

## **Release of Student Information to Military and Colleges**

The district is required by federal law to comply with a request by a military recruiter or an institution of higher education for students' names, addresses, and telephone listings, unless parents have advised the district not to release their child's information without prior written consent. [See the "Notice Regarding Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) Directory Information" included in the registration forms packet.]

## **COMPULSORY ATTENDANCE**

Regular school attendance is essential for the student to make the most of his or her education to benefit from teacher led and school activities, to build each day's learning on the previous day's, and to grow as an individual. Absences from class may result in serious disruption of a student's mastery of the instructional materials; therefore; the student and parent should make every effort to avoid unnecessary absences. Two state laws – one dealing with compulsory attendance, the other with attendance for a student's final grade or course credit – are of special interest to students and parents. They are discussed below.

1. It is the law in Texas that a student between the ages of 12 and 18 must attend school and tutorial sessions unless the student is otherwise exempted or excused. Students enrolled in prekindergarten or kindergarten are required to attend school.
2. State law requires attendance in an accelerated reading instruction program when kindergarten, first grade or second grade students are assigned to such a program. Parents will be notified in writing if their child is assigned to an accelerated reading instruction program as a result of the reading diagnostic test. A student who is absent without permission from school; from any class; from required special programs, such as accelerated instruction; or from required tutorials will be considered in violation of the compulsory attendance laws and subject to disciplinary action. Excessive absences may result in a violation of compulsory attendance laws and the Student Code of Conduct. A student in grades 3-8 will be required to attend any assigned accelerated instruction program, which may occur before or after school or during the summer, if the student does not meet the passing standards on the state assessment for his or her grade level and applicable subject area. The District may revoke the enrollment for the remainder of the school year of a student age 18 or older who has more than five absences in a semester that are not excused. A student whose enrollment is revoked may be considered an unauthorized person on school grounds for purposes of the trespass law. Policy FEA (LEGAL)

## **Exemptions to Compulsory Attendance**

State law allows exemptions to the compulsory attendance requirements for several types of absences if the student makes up all work, these include the following activities and events:

- Religious Holy days
- Required court appearances
- Activities related to obtaining United States citizenship
- Service as an election clerk
- Documented health-care appointments for the student or a child of the student, including absences for recognized services for students diagnosed with autism spectrum disorders. A note from the health-care provider must be submitted upon the student's arrival or return to campus. Should a student develop a questionable pattern of absences, the principal or attendance committee may require a statement from a doctor or health clinic verifying the illness or condition that caused the student's absence from school. Policy FEC (LOCAL).
- A junior or senior student's absence of up to two days related to visiting a college or university will be considered an exemption, provided the student receives approval from the campus principal, follows the campus procedures to verify such a visit, and makes up any work missed.
- For students in the conservatorship (custody) of the state,
  - Mental health or therapy appointments; or
  - Court-ordered family visitations or any other court-ordered activity, provided it is not practicable to schedule the student's participation in the activity outside of school hours.
- Absences of up to two days in a school year will also be considered an exemption for a student serving as an early voting clerk, provided the student notifies his or her teachers and receives approval from the principal prior to the absences.
- As listed in Accommodations for Children of Military Families, absences of up to five days will be excused for a student to visit with a parent, stepparent, or legal guardian who has been called to duty for, is on leave from, or immediately returned from certain deployments.

## **Failure to Comply with Compulsory Attendance**

School employees must investigate and report violations of the state compulsory attendance law. A court of law may impose penalties against both the student and his or her parents if the school age student is deliberately not attending school. While the district will make every effort to send a warning notice, the Education Code (75.095) states "The fact that a parent did not receive a notice under subsection (A) or (B) does not create a defense to presentation under 25.093 or 25.094." A complaint may be filed against the parent and/or student if the student:

- a. Is absent from school three or more days or parts of days within a four week period.
- b. Is absent from school on 10 or more days or parts of days within a six-month period in the same school year.

For a student younger than 12 years of age, the student's parent could be charged with an offense based on the student's failure to attend school. If a student is 12 through age 17 violates the compulsory attendance law, both the parent and student could be charged with an offense. Policy FEA (LEGAL)

## **ATTENDANCE FOR CREDIT OR FINAL GRADE**

To receive credit or a final grade in class, a student in kindergarten – 12th grade must attend at least 90 percent of the days the class is offered. A student who attends at least 75 percent, but fewer than 90 percent of the days the class is offered may receive credit or a final grade for the class if he or she completes a plan, approved by the principal that allows the student to fulfill the instructional requirements for the class. If a student is involved in a criminal or juvenile court proceeding, the approval of the judge presiding over the case will also be required before the student receives credit or a final grade for the class. If a student attends less than 75 percent of the days of class is offered or has not completed a plan approved by the principal, then the student is referred to the attendance review committee to determine whether there are extenuating circumstances for the absences and how the student can regain credit or a final grade lost because of absences. (See policy in FFC)

In determining whether there were extenuating circumstances for the absences, the Attendance Review Committee will use the following guidelines:

- All absences, whether excused or unexcused, must be considered in determining whether a student has attended the required percentage of days. If makeup work is completed, absences for the reasons listed above at Exemptions To Compulsory Attendance will be considered days of attendance for this purpose.
- The committee will consider the acceptability and authenticity of documented reason for the student's absence.
- The committee will consider the extent to which the student has completed all assignments, mastered the essential knowledge and skills, and maintained passing grades in the course or subject.
- The student or parent will be given an opportunity to present any information to the committee about the absences and to talk about ways to ensure or regain credit or a final grade.

The student or parent may appeal the committee's decision to the board of trustee's by filing a written request with the superintendent in accordance with policy FNG(LOCAL). The actual number of days a student must be in attendance in order to receive credit or a final grade will depend on whether the class is for a full semester or for a full year.

### **School Attendance Review Committee**

A student and the student's parent or guardian are given written notice prior to and upon a student's attendance in any class dropping below 90 percent of the days the class is offered. When a student's attendance drops below 90 percent of the days the class is offered, the student, parent, or representative may submit a written petition to the appropriate campus Attendance Review Committee requesting the awarding of credit. The campus Attendance Review Committee shall review the student's entire attendance record and reasons for absences and to determine whether to award credit. Petitions for credit may be filed at any time the student receives notice, but in any event no later than 30 days after the last day of classes. Should the student develop a questionable pattern of absences, the principal or attendance committee may require a statement from a doctor or health clinic verifying the illness or condition that caused the student's absence from school. [See policy FEC (LOCAL)]

### **ABSENCE PROCEDURES**

1. When a student must be absent, the student, upon arrival or return to school, must bring documentation that describes the reason for the absence. Documentation for all excused absences must be submitted within 48 hours after the absence has occurred. Parent notes may be used to excuse a total of 8 absences for the school year. All notes should include the date the note was written, dates of absence(s) and student ID#. Upon return to school, a student absent for more than 5 consecutive days because of a personal illness must bring a statement from a doctor or health clinic verifying the illness or condition that caused the student's extended absence from school. A note signed by the student, even with the parent's permission, will not be accepted unless the student is 18 or older.
2. A student absent for any reason should promptly make up specific assignments missed. Absences made up during Saturday school, after school or credit recovery DO NOT make up the absences for the purpose of truancy court.
3. If a student has an appointment with a health care professional, the student may be counted present for the day if: the student attends class sometime during the day of the appointment, either before or after the appointment; the school sign-in/out sheet supports the appointment; and the student provides written documentation from the health care professional for his/her presence at the appointment. The student is responsible for completing any assignments missed.
4. A student who is tardy to class will be subject to the consequences established at each campus in accordance with the possible consequences in the *SAISD Student Code of Conduct*.
5. Students and parents should be aware of specific school procedures for contacting the Attendance Office at each school.
6. A student absent from school may not be allowed to participate in school-related activities on that day or evening.
7. Excessive absences may result in a violation of compulsory attendance laws and the *Student Code of Conduct*. Such violations may result in the loss of course/grade credit, court action, and/or monetary fines.

### **Makeup Work Because of Absence**

For any class missed, the teacher may assign the student makeup work based on the instructional objectives for the subject or course and the needs of the individual student in mastering the essential knowledge and skills or in meeting subject or course requirements. A student will be responsible for obtaining and completing the makeup work in a satisfactory manner and within the time specified by the teacher. A student who does not make up assigned work within the time allotted by the teacher will receive a grade of zero for the assignment.

A student is encouraged to speak with his or her teacher if the student knows of an absence ahead of time, including absences for extracurricular activities, so that the teacher and student may plan any work that can be completed before or shortly after the absence. Please remember the importance of student attendance at school and that, even though absences may be excused or unexcused, all absences account for the 90 percent threshold in regards to the state laws surrounding "attendance for credit or final grade." [See also **Attendance for Credit or Final Grade** above.]