteen and older have the right to keep information about drug, alcohol or mental health treatment confidential. Students fourteen and older have the same confidentiality rights regarding HIV and sexually transmitted diseases.

Unexcused Absences

A. As a means of instilling values of responsibility and personal accountability, a student whose absence is not excused shall experience the consequences of his/her absence. A student's grade may be affected if a graded activity or assignment occurs during the period of time when the student is absent.

B. The school shall notify a student’s parent or guardian in writing or by telephone whenever the student has failed to attend school after one unexcused absence within any month during the current school year. The notification shall include the potential consequences of additional unexcused absences.

C. A conference with the parent or guardian shall be held after two unexcused absences within any month during the current school year. A student may be suspended or expelled for habitual truancy. Prior to
suspension or expulsion, the parent shall be notified in writing in his/her primary language that the student has unexcused absences.

A conference shall be scheduled to determine what corrective measures should be taken to ameliorate the cause for the student's absences from school. If the parent does not attend the conference, the parent shall be notified of the steps the district has decided to take to reduce the student’s absences.

D. Not later than the student’s fifth unexcused absence in a month the district shall enter into an agreement with the student and parents that establishes school attendance requirements, refer the student to a community truancy board or file a petition and affidavit with the juvenile court alleging a violation of RCW 28A.225.010.

E. If such action is not successful, the district shall file a petition and affidavit with the juvenile court alleging a violation of RCW 28A.225.010 by the parent, student or parent and student no later than the seventh unexcused absence within any month during the current school year or upon the tenth unexcused absence during the current school year.

F. All suspensions and/or expulsions shall be reported in writing to the superintendent within 24 hours after imposition.

The superintendent shall enforce the district's attendance policies and procedures. Because the full knowledge and cooperation of students and parents are necessary for the success of the policies and procedures, procedures shall be disseminated broadly and made available to parents and students annually.

Legal References:
RCW 13.34.300  Failure to cause juvenile to attend school as evidence under neglect petition
RCW 28A.225 Compulsory School Attendance
WAC 180-16-215(4) Minimum 180 school day year —Five day flexibility —Students graduating from high school
WAC 392-400-235  Discipline —Conditions and limitations
WAC 392-400-260  Long-term suspension —Conditions and limitations

More Tweaking of Becca Petitions
Administrative Procedure 3122P

Excused and Unexcused Absences

Students are expected to attend all assigned classes each day. Teachers shall keep a record of absence and tardiness.

Excused Absences
The following are valid excuses for absences and tardiness.
Assignments and/or activities not completed because of an excused absence or tardiness may be made up in the manner provided by the teacher.

A. Participation in school-approved activity or instructional program. To be excused this absence must be authorized by a staff member and affected teacher must be notified prior to the absence unless it is clearly impossible to do so.

B. Absence due to illness, health condition, family emergency or religious purposes; court, judicial proceeding or serving on a jury; post-secondary, technical school or apprenticeship program visitation, or scholarship interview; State-recognized search and rescue activities consistent with RCW 28A.225.055; and directly related to the student’s homeless status. When possible, the parent is expected to notify the school office on the morning of the absence and send a signed note of explanation with the student upon his/her return to school. Adult students (those over eighteen) and emancipated students (those over sixteen who have been emancipated by court action) shall notify the school office of their absences with a signed note of explanation. Students fourteen years old or older who are absent from school due to testing or treatment for a sexually transmitted disease shall notify the school of their absence with a signed note of explanation, which will be kept confidential. Students thirteen years and older may do the same for mental health, drug or alcohol treatment; and all students have that right for family planning and abortion. A parent may request that a student be excused from attending school in observance of a religious holiday. In addition, a student, upon the request of his/her parent, may be excused for a portion of a school day to participate in religious instruction provided such is not conducted on school property. A student shall be allowed one makeup day for each day of absence.

C. Absence for parental-approved activities. This category of absence shall be counted as excused for purposes agreed to by the principal and the parent. An absence may not be approved if it causes a serious adverse effect on the student's educational progress. In participation-type classes (e.g., certain music and physical education classes) the student may not be able to achieve the objectives of the unit of instruction as a result of absence from class. In such a case, a parent-approved absence would have an adverse effect on the student's educational progress which would ultimately be reflected in the grade for such a course. A student, upon the request of his/her parent, may be excused for a portion of a school day to participate in religious instruction provided such is not conducted on school property or otherwise involves the school to any degree.

D. Absence resulting from disciplinary actions —or short-term suspension. As required by law, students who are removed from a class or classes as a disciplinary measure or students who have been placed on short-term suspension shall have the right to make up assignments or exams missed during the time they were
denied entry to the classroom if the effect of the missed assignments shall be a substantial lowering of the course grade.

E. Extended illness or health condition. If a student is confined to home or hospital for an extended period, the school shall arrange for the accomplishment of assignments at the place of confinement whenever practical. If the student is unable to do his/her schoolwork, or if there are major requirements of a particular course which cannot be accomplished outside of class the student may be required to take an incomplete or withdraw from the class without penalty.

F. Excused absence for chronic health condition. Students with a chronic health condition which interrupts regular attendance may qualify for placement in a limited attendance and participation program. The student and his/her parent/guardian will apply to the principal or counselor, and a limited program will be written following the advice and recommendations of the student’s medical advisor. The recommended limited program will be approved by the principal. Staff will be informed of the student’s needs, though the confidentiality of medical information will be respected at the parent’s request.

Unexcused Absences
Unexcused absences fall into two categories:

A. Submitting a signed excuse which does not constitute an excused absence as defined previously; or

B. Failing to submit any type of excuse statement signed by the parent, guardian or adult student.
   1. After the first unexcused absence, the school shall notify the parent in writing or by telephone. Each unexcused absence shall be followed by a warning letter to the parent of the student. A student's grade shall not be affected if no graded activity is missed during such an absence.
   2. After two unexcused absences within any month a conference shall be held between the parent, student and principal. At such a conference the principal, student and parent may consider:
      a. Adjusting the student's program;
      b. Providing more individualized instruction; preparing the student for employment with specific vocational experience or both;
      c. Transferring the student to another school;
      d. Assisting the student to obtain supplementary services that might eliminate or ameliorate the causes of absence; or,
      e. Imposing other corrective actions that are deemed to be appropriate. Not later than the student’s fifth unexcused absence in a month the district shall enter into an agreement with the student and parents that establishes school attendance requirements, refer the student to a community truancy board or file a petition and affidavit with the juvenile court alleging a violation of RCW 28A.225.010.
   3. If the above action fails to correct the attendance problem, the student shall be declared a habitual absentee. The principal shall interview the student and his/her family and prescribe corrective action which may include suspension for the current semester and expulsion. No later than the seventh unexcused absence within any month during the current school year or upon the tenth unexcused absence during the current school year the district shall file a petition and affidavit with the juvenile court alleging a violation of RCW 28A.225.010 by the parent, student or parent and student. The petition consists of written notification to the court alleging that:
      a. The student has unexcused absences in the current school year (petitions must be filed if the student has seven or more unexcused absences within any month during the current school year or ten or more unexcused absences in the current school year, but a petition may be filed earlier; also unexcused absences accumulated in another school or school district shall be counted for all purposes in this procedure);
      b. Actions taken by the school district have not been successful in substantially reducing the student’s absences from school; and
c. Court intervention and supervision are necessary to assist the school district to reduce the
student’s absences from school. Additionally, the petition shall include the student’s name, 
date of birth, school, address, gender, race and ethnicity; and the names and addresses of the 
student’s parents. The petition must include facts that support the allegations made in the 
petition, must generally request relief available under the statute, and must describe what the 
court might order. Petitions may be served by certified mail, return receipt requested, but if 
such service is unsuccessful, personal service is required. At the district’s choice, it may be 
represented by a person who is not an attorney at hearings related to truancy petitions.

4. Any student who presents false evidence, with or without the consent of his/her parent, in order to 
wrongfully qualify for an excused absence shall be subject to the same corrective action that would 
have occurred had the false excuse not been used.

5. Students six or seven years of age, who have been enrolled in the district are required to attend school 
and their parents are responsible for ensuring that they attend. Parents who wish to withdraw 
their children before the children are eight years old and against whom no truancy petition has been filed, 
may withdraw the students from school. When a six or seven year old student has unexcused 
absences, the district shall do the following:

a. Notify the parent or guardian in writing or by telephone after one unexcused absence in any 
month.

b. Request a conference with the parent or guardian and child to analyze the causes of the 
student’s absences after two unexcused absences in any month (a regularly scheduled teacher-
parent conference held within thirty days may substitute).

c. Take steps to eliminate or reduce the student’s absences, including: adjusting the school 
program, school, course assignment; providing more individualized or remedial instruction; 
offering enrollment in alternative schools or programs; or assisting in obtaining 
supplementary services.

d. After seven unexcused absences in a month, or ten in a school year, the district shall file a 
truancy petition.

Students are expected to be in class on time. When a student's tardiness becomes frequent or disruptive, the 
student shall be referred to the principal or counselor. If counseling, parent conferencing or disciplinary 
action is ineffective in changing the student's attendance behavior, he/she may be suspended from the class.

All sanctions imposed for failure to comply with the attendance policies and procedures shall be implemented in 
conformance with state and district regulations regarding corrective action or punishment.

Admission and Attendance

3124 – Removal/Release of Student During School Hours

The board recognizes its responsibility for the proper care of students during school hours. Students shall not be removed from school grounds, any school building or school function during school hours except by a person duly authorized in accordance with district procedures. Before a student is removed or excused, the person seeking to remove the student must present to the satisfaction of the principal or designee evidence of his/her proper authority to remove the student. A teacher should not excuse a request is approved by the principal or designee. The superintendent is directed to establish procedures for the removal of a student during school hours.

Prior to sending a student to his/her home for illness, discipline or a corrective action, the principal shall attempt to reach the student's parent to inform him/her of the school's action and to request that he/she come to the school for the child. If the principal or designee cannot reach the parent, the student shall remain at school until the close of the school day. A student may be released to a law enforcement officer in accordance with the district policy. The above policy statement need not apply to students in grades 9-12 when the school is unable to contact a parent or legal guardian; however, these students may only leave school with permission of the building principal or designee.

Cross Reference: Board Policy 3418 Emergency Treatment
Legal Reference: RCW 28A.605.010 Removing child from school grounds during school hours--Procedure

Original Adoption of 3440: January 28, 1981
Original Adoption of 3441: January 28, 1981

Revised: November 12, 2003
Truancy

In our state, the law requires that children ages 6 to 17 who are enrolled in public schools, attend school Monday through Friday, unless there is a good reason for being absent. In this case the parent or legal guardian must excuse the absence by notifying the school. When students miss school and their parents have not excused the absence, they can be considered truant. Truancy is defined as being absent from school or from the majority of a student’s classes without a valid excuse.

School districts around the state have different rules and regulations about student attendance and how parents should excuse absences. Be sure to read the attendance policies in your school district and discuss them with your student.

The Becca Bill

The “Becca Bill” (SB 5439) is our state’s truancy law. It is intended to stop truancy before it becomes a problem. Schools and families should work together as a team to ensure school attendance and student safety. However, if a student has unexcused absences, this law requires that schools and school districts take the following actions:

One (1) unexcused absence. The school must inform the parent when there is one unexcused absence. This is often done by a phone call home.

Two (2) unexcused absences. After the second unexcused absence, the school is required to schedule a meeting with the parent/legal guardian and student to discuss the causes of the unexcused absences and find solutions to prevent further absences. This is a team effort.

Five (5) unexcused absences within 30 days. The school must enter into a written truancy agreement with the family, where the parent, student and school agree on the necessary steps to resolve the student’s attendance problem.

Seven (7) unexcused absences during a month or at the tenth (10th) unexcused absence within a school year. The school district will file a petition in juvenile court to order the student to attend school. If this court order is violated, the court will call for a Contempt Hearing and the student could be ordered to do community service or spend time in juvenile detention. The parent may be fined up to $25.00 for each day of unexcused absence.

The school district may also refer the family to a “Community Truancy Board” if there is one in the community. A Truancy Board is a group of citizens who help resolve truancy cases away from the court.

Schools must send the student a notice of the truancy court petition by certified mail with return receipt or by in-person delivery. The petition includes many important dates and
deadlines that must not be missed by the student and the family. A student and/or parents can be represented by a lawyer in truancy court.

Preventing Truancy

Student safety and academic progress are important to both parents and educators. Here are some tips to prevent absences:

Communicate with your student frequently
- Talk about family expectations regarding school attendance.
- Discuss family expectations for earning a high school diploma.
- Praise positive behaviors and achievements in school.
- Look for attitudes from your youth that indicate unhappiness with school or fear of attending school. Listen to what they say and ask questions.

Communicate with your school frequently
- Ask the school about their policy and procedures on excusing absences from school.
- Respond quickly when the school notifies you of an unexcused absence.
- Learn how you can check your student’s attendance.
- Immediately address issues of concern about your student with the school. Start with the teacher or counselor.
- If you feel your district’s truancy or discipline procedures were not addressed properly, inquire about your district’s appeal process.
- If you feel your school district policies are inadequate, speak with the Superintendent and school board members.

Get more help when you need it

Go to the Education Ombudsman website at www.waparentslearn.org to read the Basic Education Rights manual, Section VI.

If you have difficulties with the school in resolving truancy issues contact:
The Office of the Education Ombudsman toll-free at 1-866-297-2597 or the Washington School Safety Center at 360-725-6044 or jeff.soder@k12.wa.us