

# Policy 0500-20

## Elementary Attendance

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Idaho law requires mandatory attendance from ages seven (7) up to sixteen (16) years of age. State law also requires each school district to establish an attendance policy. Attendance is an indicator of success in school and is necessary for maximum student learning so West Ada School District establishes the following policy for elementary schools:

- Increase the likelihood of student academic success
- Increase daily student attendance
- Encourage students to be academically current in classes
- Develop student responsibility
- Increase parental involvement in student attendance
- Prepare students for attendance expectations in their future careers

It is the responsibility of the parent(s)/guardian(s) to aid school officials in enforcing district attendance policies.

Administrators will make decisions in keeping with the overall intent of this policy. All absences from class shall be counted unless the student physically remains within an accountable school setting such as with a counselor, nurse, administrator, etc. Each school shall keep accurate attendance records.

Incentives for student attendance are encouraged and expected. Incentives and additional intervention plans may be determined at each building or classroom site, as approved by the administrator.

Schools shall establish clear procedures to implement this policy, including, but not limited to:

- Regular and accurate recording of attendance
- Parental access to current attendance records
- Clear communication of school hours
- Advance notice of attendance requirements
- Parent contact in the event of excessive absences
- Provide written notification to parents in the instances of unverified absences changing to truancy and/or notification that a habitual truancy notice will be sent to the prosecuting attorney for action

### ELEMENTARY ATTENDANCE REQUIREMENT

All students are expected to be in class on time every school day. West Ada School District defines elementary school attendance as missing not more than six (6) days per semester. Elementary school students who do not meet the attendance standard may be assigned other consequences. School staff enforces daily attendance and initiate measures to correct attendance problems, which may include, but are not limited to any of the following:

1. Conference with student
2. Phone or letter contact with parent or guardian
3. Make up requirements
4. Counseling contract
5. Attendance contract
6. Referral to other governmental agencies
7. Court referrals To ensure student's safety, parents are obligated to contact the school regarding each day or portion thereof that a child misses. Upon failure of contact by the parent/guardian, the school will make a reasonable attempt to contact them.

The attendance standard for elementary school students is as follows:

The normal elementary school instructional day consists of 5 hours 35 minutes and students are expected to attend the full day.

## Tardies

$\frac{1}{2}$  Day Kindergarten – Students arriving to class after the tardy bell, or leaving for a period of time during the day, but in attendance for more than 2.5 hours will be marked tardy.

## Full Day Kindergarten - Grades 1- 5

Students arriving to class after the tardy bell, or leaving for a period of time during the day, but in attendance for more than 4.0 hours will be marked tardy.

## Absences

Student absences will be marked under two general categories, absent for a half day or absent for a full day. The calculation of average daily attendance (ADA) as defined by Idaho Statute (I.C. 33-101 and IDAPA 08.02.01) is as follows:

## Full Day

½ Day Kindergarten – A full session consists of 2. 5 hours of instruction per day. Full Day Kindergarten - Grades 1- 5 – A full day consists of at least 4 hours of instruction per day.

## Half Day

Kindergarten - There are no shortened days for Kindergarten. A period of instruction of less than 2.5 hours should be recorded as an absence. Grades 1- 5– A half-day consists of at least 2.5 hours, but less than 4 hours per day

## EXTRAORDINARY ABSENCES

Extraordinary absences require prior notification from a parent or guardian, except in the cases of illness, accident, emergency, or bereavement. The student will be expected to complete assigned work within a time period agreeable to the teacher(s) of the missed class(es). The following criteria are used to determine extraordinary absences:

- National or International Activities: Events organized for the purpose of continuing competition or as an extension of an approved school program/contest, or special activities such as Olympic qualifying meets.
- Court Appearance: Verified by official documentation
- Professional Appointments: Confirmed with documentation from professional personnel such counselors, attorneys, etc.
- Extended Family Educational Trip: In the instance that an extended family educational trip occurs while school is in session, the parent/guardian and student requesting this exception must meet the following:
  - Submit a letter of request to the principal at least two (2) weeks prior to the trip;
  - Have passing grades in all classes;
  - Not exceed six (6) absences in the current semester prior to this request;
  - Not have any truancies or school suspensions;
  - Request work from teachers and agree to turn in all pre-arranged work on or before the first day back to class;
  - Work that cannot be pre-arranged will be completed upon return based on Make Up Work expectations below.
  - Call the attendance office prior to the dates of absence;
- Religious Observances: Verified by parent/guardian, church official, or document.

## **EXCESSIVE ABSENCES**

If a student is absent for fifteen (15) consecutive school days, that are unverified, the student will be disenrolled from school. At the time the student returns to school, the student may be re-enrolled. Students served by receiving homebound tutors services or absent due to illness documented by licensed medical personnel will not be included in this procedure.

## **MAKE UP WORK**

If a student is to be out of school for an extended absence of 15 days or less, it is his/her responsibility to make arrangements for assignments with the teacher. Written assignments will be gathered during the absence and provided to the student upon his/her return to school. Please be aware that up to 70% of the classroom activities consist of class participation, projects, discussion and practice that cannot be duplicated or made up. In all absentee cases, class assignments must be completed within the number of days equal to the number of days of absence to receive credit.

## **TRUANCY**

Truancy occurs when a student intentionally absents himself/herself from school either before arriving or after having arrived at school without previous knowledge and consent of parents or school officials. A written record of truancies shall be kept with or in the student's cumulative record folder and forwarded to the receiving school.

## **HABITUAL TRUANCY**

Any student at the elementary school level who is deemed habitually truant, may be referred to the prosecuting attorney pursuant to Idaho Code 33-206.

Principals/assistant principals, as the authorized representative of the board of trustees, will submit documentation of the excessive absences/truancies to the prosecuting attorney in the county of the student's residence.

## **APPEAL PROCEDURE**

In the event that a parent chooses to appeal the decision of the principal or designee, it must be made no less than ten (10) working days after the decision of the principal is rendered. The Superintendent or Designee will receive the appeal and respond within five (5) working days. This decision of the director is final.

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Reference: Code of Idaho 33-202, 33-205, 33-206