

Purpose

To establish responsibility for recording and excusing student absences and to outline procedures for monitoring and improving attendance for follow-up with students and parents in accordance with requirements set forth in 22-8-2 [NMSA 1978]

Definitions

“Attendance” means students who are in class or in a school-approved activity. If a student is in attendance up to one half the total instructional time during a school day, the student will be counted as having attended one-half of a school day. If the student attends school for more than one-half of the total instructional time, the student will be counted as having attended for the full day.

“Habitual truant” means a student who has accumulated the equivalent of ten (10) or more unexcused absences within a school year.

“Student in need of early intervention” means a student who has accumulated five unexcused absences within a school year.

“Adult student” means a student who has reached the age of 18 and is not subject to Compulsory School Attendance Laws. See NMSA 1978, § 22-12-2(A). Therefore, the student can withdraw from the public school at any time. NMSA 1978, § 22-1-4, Subsection C states: “Any person entitled to a free public school education pursuant to the provisions of this section may enroll or re-enroll in a public school at any time and, unless required to attend school pursuant to the Compulsory School Attendance Law [Chapter 22, Article 12 NMSA 1978], may withdraw from a public school at any time.” If the Adult Student is still a dependent of the parent for tax purposes, FERPA allows the District to continue to disclose personally identifiable information (including attendance information) to that parent without the consent of the Adult Student. The adult student’s absences must meet the requirements for excused absences.

Excused Absences

Parents or an adult student may excuse up to ten days of absences per academic year. It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian or adult student to notify the school of every absence. Please notify the school office by contacting the attendance phone line or attendance email on the day of the student’s absence. Absences may be excused for the following reasons with proper notification:

- Illness (including chronic illness documented on a health plan, IEP or 504 plan)
- Limited family emergencies
- Family deaths
- Hazardous weather conditions
- Late bus arrivals
- Medical, health or legal appointments
- Suspensions
- Religious observance
- College or University visits
- Deployment of a military parent
- Parent or Adult Student Requested absences for educational travel as approved in advance by the school principal

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- Limited extenuating circumstances as approved in advance by the school principal

To excuse an absence, parents or adult students are expected to notify the school attendance office *within 24 hours following the absence* and provide the following information:

- Your name
- Your student's name (spell his/her last name)
- Your student's grade level
- Your daytime phone number
- The reason for the absence with the date and time away from school

Failure to excuse an absence within 24 hours will result in the absence being rendered unexcused.

Interscholastic Activities and Absences

No student shall be absent from school for school-sponsored interscholastic activities in excess of fifteen (15) days per semester, and no class shall be missed in excess of fifteen (15) times per semester.

Religious Instruction Excusal

A student may, subject to the approval of the school principal, be excused from school to participate in religious instruction for not more than one class period each school day with the written consent of the student's parents or adult student at a time period not in conflict with the academic program of the school.

Pregnant/Parenting Student Excusal

Los Alamos Public Schools shall permit at least ten (10) days of excused absences for a student who provides documentation of the birth of the student's child and parentage. Los Alamos Public Schools shall provide additional excused absences to a student after the birth of the student's child if deemed medically necessary by the student's physician.

Los Alamos Public Schools shall permit four (4) days of excused absences as necessary for a student who provides appropriate documentation of pregnancy or that the student is the parent of a child under the age of thirteen needing care.

Unexcused Absences

All absences for reasons not included under excused absences shall be considered unexcused. Examples include, but are not limited to:

- Non-school sponsored activities or trips
- Family vacations outside of the normally scheduled school breaks

Chronic Attendance Problems

School interventions may include phone calls, email, and written notices via mail, home visits and in-person meetings. For students in need of early intervention the principal, or his/her designee, shall hold a conference with parents/legal guardians, student, and the Student Assistance Team. An IEP committee may serve in this capacity. This meeting shall attempt to investigate the reason(s) for the student's unexcused absences, establish a truancy reduction intervention plan and advise parents/guardians or adult students regarding the importance of regular school attendance and the legal implications involved. If family problems appear to be involved, families may be counseled to seek help from appropriate community services. This conference shall be documented as part of the school intervention efforts to reduce or eliminate truancy.

Should previous interventions fail, and the student becomes a habitual truant (10 unexcused days), the student and family shall be referred to the Children, Youth and Families Department (CYFD) and/or probation services office of the judicial district where the student resides. Probation may refer the student and family to the court. The court may issue legal notice be served on the parents/legal guardians or other persons having custody of the student.

Since the adult student is not subject to compulsory attendance, notification to state agencies will not be necessary. Notification of withdrawal will be sent to the adult student and to the adult student's parents if the student is still dependent on the parents for tax purposes.

Out-of-school suspension and expulsion shall not be used as punishment of unexcused absences and/or habitual truancy.

Unexcused Full Day Absences	3	5	7	10	10 +
School contacts Parent/Guardian	X	X	X	X	X
School Interventions and Strategies (SAT and IEP)		X	X	X	X
Written Notice to Parents from School		X	X	X	X
Parent and Student Conference with School Staff		X	X	X	X
Referral to Children Youth and Family Department				X	X

State law requires schools to withdraw a student after ten (10) consecutive days of absences, but only after the school has exhausted its efforts to keep the student in an educational setting through a variety of interventions.

Attendance Monitoring in Los Alamos Public Schools

New Mexico state statute states:

Any parent, guardian or person having custody and control of a person subject to the provisions of the Compulsory School Attendance Law is responsible for the school attendance of that person.

Students in need of early intervention or students with attendance problems may be referred to the school Student Assistance Team or an IEP committee for intervention.

Attendance Monitoring Process

Each school shall notify students and families of the school's attendance monitoring process annually. The school process shall include at least the following:

- Parents/legal guardians are expected to contact the school regarding absences within twenty-four (24) hours after the date of absence.
- Schools shall request that calls regarding absences be completed, as early in the school day as possible, however, schools shall accept calls regarding absences.
- Parents/legal guardians shall notify the school of anticipated absences because of trips, family emergencies, and medical or agency appointments.
- Elementary school shall record attendance twice a day.
- Middle School and High School teachers shall record attendance for each class period.
- Secondary students who miss more than 50% of the class period are considered absent.
- Students are not permitted, at any time, to call and excuse an absence themselves unless they are 18 years of age and living outside the home of the parents/guardians (i.e. are emancipated).
- The school shall keep a record of excused and unexcused absences.
 - Parents/legal guardians shall be informed at each official reporting period of the number of absences for each student

Make-up Work and Grades

Students and/or families are responsible for requesting makeup assignments. Teachers may need one school day from the time of the request to compile work. Make up work must be submitted within a period of time equal to the number of school days absent, unless arrangements have been made with the teacher in advance. Teachers will assign any make-up work that can be completed outside of class, but credit for class participation and lab activities cannot be guaranteed. To maintain continuity in learning, students are encouraged to complete work missed during unexcused absences. Teachers are not required to accept work missed during unexcused absences unless otherwise notified by administration. Individual teachers may require students to complete assignments prior to a scheduled school-related absence or family trip.

References**Legal Cross Ref.:**

- §22-12-1 et. seq. NMSA 1978
- NMAC 6.10.8

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