

Attendance Policies

Why Attendance is Important

The Sequoia Union High School District (“District”) is committed to the education of all students. The District believes that regular attendance plays an important role in student achievement and that absenteeism, whatever the cause, may put students at risk of dropping out of school. The District desires to ensure that all students attend school in accordance with the state's compulsory education law and take full advantage of educational opportunities provided by the district. It is the intent of the District that intensive guidance and coordinated community services are provided to meet the special needs of pupils with school attendance and/or school behavior problems.

Did You Know?

- Absences can be a sign that a student is losing interest in school, struggling with school work, or facing some other potentially serious difficulty
- By 6th grade, absenteeism is one of three signs that a student may drop out of high school
- By 9th grade, regular attendance is a better predictor of graduation rates than 8th grade test scores
- Missing 10 percent (18 days) of the year can drastically affect a student’s academic success
- Students can be chronically absent even if they only miss a day or two every few weeks
- Attendance is an important life skill that will help your child graduate from college or keep a job

What You Can Do

Make school attendance a priority

- Talk about the importance of showing up to school every day, make that the expectation
- Help your child maintain daily routines; finishing homework and getting a good night’s sleep
- Try not to schedule dental and medical appointments during the school day
- Don’t let your child stay home unless truly sick; complaints of headaches or stomach aches may be signs of anxiety

Help your teen stay engaged

- Find out if your child feels engaged by his classes and feels safe from bullies and other threats
- Make sure he/she is not missing class because of behavioral issues and school discipline policies; if any of these are problems, work with your school
- Stay on top of academic progress and seek help from teachers or tutors if necessary; make sure teachers know how to contact you
- Stay on top of your child’s social contacts; peer pressure can lead to skipping school, while students without many friends can feel isolated
- Encourage meaningful afterschool activities, including sports and clubs

Communicate with the school

- Know the school’s attendance policy – incentives and penalties
- Talk to teachers if you notice sudden changes in behavior
- Check on your child’s attendance to be sure absences are not piling up
- Ask for help from school officials, afterschool programs, other parents or community agencies if you’re having trouble getting your child to school

Excused Absences

The California Education Code directs all public school districts in California as to how to treat excused absences. The Education Codes below refer to the California Department of Education's excused absence reasons; SUHSD attendance codes are listed after each provision in parentheses and explained at the end.

48205(a) Notwithstanding Section 48200, a pupil shall be excused from school when the absence is:

1. Due to the pupil's illness. (H)
2. Due to quarantine under the direction of a county or city health officer. (H)
3. For the purpose of having medical, dental, optometrical, or chiropractic services rendered. (H)
4. For the purpose of attending the funeral services of a member of the pupil's immediate family, so long as the absence is not more than one day if the service is conducted in California and not more than three days if the service is conducted outside California. (EXC)
5. For the purpose of jury duty in the manner provided for by law. (EXC)
6. Due to the illness or medical appointment during school hours of a child of whom the pupil is the custodial parent, including absences to care for a sick child for which the school shall not require a note from a doctor. (H)
7. For justifiable personal reasons, including, but not limited to, an appearance in court, attendance at a funeral service, observance of a holiday or ceremony of the pupil's religion, attendance at religious retreats, attendance at an employment conference, or attendance at an educational conference on the legislative or judicial process offered by a nonprofit organization when the pupil's absence is requested in writing by the parent or guardian and approved by the principal or a designated representative pursuant to uniform standards established by the governing board. (EXC)
8. For the purpose of serving as a member of a precinct board for an election pursuant to Section 12302 of the Elections Code. (EXC)
9. For the purpose of spending time with a member of the pupil's immediate family who is an active duty member of the uniformed services, as defined in Section 49701, and has been called to duty for, is on leave from, or has immediately returned from deployment to a combat zone or combat support position. Absences granted pursuant to this paragraph shall be granted for a period of time to be determined at the discretion of the superintendent of the school district. (EXC)
10. For the purpose of attending the pupil's naturalization ceremony to become a United States citizen. (EXC)
11. Other reasons authorized at the discretion of the principal or designee based on the student's specific circumstances. (W)

48205(b) A pupil absent from school under this section shall be allowed to complete all assignments and tests missed during the absence that can be reasonably provided and, upon satisfactory completion within a reasonable period of time, shall be given full credit therefor. The teacher of the class from which a pupil is absent shall determine which tests and assignments shall be reasonably equivalent to, but not necessarily identical to, the tests and assignments that the pupil missed during the absence.

48205 (c) For purposes of this section, attendance at religious retreats **shall not exceed four hours per semester.**

48205 (e) "Immediate family," as used in this section, means the parent or guardian, brother or sister, grandparent, or any other relative living in the household of the pupil.

District's Daily Attendance Codes

A = Absent	C = Cuts	EXC = Excused Absence
H = Health/Illness	I = In-School Suspension	J = Court System
S = Suspension	SA = School Activity	SS= School Sports
T = Tardy	TE = Tardy Excused	UNX = Unexcused Absence*
W = Warranted**		

* **Any absence outside of CA E.C. 48205 will be marked as an Unexcused Absence (UNX)**

** **In very rare instances, administrators may approve other absences at their discretion, based on the student's specific circumstances. (W)**

Clearing Student Absence

Parents have five (5) school days from the day of the absence(s) to contact the school Attendance Clerk in order to excuse their student's absence(s). Absences not excused within five school days are marked as C (Cuts) and cannot be excused.

18 Year Old Students

Absences shall be verified by the student's parent/guardian, other person having charge or control of the student, or the student if age 18 or older. (Administrative Regulation 5113)

A student 18 years of age or over, with respect to their own absences from school, shall have all of the responsibilities and powers which, in the case of a minor, would be charged to the parent, guardian, or other person having charge or control of the minor. (Education Code 46012)

Method of Verification

Absences shall be verified within five (5) school days from the day of the absence by the student's parent/guardian, other person having charge or control of the student, or the student if age 18 or older. (Education Code 46012; AR 5113)

When an absence is planned, parents/guardians or students if age 18 or older shall notify the school Attendance Clerk prior to the date of the absence when possible.

The following methods may be used to verify student absences:

1. Written note, email, or voice mail from parent/guardian or parent representative.

2. Conversation, in person or by telephone, between the verifying employee and the student's parent/guardian or parent representative. The employee shall subsequently record the following:
 - a. Name of student
 - b. Name of parent/guardian or parent representative
 - c. Name of verifying employee
 - d. Date(s) of absence
 - e. Reason for absence
3. Visit to the student's home by the verifying employee, or any other reasonable method which establishes the fact that the student was absent for the reasons stated. The employee shall document the verification and include the information specified in item #2 above.
4. Physician's verification.
 - a. When excusing students for confidential medical services or verifying such appointments, district staff shall not ask the purpose of such appointments but may request a note from the medical office to confirm the time of the appointment.
 - b. If a student shows a pattern of chronic absenteeism due to illness, district staff may require physician verification of any further student absences.

Contacts to clear absences

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Chronic Absenteeism and Truancy

Chronic absentee means a student who is absent for any reason on 10 percent or more of the school days in the school year, when the total number of days the student is absent is divided by the total number of days the student is enrolled and school was actually taught in the regular schools of the district, exclusive of Saturdays and Sundays. (Education Code 60901)

Whenever chronic absenteeism is linked to a health issue or nonschool condition, the District may recommend school or community resources and/or collaborate with community agencies and organizations to address the needs of the student and his/her family.

Addressing Chronic Absenteeism

When a student is identified as a chronic absentee, the school shall communicate with the student and his/her parents/guardians to determine the reason(s) for the excessive absences, ensure the student and parents/guardians are aware of the adverse consequences of poor attendance, and jointly develop a plan for improving the student's school attendance. The student may be referred to a student success team or school-site attendance review team to assist in evaluating his/her needs and identifying strategies and programs to assist him/her. A student who is struggling academically may be offered tutoring or other supplemental instruction, extended learning opportunities, and/or alternative educational options as appropriate.

Refer to SUHSD Attendance Handbook for more information.

Truancy

Truant means a student who is absent from school without a valid excuse three full days in one school year, or tardy or absent for more than any 30-minute period during the school day without a valid excuse on three occasions in one school year, or any combination thereof. (Education Code 48260)

For purposes of classifying a student as a truant, valid excuse includes, but is not limited to, the reasons for which a student shall be excused from school pursuant to Education Code 48205 and 48225.5. (Education Code 48260)

Habitual truant means a student who has been reported as a truant three or more times within the same school year, provided the district has made a conscientious effort to hold at least one conference with the student and his/her parent/guardian after either of the two previous reports. (Education Code 48262, 48264.5)

Chronic truant means a student who has been absent from school without a valid excuse for 10 percent or more of the school days in one school year, from the date of enrollment to the current date, provided the district has met the requirements of Education Code 48260, 48260.5, 48261, 48262, 48263, and 48291. (Education Code 48263.6)

Refer to the SUHSD Attendance Handbook for more information