

## **Attendance FAQs**

### **Does the school get funding when a student is absent?**

No, the school does not receive funding for either excused or unexcused absences.

### **What's the difference between an excused absence and an unexcused absence?**

Excused absence means that the absence is in compliance with compulsory attendance law (children 6-18 must attend a full-time education program where parents are required to compel their minor child to attend school punctually every school day). Unexcused absence means the absence is noncompliant and subject to truancy law after 3 incidents.

### **What is considered an excused absence?**

The following are excused absences as mandated by the state:

- For personal illness or injury
- Quarantine as mandated by the county or health officer
- Medical, dental, optometric or chiropractic services rendered
- Attendance at funeral services for a member of the immediate family
- Exclusion from school because the student is either a carrier of a contagious disease or not immunized for a contagious disease

The following are excused if the parent submits written notification to the Attendance Coordinator and received prior approval:

- Observation of a holiday or ceremony of your religion
- Attendance at religious retreats not to exceed 4 hours/semester
- Attendance at funeral services for someone not a member of the immediate family

### **What is an unexcused absence?**

Vacation  
Illness of a family member other than the student  
Weather  
Transportation Issues  
No reason given to the school

### **How long do I have to clear my child's absence?**

All student absences must be cleared within 5 school days, by calling the school office and notifying them as to the reason for the absence. After 5 days, any uncleared absences will be recorded as "unexcused".

### **What if I get a message from the school saying my child was absent, when in fact they were at school?**

It is important you call the school to verify that indeed your child was in attendance. Occasionally a student will show up tardy and forget to check in with the office. If we do not hear back from parents the absence will go against the student's record.

### **Can I do an Independent Study when my child is sick?**

No. NCSA no longer allows Independent Studies for unplanned 1-3 day absences. If you are planning to go on a trip, you must inform the Attendance Coordinator and the teacher 1 week in advance in order to create an IS. If the IS is not completed or turned in the day the student returns, the absences will be considered unexcused.

**Can my child do an Independent Study any time of the year?**

Yes. Your child can do an IS up to June 10<sup>th</sup> if the contract is signed no less than *one week* before the IS.

**What is SARB?**

SARB is the School Attendance Review Board. Their purpose is to examine poor attendance situations and develop an individual plan with the student and the family to reduce absences and/or tardies. NCSA strives to communicate with our families as to their progress during the school year and we encourage you to minimize the time your child is away from school.

**When is a student considered truant?**

According to the state, if a student has 3 or more unexcused absences and/or more than 3 unexcused tardies totaling more than 30 minutes, they are considered truant.

A student can also be considered truant if their attendance drops below 90% at any time during the school year. This includes excused and unexcused absences. By the end of the school year, 90% means a total of 17 absences.

PLEASE NOTE: if a student is a recipient of County Health and Human Services, they are required to attend school 80% of the time in order to receive services, should a student drop below 80%, they may lose those services.

**How does the school keep me informed of my child's absences?**

NCSA sends an initial email to ALL students' families after 4 absences, followed by a letter to those who have more than 7 absences (excused or unexcused) as is required by law. If the absences continue to accrue, NCSA will send another letter requesting a meeting with the School Director. If the absences continue after that meeting, the student will be referred to SARB.

**What happens with a SARB situation?**

Should a family reach the SARB level, they will personally receive a summons from a Sheriff's deputy to appear before the SARB (a panel of representative from the County, including the County Superintendent, Probation, Department of Children's Services and the Mental Health Department.) This meeting will result in a legally binding document requiring the student to attend school, only to be excused *by a doctor's note* for each subsequent absence.

If the parents continue to violate the contract, they could be sent to the district of attorney and be charged with "contributing to the delinquency of a minor" and receive a fine of approximately \$250 for each absence.

**How can I prevent this?**

Continue to communicate with the school and bring your child to school every day and on time unless they are ill.