

POLICY 3122 AND PROCEDURE 3122P (EXCUSED AND UNEXCUSED ABSENCES)

Students are expected to attend all assigned classes each day. School staff will keep a record of absence and tardiness, including a call log and/or a record of excuse statements submitted by a parent/guardian or, in certain cases, students, to document a student's excused absences.

Excused Absences

All student absences will be classified as excused or unexcused. Absences for the following reasons will be excused if there is timely verification (within 2 school days upon return) of such reasons provided to the school:

The following are examples of 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.

1. **Participation in school-approved activity or instructional program.** To be excused, this absence must be authorized by a staff member and the affected teacher must be notified prior to the absence unless it is clearly impossible to do so.
2. **Illness, health condition or medical appointment** (including but not limited to medical, counseling, dental or optometry);
3. **Family emergency**, including but not limited to a death or illness in the family;
4. **Religious or cultural purpose** including observance of a religious or cultural holiday or participation in religious or cultural instruction;
5. **Court, judicial proceeding**, court-ordered activity or serving on a jury;
6. **Post-secondary, technical school or apprenticeship program visitation**, or scholarship interview;
7. **State-recognized search and rescue activities** consistent with RCW 28A.225.055;
8. Absence directly related to the student's **homeless status or foster care**/dependency status;
9. Absence resulting from a **disciplinary/corrective action**. (e.g., short-term or long-term suspension, emergency expulsion) if the student is not receiving educational services and is not enrolled in a qualifying "course of study" activities as defined in WAC 392-121-107
10. Absences due to student **safety concerns**, including absences related to threats, assaults or bullying
11. Absences due to a **student's migrant status**; and
12. **Principal (or designee) and parent, guardian, or emancipated youth mutually agreed upon** approved activity. The school principal (or designee) has the authority to determine if an absence meets the above criteria for an excused absence.

If an absence is excused, the student will be permitted to make up all missed assignments outside of class under reasonable conditions and time limits established by the appropriate teacher. For an absence to be excused, parent/guardian(s) or adult student must communicate an excuse statement to the school according to the school's submission guidelines. When possible, the parent/guardian is expected to notify the school office on the morning of the absence by phone, e-mail or written note and to provide the excuse for the absence. Students (those over eighteen) and emancipated students (those over sixteen who have been emancipated by court action) will notify the school office of their absences with a note of explanation. Students fourteen years old or older who are absent from school due to testing or treatment for a sexually transmitted disease will notify the school of their absence with a note of explanation which will be kept confidential. The explanation does not need to specify the nature of the testing or treatment. 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/guardian 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 will be allowed one makeup day for each day of absence.

13. **Absence for parental-approved activities.** This category of absence will be counted as excused for purposes agreed to by the principal and the parent/guardian for a maximum of five days. 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 because of absence from class. All such absences shall be prearranged. Failure to prearrange the absence may result in the absences being unexcused. In such a case, a parent or guardian-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/guardian, 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.

14. **Absence resulting from disciplinary actions.** As required by law, students who are removed from a class or classes as a disciplinary measure will 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 will be a substantial lowering of the course grade.

15. **Extended illness or health condition.** If a student is confined to home or hospital for an extended period, the school will 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.

Unexcused Absences

In accordance with RCW 28A.225.010, each unexcused absence will be followed by notification the parent or guardian of the student. As a means of instilling values of responsibility and personal accountability, a student whose absence is not excused will experience the consequences of his/her absence. Students are expected to make up all work. A student's grade may be affected if a graded activity or assignment occurs during the period of time when the student is absent. Unexcused absences fall into two categories:

- A. Submitting an excuse which does not constitute an excused absence as defined previously; or
- B. Failing to submit, whether by phone, e-mail or in writing, any type of excuse statement by the parent, guardian or adult student.

Each unexcused absence will be followed by notification the parent or guardian of the student. A student's grade will not be affected if no graded activity is missed during such an absence.

1. After three unexcused absences within any month, a conference will be scheduled between the parent, student and principal or designee. At such a conference the principal or designee, student and parent may consider:
 - Adjusting the student's program;
 - Providing more individualized instruction; preparing the student for employment with specific vocational experience or both;
 - Transferring the student to another school;
 - Assisting the student to obtain supplementary services that might eliminate or ameliorate the causes of absence; or,
 - Other interventions deemed to improve the students' attendance.

If the parent does not attend, the scheduled conference the conference can be conducted with the student and school official and the parent will be notified of the steps to be taken to eliminate or reduce the student's absences.

2. After the second unexcused absence and before the fifth unexcused absence the school will take data-informed steps to eliminate or reduce the child's absences.
 - In middle and high school, these steps must include offering the application of the Washington Assessment of the Risks and Needs of Students (WARNS)
 - Students and parents must agree to participate the WARNS by signing a consent form.
 - Any student with an existing 504 plan or individualized education plan (IEP), these steps must include convening of the child's IEP or 504 plan team. If necessary and if consent from the parent is given, a functional behavior assessment (FBA) will be conducted to explore the function of the absence behavior and if appropriate, a behavior plan completed.
 - Any student, without an IEP or 504 plan, reasonably believed to have a mental or physical disability or impairment, will be brought to guidance team to consider an evaluation.
3. No later than the student's fifth unexcused absence in a month the district will enter into an agreement with the student and parents/guardians that establishes school attendance requirements. The district will 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.
4. If the above action fails to correct the attendance problem, the following truancy petition procedure will apply only to students under the age of eighteen. 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 will file a petition 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:
 - The student has unexcused absences in the current school year. While petitions must be filed if the student has seven or more unexcused absences within any one month, or ten or more unexcused absences in the current school year, a petition may be filed earlier. In addition, unexcused absences accumulated in another school or school district will be counted when preparing the petition;
 - Attesting that actions taken by the school district have not been successful in substantially reducing the student's absences from school; and
 - Court intervention and supervision are necessary to assist the school district to reduce the student's absences from school.
5. Any student who presents false evidence, with or without the consent of his/her parent/guardian, in order to wrongfully qualify for an excused absence will be subject to corrective action in accordance to Policy and Procedure 3241.

6. If a student has an unexcused absence or chooses to 'skip' a class, the following will occur: • Parent contact and student assigned lunch detentions to make up the missed classwork and to complete a written reflection • Repeated violations will result in progressive discipline and/or Becca Truancy Law referral.

Tardies

Students are expected to be in class on time. This means that students are expected to be in their classrooms, in their seats, and ready for class at the beginning of the class. When a student's tardiness becomes frequent or disruptive, the student may be referred to the principal or counselor and may be subject to corrective action. Each school may determine what point in the class a tardy turns into an absence.

Bellevue Big Picture School students need to be in class and ready to learn at the bell/beginning of class. Students who are more than **ten** minutes late to class will be considered absent. The following are consequences for tardiness:

1. The first time a student is tardy, the teacher will have a problem-solving conversation with the student.
2. The second time a student is tardy, the teacher will call a parent or guardian.
3. The third time a student is tardy, the teacher will convene a meeting with the student and their advisor to problem-solve.
4. The fourth (or additional times) a student is tardy, the teacher will assign the student a detention in their class during tutorial.
5. The fifth (or additional times) a student is tardy, the teacher will refer the student to the office for a meeting with the Assistant Principal. At that time, additional consequences may be determined.

Early Release

Students are expected to remain in class until the end of the class. This means that students are expected to be in their classrooms, engaged in the learning, until the teacher has dismissed the students. Secondary students: When a student leaves class or school early without permission or it becomes frequent or disruptive, the student may be referred to the principal or counselor and may be subject to corrective action. Each school may determine the point in the class at which the early release turns into an absence.

At Bellevue Big Picture School, students who leave class without permission with more than ten minutes left in the class period will be considered absent. The following are consequences:

1. Students will meet with counselor or administrator after first unexcused early release to create an attendance plan which may include consequences such as a lunch detention. Parents will be contacted.
2. Repeated violations will result in parent conference with administrator and progressive discipline.

Sanctions

All sanctions imposed for failure to comply with the attendance policies and procedures will be implemented in accordance with state and district regulations regarding corrective action or punishment consistent with Policy 3421 and Procedure 3241P (Classroom Management, Corrective Actions and/or Interventions). For example, a student who presents false evidence, with or without the consent of his/her parent/guardian, to wrongfully qualify for an excused absence will be subject to corrective action in accordance with Policy and Procedure 3241.

Excessive Absences

If a student has excessive absences a note from a medical/mental health professional may be required. If a student reaches 20 absences in a year (excused and unexcused) a petition may be filed at the principal's discretion if interventions to improve the student's attendance have been attempted.

Absences and Student Athletes

Student athletes are expected to be in attendance on days of practices and competitions. Coaches are provided with a daily printout of attendance to ensure their athletes are eligible to practice or compete based on the following:

- Students must attend a minimum of (5) classes for a 7-period schedule (Monday, Tuesday and Friday)
- Students must attend a minimum of (4) classes for a 6-period schedule
- Students must attend a minimum of (2) classes for a 3-period schedule (Wednesday)
- Students must attend a minimum of (3) classes for a 4-period schedule (Thursday)

In rare, extreme and extenuating circumstances beyond the control of the student, eligibility to practice or compete may be granted in advance, on a case-by-case basis.

