

Attendance Policy

Statement of Policy

The Alpine Board of Education recognizes that the Utah Compulsory Attendance Law (Utah Code 53A-11-101) directs parents to require their children between the ages of six and eighteen years of age to attend school unless they have graduated from high school or have been excused by the Board of Education. The Alpine School District Board of Education has determined that the parent or legal guardian of a student can excuse an absence for reasons they deem necessary.

1. PURPOSE AND INTENT OF THIS POLICY IS TO:

- 1.1. Promote student attendance and participation. Students should be in attendance and participate every possible day of the school year in order to receive maximum benefit from their educational opportunities.
- 1.2. Allow teachers to exercise reasonable discretion in determining the relationship between attendance, class participation and grades.
- 1.3. Encourage administrators and teachers to coordinate extracurricular activities in order to allow students full attendance and participation in class work.

Board Approvals

- Board Approved: July 12, 1983;
- Revised: July 2005, June 2013, April 2016

Procedures

1. ATTENDANCE

- 1.1. Understanding that student attendance is vital for success in school, the Alpine School District recognizes that a parent or legal guardian of a student may excuse an absence for reasons they deem necessary.
- 1.2. When attendance begins to significantly impact the ability of a student to be successful in school, teachers, administrators, and counselors shall intervene and work with parents to create interventions to change behaviors and improve school success. In extreme cases of students becoming educationally at-risk, this may limit the ability to excuse absences.

2. EARNEST AND PERSISTENT EFFORTS

- 2.1. Each school will implement earnest and persistent effort procedures.
 - 2.1.1. The teacher, counselor, or student advocate shall make initial contacts with a student or his/her family to encourage attendance.
 - 2.1.2. The teacher, counselor, or student advocate shall contact the student’s parents to consider adjustments in the curriculum to meet the student’s needs and abilities.
 - 2.1.3. If attendance issues continue, the teacher, counselor, or student advocate shall refer the student to the building administration.
 - 2.1.4. All attendance interventions will be documented on the district student management system.

3. ELEMENTARY SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

- 3.1. Students age six to 13 fall under Utah state compulsory education laws (53A-11-101.5), which requires all school aged students to attend school

(except as provided in Section 53A-11-102 or 53A-11-102.5). The law holds parents/guardians responsible to assure their student(s) attendance.

- 3.2. Students and parents/guardians can find the attendance policies and expectations of their school on the school's website or in the student handbook.
- 3.3. After three (3) or more consecutive unexcused absences (Utah Code 53A-11-101) or an attendance-related drop in student achievement, parents/guardians will be contacted by the student's teacher.
 - 3.3.1. An attendance-related drop in student achievement is defined as:
 - 3.3.1.1. Falling behind in achievement relative to peers in the lack of attendance.
 - 3.3.1.2. Lacking academic competencies and proficiencies as demonstrated by one or more class or state assessments due to attendance.
 - 3.3.1.3. Failing one or more core subjects due to lack of attendance.
- 3.4. After the equivalent of ten (10) or more days of school absence and an attendance-related drop in achievement, the principal will:
 - 3.4.1. Review the absences by visiting with parents/guardians to learn of circumstances related to the student's absences (see Guidelines in Rules and Regulations 5156, 1.3.8).
 - 3.4.2. Discuss ways to improve the student's attendance. Provide positive support to encourage and change attendance patterns.
 - 3.4.3. Discuss academic challenges and concerns related to the student's attendance.
 - 3.4.4. Send or provide parents/guardians with Attendance Letter #1 - Notification of Attendance Concern.
- 3.5. After the equivalent of 15 or more days of school absence and an attendance related drop in achievement, the principal will:

- 3.5.1. Arrange an attendance intervention meeting with the parents/guardians of the student and a district social worker to create a plan for improving the student's attendance.
 - 3.5.2. Send Attendance Letter #2 - Notification of Compulsory Education Violation by certified mail to the parents/guardians. This letter informs parents/guardians of the date of the intervention meeting, compulsory education laws, and invites parents/guardians to contact the school if there are extenuating circumstances affecting their student's continued attendance problems.
- 3.6. If a student misses the equivalent of five (5) or more days of school after the date of the attendance intervention meeting the principal will:
- 3.6.1. Notify the district social worker of the continued absences.
 - 3.6.2. Send the completed Earnest and Persistent Effort (EPE) checklist to the district social worker.
- 3.7. Once the district social worker has been notified by a school principal that a student has missed the equivalent of five (5) or more absences since an attendance intervention meeting, the social worker will:
- 3.7.1. Invite parents/guardians to contact the school principal to share any extenuating circumstances for the absences as outlined in Attendance Letter #3 - Notice of Juvenile Court Referral for Compulsory Education Violation.
 - 3.7.2. Send Attendance Letter # 3 to parents/guardians through certified mail.
 - 3.7.2.1. If after five (5) school days from the date of Attendance Letter #3 being sent, the district social worker will make a Compulsory Education Violation referral to the Juvenile Court unless the school principal contacts the social worker to explain extenuating circumstances.

- 3.8. Parents/guardians, school administrators, social worker, and student services will be notified of the date and time to appear in court by the Juvenile Court.

4. SECONDARY TRUANCY AND CHRONIC ATTENDANCE PROBLEMS

- 4.1. Truancy is defined as a student who is deliberately absent from class without the knowledge and consent of his or her parents.
 - 4.1.1. Utah state law has established a student who is at least 12 years of age and who is habitually truant, may be given a habitual truancy citation (53A-11-101.7).
- 4.2. In the case of truancy, the decision of whether a student will be allowed to make up the work is left strictly up to the teacher. For example, if a student is knowingly truant in order to avoid an examination or a responsibility, the teacher is not required allow the work missed due to truancy to be made up.
- 4.3. Students should not fail a class solely because they have been truant. Alternative ways need to be found to help these students find success and meet the goals of the course.
- 4.4. Students and parents/guardians can find the attendance policies and expectations of their school on the school's website or handbook.
- 4.5. When a secondary aged student has the equivalent of five (5) or more days of unexcused absences; or the equivalent of 10 or more days of school absence (whether excused or unexcused) they may be identified as at-risk and having a chronic attendance problem.
 - 4.5.1. If after consultation with the parent/guardian, there is not an appropriate documentable reason for the student missing school; and
 - 4.5.2. It can be demonstrated that a student's pattern of attendance is having a significant impact on their success in school;

- 4.5.2.1. A significant impact is defined as:
 - 4.5.2.1.1. An attendance related failure or loss of credit in one or more classes during a term; or
 - 4.5.2.1.2. A drop in GPA of at least 1.0 from terms prior to the attendance problem or a cumulative GPA of less than 2.0.
- 4.5.3. The school will issue Chronic Attendance/Habitual Truancy Letter #1 and apply a minimum of the following interventions to change the attendance pattern:
 - 4.5.3.1. Student conference(s) to discuss attendance/truancy problem within current academic year.
 - 4.5.3.2. Parent/guardian and student conference to discuss attendance/truancy problem and create a written plan for improving the student's attendance within the current school year (preferably in-person). The plan may include goals and positive reinforcement for improved attendance and should be signed by the parent/guardian, student, and administrator.
 - 4.5.3.2.1. Four unsuccessful attempts to meet with the parent/guardian and student will satisfy this intervention. School administration may work with the student to create a plan in this circumstance and attempt to have a parent/guardian sign it.
 - 4.5.3.3. Referral to a counselor.
- 4.5.4. If after the initial interventions have been implemented, the student misses the equivalent of another five (5) days of school, the school may communicate to the parents/guardians that due to the student's continuance of chronic attendance/habitual truancy and the impact this is having on learning, restrictions will be applied on excusing student absences.

4.5.4.1. The school will also complete two or more of the following student interventions within the current school year:

4.5.4.1.1. Referral to a tracker

4.5.4.1.2. Change of schedule

4.5.4.1.3. Home visit

4.5.4.1.4. Referral to social services

4.5.4.1.5. Attendance contract

4.5.4.1.6. Refer student for evaluation

4.5.4.1.7. Make-up sessions

4.5.4.1.8. In-school suspension

4.5.4.1.9. Other appropriate intervention

4.5.5. If after the implementation of two or more of the above interventions, the student misses the equivalent of an additional five (5) days of school, the school may refer the student and parent/guardian to the Alpine School District Truancy School for chronic attendance and/or habitual truancy. The principal or principal designee will:

4.5.5.1. Refer the student to the Student Services department.

4.5.5.1.1. Student Services personnel will verify the Earnest and Persistent Efforts (EPE) have been completed and assign the student to truancy school.

4.5.5.2. Upon confirmation from Student Services, contact the parents/guardians to make them aware their student will be referred to the Alpine School District truancy school for continued chronic attendance or habitual truancy. Provide them the date, time, and location of the truancy school.

- 4.5.5.3. Issue Chronic Attendance/Habitual Truancy Letter #2 by certified mail.
- 4.5.6. If a student has the equivalent of two (2) days of unexcused absences or three (3) unexcused absences in the same class after being referred to Alpine School District truancy school, the school may issue Truancy Citation Letter #3 and refer the student to Student Services who will contact the Juvenile Court for truancy court intervention if the following have occurred:
 - 4.5.6.1. The student has been referred to the Alpine School District truancy school within the past 180 school days (prior school year may be taken into consideration).
 - 4.5.6.2. The student has the equivalent of 15 or more days of unexcused absences within the past 120 school days (prior school year may be taken into consideration).
 - 4.5.6.3. There have been a minimum of one parent and student conference, and one other intervention addressing the attendance problem during the current school year.
 - 4.5.6.4. The poor attendance pattern has remained virtually unchanged or worsened over the past 120 school days (prior school year may be taken into consideration).
- 4.6. A truancy citation may not be issued to a habitually truant student if the student has at least a 3.5 cumulative grade point average and is at least 16 years old (53A11-101.7 (5b)).

NOTES:

Summary for Secondary Chronic Attendance /Truancy

| Absences | Principal Response | Interventions |
|---|---|--|
| 5+ Days Unexcused (20 periods) or 10 Days (E, X, or Y) | Investigate absences; if two or more risk factors - Letter #1 | Parent/student conferences; written attendance plan; referral to counselor |
| 10+ Days Unexcused (40 periods) | May restrict excusing | Two or more additional interventions |
| 15+ Days (60 periods) | Letter #2 | Truancy school |
| 17+ Days Unexcused (68 total unexcused periods) or 3 unexcused absences in same period. | Letter #3 | Truancy Court |

Approvals

- Board Approved: April 12, 1988;
- Revised: February 12, 2014, May 28, 2014, April 14, 2016

Rules & Regulations

No rules & regulations have been established at this time.

1. ATTENDANCE RULES FOR SECONDARY SCHOOL

- 1.1. Students are expected to be in attendance every possible day of the school year in order to receive maximum benefit from their educational opportunities.
- 1.2. In all cases of absence, including truancy and suspension, students will be required to make up work if assigned by the teacher. This would include, but not be limited to tests, quizzes, papers and daily assignments. A student's grade may be affected by participation as determined by the teacher.
- 1.3. Teachers will be required to give students who are absent and/or tardy an opportunity to make up work missed.
- 1.4. Students missing a class to participate in any school sponsored activity will not be considered absent from that class provided they have followed proper excusing procedures. However, excessive absence of this kind cannot be permitted under the participation and attendance standard. To earn full grade or credit these students will be required to make up work if assigned by the teacher.
- 1.5. When students are tardy for class, it disrupts the classroom's instructional and learning process. It is the student's responsibility to explain the reason for their tardiness to the teacher prior to leaving class that day. The tardy is to be marked excused if it were beyond the control of the student. Tardies not judged excused by the teacher will be considered "unexcused." A student's grade may be affected by participation as determined by the teacher.
- 1.6. When new term or semester courses commence, teachers must submit disclosure documents in writing to enrolled students outlining the attendance and class participation guidelines of the class which will be used for the student's grade and credit determination.

- 1.7. Administrators and teachers will coordinate extracurricular activities so students' attendance and participation will only be disrupted minimally.
- 1.8. An absence may be excused by a parent or guardian ("for reasons they deem necessary") up to 10 school days following an absence. After 10 days, an absence may be excused through an administrator.

2. ATTENDANCE RULES FOR ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

- 2.1 The Alpine School District Board of Education recognizes that regular attendance at school increases the opportunities for students to profit from educational instruction and benefits students' academic learning. Frequent absences of students from the day-to-day classroom experiences disrupt the instructional and learning process. The Board further recognizes that the Utah Compulsory Attendance Law 53A-11-101 (9)(e) directs the parent/guardian to enroll and send school-age minors to a public or regularly established private school during the school year of the district in which the school-age minor resides, except as provided in Sections 53A-11-102.5.
- 2.2 In order to support elementary student attendance and the associated learning that occurs in schools, it is expected that each local school will make Earnest and Persistent Effort (EPE) to cooperate with the parent/guardian to ensure regular school attendance.
- 2.3 Guidelines
 - 2.3.1 Students are expected to attend class, on time, every school day, unless properly excused by parent or guardian.
 - 2.3.2 Teachers should keep rolls and record accurate daily attendance for all students assigned to their class.
 - 2.3.3 Teachers will report to the principal anytime their class absences exceed 10% of enrollment.

- 2.3.4 Electronic roll books are the official attendance records of Alpine School District and will be available for inspection in accordance with the District records policy.
- 2.3.5 Teachers should contact the parent or guardian after three student absences. Unexcused absences will be referred to the appropriate authority.
- 2.3.6 Elementary schools maintain a closed campus. Students should not leave the school grounds from the time school begins in the morning until it ends in the afternoon. Parents or guardians may authorize students to go home for lunch with an annual written release. Students may be checked out in the office by a parent or guardian in the event of an emergency by those designated on the emergency release form.
- 2.3.7 Excuses for absences typically include an illness, a family death, an approved school activity, an absence approved by the child's IEP or Accommodation Plan, or any other excuse established as valid by the local school administrator. An extended absence can be preapproved if the school administration collaborates with the parent/guardian to define the absence and provide reasonable make-up opportunities.
- 2.3.8 School administrators should refer to the following checklist when investigating student absences:
 - 2.3.8.1 Is the child falling behind his/her peers academically?
 - 2.3.8.2 Are the absences consecutive?
 - 2.3.8.3 Is there a prior history of absences and if so, what steps have been taken in prior years?
 - 2.3.8.4 Are the parents contacting the school to excuse the absences?

- 2.3.8.5 Does the teacher or school secretary have knowledge of the absences?
- 2.3.8.6 Are there frequent tardies as well?
- 2.3.8.7 Are other members of the student's family experiencing similar attendance patterns?
- 2.3.8.8 Is the student chronically ill?
- 2.3.8.9 Are there friendship or social issues such as bullying involved, contributing to absences?
- 2.3.8.10 Does the student's EPE show a pattern contributing to poor attendance?

Approvals

- Board Approved: April 12, 1988;
- Revised: October 2005, February 2014, May 2014, February 2016