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## **Policy on Absenteeism and Truancy**

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### **Attendance**

In accordance with the laws of the state, all pupils are held to regular and punctual attendance. Regular student attendance is directly related to student academic success; therefore student participation and attendance may be considered when determining eligibility for promotion to the next grade level. Parents/Guardians are legally responsible for their child's attendance.

In cases of sickness, parents must call the school office to report the absence to the school office administrator by 8:15 a.m. Absences not called in or reported by a parent by 9:00 a.m., will result in a phone call to the parent by the office administrator. All K-8 students arriving after 8:00 a.m. will be marked tardy. If a prolonged absence occurs due to sickness, the teacher should be notified as soon as possible so assignments can be kept up to date.

When a doctor or dental appointment is necessary during school hours, please send a written note to the teacher prior to the appointment date.

### **Excused Absences/Tardies/Early Departures (Appropriate documentation is required)**

- Illness/ Hospitalization, including mental or behavioral health of the student
- Pre-arranged doctor or dental appointment
- Death in the family or family emergency
- Required court appearance
- Observation of a bona fide religious holiday
- Pre-arranged/avoidable absences
- Other situations beyond the control of the student that are recognized and approved as excused by the principal.
- Other circumstances that cause reasonable concern to the parent for the mental, emotional, or physical health or safety of the student and approved as excused by the principal.

## **Unexcused Absences/Tardies/Early Departures**

- Not having received an absence call or e-mail from the parent/guardian
- Oversleeping or missing the bus
- Personal business
- Suspensions
- Truancy from school or class

## **Attendance, Absences and Truancy**

### **Excused Absences**

To obtain the most from the educational opportunities provided and because a student's attendance record is part of his/her permanent record, it is important that students keep absences to a minimum.

Students shall be permitted **NO MORE THAN FIVE EXCUSED ABSENCES PER SEMESTER BASED UPON PARENTAL CONFIRMATION FOR THE REASONS OF THE ABSENCE**. After the student has been excused five times in one or more of his/her classes during a semester, additional excused absences for illness may only be verified through a written medical statement from a physician. After the five excused absences, the school will notify the parent/guardian by phone. If a student's absence is verified by a doctor's excuse before the student has reached the limit of five days (or classes) of excused absences, the absence will not count toward the five days permitted by this section. All doctor's excuses must be submitted to the main office within 48 hours of the student's absence. Failure to call or write an excuse within 48 hours will result in the absence being unexcused.

### **Illness**

Personal illness and/or physical disability is excused. In the event of three or more consecutive days of absences due to illness, a doctor's statement may be required. A student too ill to attend school is also considered too ill to work, to go shopping, to attend school activities or games, or take part in any other similar activity that same day. To do so shall result in the absence from school being unexcused.

In the event of a long term absence due to illness (greater than five days), parents and teachers may arrange for the student to access instruction remotely. Students who attend classes remotely would not be counted absent.

### **Medical/Dental Appointment, Court Appearance, Etc.**

Keeping in mind that classroom attendance is a top priority at T-SJ; every attempt should be made to schedule medical and dental appointments after school hours or on Saturdays. When this is not possible, the appointment time should be scheduled so that the student misses the minimum amount of school. Appointment cards are routinely issued by health care offices and officers of the court and should be presented when the student returns to school for re-admittance.

### **Religious Observance**

A student shall be released from school as an excused absence, for observing a religious holiday. The parent(s)/guardian(s) should give written notice in advance of the student's anticipated absence.

### **Authorized Absences**

Examples of such absences are school-sponsored field trips, athletic competitions, academic competition and music contests.

### **Pre-Arranged/Avoidable Absences**

Planned absences that the parent is aware of and approves, but which are difficult for the administration to approve, are classified as avoidable. Class work missed from an avoidable absence can be made up provided:

1. It was cleared ahead of time by the administration. Leaving a message on the school's voice mail does not meet this requirement.
2. That the student completes missed work to the satisfaction of each teacher.

### **Unexcused Absences**

Any absence, which does not meet the criteria for excused, authorized, or avoidable, will be classified as an unexcused absence. Please note that serving an out of school suspension is an unexcused absence. In the event an absence is classified as unexcused:

1. The student must make up all mandatory work before the awarding of credit can be considered. Work not made up will result in zero credit for that assignment or test.
2. The student will be allowed to make up all tests and assignments with a 25% deduction of the original value of the assignment for students in grades 5-8.

Avoidable absences that have not been cleared in advance with the principal will be classified as unexcused!

Procedures that will be used to identify the causes of unexcused absences include communication (phone call or email), interviews with the student, his or her parent or guardian, and any school official who may have information about the reasons for the student's attendance problem.

Interventions and supportive services for truant or chronically truant students include parent conferences, information regarding counselors for the student or student family, and information about existing community services that are available to truant and chronically truant students and relevant to their needs.

T-SJ collects and regularly reviews chronic absence data through our attendance tracking system Sycamore in order to identify the student who most need support and how best to support them.

**Students who are unexcused for 10% of the previous 180 school attendance days will be referred to the Truancy Officer at the Regional Office of Education.**

### **Make-Up Work**

Students with excused absences and tardies will be expected to make up all work missed within the same time frame that the student was absent and will receive a grade for all work completed within that time frame. For example, a student who is absent three days has three days to complete the missed assignments. It is the responsibility of the parent and/or student to acquire all make-up work. Parents may request homework by calling the school before 9:00 a.m. when reporting the student's absence.

Students with unexcused absences should make up all work missed within the same time frame that the student was absent; however students in grades 5-8 will receive a 25% deduction on assignments as a result of the unexcused absence. Students in grades K-4 will receive full credit for their completed work.

After a student is absent 10 consecutive days a doctor's excuse will be necessary, or it will be an unexcused absence. It is the responsibility of the student, especially in grades 4-8, to find out what work was required during the absence. It is then the **student's responsibility** to see that it is completed within the time allotted.

Good schoolwork depends to an extent on punctual and regular attendance. Any child who regularly misses school or otherwise has poor attendance (10-15 absences) will be referred to the Regional Superintendent of School's Attendance Officer.