

**ABSENCES AND EXCUSES**

The Governing Board believes that regular attendance plays an important role in student achievement. The Board shall work with parents/guardians and students to ensure their compliance with all state attendance laws and may use appropriate legal means to correct problems of chronic absence or truancy.

*(cf. 5112.1 - Exemptions from Attendance)*

*(cf. 5112.2 - Exclusions from Attendance)*

*(cf. 5113.1 - Chronic Absence and Truancy)*

*(cf. 5121 - Grades/Evaluation of Student Achievement)*

*(cf. 6154 - Homework/Makeup Work)*

Absence from school shall be excused only for health reasons, family emergencies, and justifiable personal reasons, as permitted by law, Board policy, and administrative regulation. (Education Code 48205)

Student absence for religious instruction or participation in religious exercises away from school property may be considered excused subject to law and administrative regulation. (Education Code 46014)

Inasmuch as school attendance and class participation are integral to students' learning experiences, parents/guardians and students shall be encouraged to schedule medical and other appointments during non-school hours.

Students shall not be absent from school without their parents/guardians' knowledge or consent, except in cases of medical emergency or, as authorized pursuant to Education Code 46010.1, for a confidential medical appointment.

The Board shall, by resolution entered into its minutes, approve reasonable methods that may be used to verify student absences due to illness or quarantine. (5 CCR 421)

*Legal Reference: (see next page)*

## **ABSENCES AND EXCUSES (continued)**

### *Legal Reference:*

#### **EDUCATION CODE**

*1740 Employment of personnel to supervise attendance (county superintendent)*  
*37201 School month*  
*37223 Weekend classes*  
*41601 Reports of average daily attendance*  
*42238-42250.1 Apportionments*  
*46000 Records (attendance)*  
*46010-46014 Absences*  
*46100-46119 Attendance in kindergarten and elementary schools*  
*46140-46147 Attendance in junior high and high schools*  
*48200-48208 Children ages 6-18 (compulsory full-time attendance)*  
*48210-48216 Exclusions from attendance*  
*48240-48246 Supervisors of attendance*  
*48260-48273 Truants*  
*48292 Filing complaint against parent*  
*48320-48324 School attendance review boards*  
*48340-48341 Improvement of student attendance*  
*48980 Parental notifications*  
*49067 Unexcused absences as cause of failing grade*  
*49701 Provisions of the interstate compact on educational opportunities for military children*

#### **ELECTIONS CODE**

*12302 Student participation on precinct boards*

#### **FAMILY CODE**

*6920-6929 Consent by minor for medical treatment*

#### **VEHICLE CODE**

*13202.7 Driving privileges; minors; suspension or delay for habitual truancy*

#### **WELFARE AND INSTITUTIONS CODE**

*601-601.4 Habitually truant minors*

*11253.5 Compulsory school attendance*

#### **CODE OF REGULATIONS, TITLE 5**

*306 Explanation of absence*

*420-421 Record of verification of absence due to illness and other causes*

#### **ATTORNEY GENERAL OPINIONS**

*87 Ops.Cal.Atty.Gen. 168 (2004)*

*66 Ops.Cal.Atty.Gen. 244 (1983)*

#### **COURT DECISIONS**

*American Academy of Pediatrics et al v. Lungren et al (1997) 16 Cal.4th 307*

*Management Resources: (see next page)*

**ABSENCES AND EXCUSES** (continued)

*Management Resources: (continued)*

*CSBA PUBLICATIONS*

*Improving Student Achievement by Addressing Chronic Absence, Policy Brief, December 2010*

*WEB SITES*

*CSBA: <http://www.csba.org>*

Policy  
adopted: February 23, 1999  
revised: March 27, 2017  
revised: November 7, 2017

**VISALIA UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT**  
Visalia, California

**ABSENCES AND EXCUSES****Excused Absences**

Subject to any applicable limitation, condition, or other requirement specified in law, a student's absence shall be excused for any of the following reasons:

1. Personal illness, including absence for the benefit of the student's mental or behavioral health (Education Code 48205)
2. Quarantine under the direction of a county or city health officer (Education Code 48205)

*(cf. 5112.2 - Exclusions from Attendance)*

3. Medical, dental, optometrical, or chiropractic appointment (Education Code 48205)
4. Attendance at funeral services for a member of the student's immediate family (Education Code 48205)

Such absence shall be limited to one day if the service is conducted in California or three days if the service is conducted out of state. (Education Code 48205)

5. Jury duty in the manner provided by law (Education Code 48205)
6. Illness or medical appointment of a child to whom the student is the custodial parent (Education Code 48205)

*(cf. 5146 - Married/Pregnant/Parenting Students)*

7. Upon advance written request by the parent/guardian and the approval of the principal or designee, justifiable personal reasons including, but not limited to: (Education Code 48205)
  - a. Appearance in court
  - b. Attendance at a funeral service
  - c. Observance of a religious holiday or ceremony
  - d. Attendance at religious retreats for no more than four hours per semester
  - e. Attendance at an employment conference
  - f. Attendance at an educational conference on the legislative or judicial process offered by a nonprofit organization

**ABSENCES AND EXCUSES** (continued)

8. Service as a member of a precinct board for an election pursuant to Elections Code 12302 (Education Code 48205)

*(cf. 6142.3 - Civic Education)*

9. To spend time with an immediate family member who is an active duty member of the uniformed services, as defined in Education Code 49701, and has been called to duty for deployment to a combat zone or a combat support position or is on leave from or has immediately returned from such deployment (Education Code 48205)

Such absence shall be granted for a period of time to be determined at the discretion of the Superintendent or designee. (Education Code 48205)

*(cf. 6173.2 - Education of Children of Military Families)*

10. Attendance at a naturalization ceremony to become a United States citizen (Education Code 48205)
11. Participation in a cultural ceremony or event which relates to the habits, practices, beliefs, and traditions of a certain group of people (Education Code 48205)
12. For a middle school or high school student, engagement in a civic or political event, provided that the student notifies the school ahead of the absence. Unless otherwise permitted by the Superintendent or designee, students shall be limited to one such school day-long absence per school year. (Education Code 48205)
13. Participation in religious exercises or to receive moral and religious instruction at the student's place of worship or other suitable place away from school (Education Code 46014)

*(cf. 6141.2 - Recognition of Religious Beliefs and Customs)*

Absence for student participation in religious exercises or instruction shall not be considered an absence for the purpose of computing average daily attendance if the student attends at least the minimum school day as specified in AR 6112 - School Day, and is not excused from school for this purpose on more than four days per school month. (Education Code 46014)

*(cf. 6112 - School Day)*

14. Work in the entertainment or allied industry (Education Code 48225.5)

Such absence shall be excused provided that the student holds a work permit authorizing such work and is absent for a period of not more than five consecutive days and up to five absences per school year. (Education Code 48225.5)

**ABSENCES AND EXCUSES** (continued)

15. Participation with a nonprofit performing arts organization in a performance for a public school audience (Education Code 48225.5)

A student may be excused for up to five such absences per school year provided that the student's parent/guardian provides a written explanation of such absence to the school. (Education Code 48225.5)

16. Other reasons authorized at the discretion of the principal or designee based on the student's specific circumstances (Education Code 48205, 48260)

For the purpose of the absences described above, *immediate family* means the student's parent/guardian, brother or sister, grandparent, or any other relative living in the student's household. (Education Code 48205)

**Method of Verification**

Student absence to care for a child for whom the student is the custodial parent shall not require a physician's note. (Education Code 48205)

For other absences, the student shall, upon returning to school following the absence, present a satisfactory explanation verifying the reason for the absence. 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. (Education Code 46012; 5 CCR 306)

When an absence is planned, the principal or designee shall be notified prior to the date of the absence when possible.

The following methods may be used to verify student absences:

1. Written note, fax, 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

(cf. 5113.11 - Attendance Supervision)

**ABSENCES AND EXCUSES** (continued)

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.

*(cf. 5113.1 - Chronic Absence and Truancy)*

**Parental Notifications**

At the beginning of each school year, the Superintendent or designee shall:

1. Notify parents/guardians of the right to excuse a student from school in order to participate in religious exercises or to receive moral and religious instruction at their places of worship, or at other suitable places away from school property designated by a religious group, church, or denomination (Education Code 46014, 48980)
2. Notify students in grades 7-12 and the parents/guardians of all students enrolled in the district that school authorities may excuse any student from school to obtain confidential medical services without the consent of the student's parent/guardian (Education Code 46010.1)

**ABSENCES AND EXCUSES** (continued)

3. Notify parents/guardians that a student shall not have a grade reduced or lose academic credit for any excused absence if missed assignments and tests that can reasonably be provided are satisfactorily completed within a reasonable period of time. Such notice shall include the full text of Education Code 48205. (Education Code 48980)

*(cf. 5121 - Grades/Evaluation of Student Achievement)*

*(cf. 5145.6 - Parental Notifications)*

*(cf. 6154 - Homework/Makeup Work)*

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