

## **Student Absences and Excuses**

Mapleton Public Schools (the “District”) is dedicated to ensuring that its students attend school every day. Colorado law requires students to attend school until the age of 17. According to State law, it is the obligation of every parent/guardian to ensure that every child under their care and supervision receives adequate education and training and, if of compulsory attendance age, attends school. The purpose of this policy is to ensure that all students are in school in accordance with the law.

One of the most important factors to a student's success in school is regular and punctual attendance. Frequent absences may lead to poor academic work, lack of social development, and possible academic failure. Regular attendance is of utmost importance for school interest, social adjustment, and scholastic achievement. No single factor may interfere with a student's progress more quickly than frequent tardiness or absence.

Continuity in the learning process and social adaptation is seriously disrupted by excessive absences. In most situations, the work missed cannot be made up adequately. Students who have good attendance generally achieve higher grades, enjoy school more, and are more employable after leaving school. For these reasons, Mapleton students that must satisfy two basic requirements in order to earn full course credit: (1) satisfy all academic requirements, and (2) exhibit good attendance habits in accordance with this policy.

### **Excused Absences**

Parents/Guardians have the responsibility to contact the school to excuse an absence, preferably the day of the student’s absence, but no later than 48 hours from the time of the absence. The school may require documentation to support an excused absence.

The following shall be considered excused absences:

1. A student who is temporarily ill or injured.
2. A student whose absence is approved by a school administrator on a prearranged basis. Prearranged absences shall be approved for appointments or circumstances of a serious nature only which cannot be taken care of outside of school hours.
3. A student who is absent for an extended period due to physical, mental, or emotional disability.
4. A student who is pursuing a work-study program under the supervision of the school.
5. A student who is attending any school-sponsored activity or activities of an educational nature with previous approval by the administration.
6. A student who is suspended or expelled.

If a student is in out-of-home placement (as that term is defined by C.R.S. § 22-32-138(1)(e)), absences due to court appearances and participation in court-ordered activities

shall be excused. The student's assigned social worker shall verify the student's absence was for a court appearance or court-ordered activity.

### **Unexcused Absences**

An unexcused absence is defined as an absence that is not covered by one of the foregoing exceptions. Each unexcused absence will be recorded on the student's record. The parent(s)/guardian(s) of the student receiving an unexcused absence shall be notified orally or in writing by the District of the unexcused absence.

In accordance with law, the District may impose appropriate penalties that relate directly to classes missed while unexcused. Penalties may include a warning, school detention, or in-school suspension. Academic penalties, out-of-school suspensions, or expulsion shall not be imposed for any unexcused absence. The District shall develop procedures to implement appropriate penalties. School administration shall consider the correlation between course failure, truancy, and a student dropping out of school in developing these procedures and shall implement research-based strategies to re-engage students with a high number of unexcused absences.

Students and parents/guardians may petition the Board of Education for Mapleton Public Schools (the "Board") for exceptions to this policy. No exception shall be sustained if the student fails to abide by all requirements imposed by the Board as conditions for granting any such exception.

### **Chronic Absenteeism**

When a student has an excessive number of absences, these absences negatively impact the student's academic success. For this reason, a student who has 10 total absences in a school year, whether the absences are excused or unexcused, may be identified as "chronically absent" by the District. Absences due to suspension or expulsion shall not be counted in the total number of absences considered for purposes of identifying a student as "chronically absent."

If a student is identified as "chronically absent," the school director (or designee) shall develop a plan to improve the student's attendance. The plan shall include best practices and research-based strategies to address the reasons for the student's chronic absenteeism, including but not limited to appropriate strategies aligned with the students' needs. When practicable, the student's parent(s)/guardian(s) shall participate in the development of the plan.

As a last resort approach for addressing the problem of truancy, the District shall initiate court proceedings to compel compliance with the compulsory attendance law. The maximum number of unexcused absences a student may incur before judicial proceedings are initiated to enforce compulsory attendance is 10 days during any calendar year or school year. Before initiating court proceedings, the District shall provide written notice to the student and his or her parent(s)/guardian(s) that the District will initiate court proceedings if the student does not comply with the compulsory attendance law.

Nothing herein shall require the District to identify a student as “chronically absent” prior to pursuing court proceedings against the student and his or her parent(s)/guardian(s) to compel the student’s attendance in accordance with State law.

### **Make-up Work**

Make-up work shall be provided for any class in which a student has an excused absence, unless otherwise determined by a building administrator, or unless the absence is due to the student’s expulsion from school. It is the responsibility of the student to pick up any make-up assignments permitted on the day returning to class. The student shall be afforded 3 days to complete make-up work for each day of absence.

Make-up work may be allowed following an unexcused absence or following a student’s suspension from school with the goal of providing the student an opportunity to keep up with the class and an incentive to attend school. This work may receive full or partial credit to the extent possible as determined by a building administrator.

Unless otherwise permitted by a building administrator, make-up work shall not be provided during a student’s expulsion. Rather, the District shall offer alternative education services to the expelled student in accordance with State law. The District shall determine the amount of credit the expelled student will receive for work completed during any alternative education program.

### **Tardiness**

Tardiness is defined as the appearance of a student without proper excuse after the scheduled time that a class begins. Because of the disruptive nature of tardiness and the detrimental effect upon the rights of the non-tardy student to uninterrupted learning, appropriate penalties may be imposed for excessive tardiness. Parent(s)/guardian(s) shall be notified of all penalties regarding tardiness.

In an unavoidable situation, a student detained by another teacher or administrator shall not be considered tardy provided that the teacher or administrator gives the student a pass to enter the next class. Teachers shall honor passes presented in accordance with this policy. The provisions of this policy shall be applicable to all students in the District, including those above and below the age for compulsory attendance as required by law.

*Adopted June 11, 2013, by the Board of Education for Mapleton Public Schools.  
Updated September 25, 2018.*

### **LEGAL REFERENCES:**

C.R.S. §§ 22-14-101 *et seq.* (*dropout prevention and student re-engagement*)

C.R.S. § 22-32-109(1)(n) (*length of school year, instruction, and contact time*)

C.R.S. § 22-32-109.1(2)(a) (*conduct and discipline code*)

C.R.S. § 22-32-138(6) (*excused absence requirements for students in out-of-home placements*)

C.R.S. §§ 22-33-101 *et seq.* (*School Attendance Law of 1963*)

C.R.S. § 22-33-105(3)(d)(III) (*opportunity to make up work during suspension*)

C.R.S. § 22-33-108 (*judicial proceedings to enforce school attendance laws*)

C.R.S. § 22-33-203 (*educational alternatives for expelled students and determination of credit*)

1 CCR 301-78 Rules 1.00 *et seq.* (*standardized calculation for counting student attendance and truancy*)

CROSS REFERENCES:

IC/ICA: School Year/School Calendar/Instruction Time

JEA: Compulsory Attendance Ages

JFABE: Students in Foster Care

JFC: Student Withdrawal from School/Dropouts

JHB: Truancy

JK: Student Discipline

JKD/JKE: Suspension/Expulsion of Students (and Other Disciplinary Interventions)

JLIB: Student Dismissal Precautions