

# Attendance Policy

## ATTENDANCE

(See policy FD, FDA, FDC, FDD, (LOCAL), FDE, FEA, and FM)

### **Compulsory Attendance According to Vernon's Texas Codes and Annotated Education Code, School Attendance Law**

Unless specifically exempted by law, every child in the state who is at least six years of age or who has been previously enrolled in first grade and who has not completed the academic year in which the student's eighteenth birthday occurred is required to attend the public schools in the District of his/her residence or in some other District to which the student may be transferred as provided or authorized by law. Pre-K or Kindergarten students, once enrolled, are also included under the compulsory attendance guidelines. Students are required to attend each school day for the entire period the program of instruction is provided. District employees must investigate and report violations of the attendance law; a student is required to attend school under Section 25.085; and if the student fails to attend school for 10 or more days or parts of days within a six-month period in the same school year, they are in violation of Vernon's Law and House Bill 2398. Students that miss school three or more days or parts of days within a four-week period will be subject to truancy prevention measures. Truancy prevention measures: 3 day warning letter, daily parent phone calls being logged, parent meeting with guardian & principal or assistant principal.

The District attendance officer shall file a complaint against the parent/guardian in court, if the compulsory attendance law is violated (Vernon's Law). Exemptions to the law may be found in Policy FDC.

A student who voluntarily remains enrolled after the age of 19 is required to attend school. If a 19-year-old student has more than five unexcused absences in a semester, Lancaster ISD may revoke his or her enrollment. If the District revokes enrollment, the student will be treated as an authorized person and may be arrested for trespassing if he or she comes on school property.

### **Dropping Students from the Roll**

Students may be automatically dropped after 10 consecutive absences after review by the attendance committee.

### **Attendance for Credit**

To receive credit in a class, a student must attend at least 90% of the days the class is offered. The actual number of days a student must attend in order to receive a credit will vary, depending on the number of days in a semester and the schedule of classes in the school. A student who attends fewer than 90% of the days the class is offered cannot receive credit for the class unless the Attendance Review Committee finds that the absences are the result of extenuating circumstances. This policy does not affect a student's right to excused absences or the right to observe religious holidays. If a student is denied credit for a class by the Attendance Review committee the student or parent/guardian may appeal the decision.

### **Excused Temporary Absence**

A student may be excused for temporary absence resulting from any cause acceptable to the principal or his/her designee of the school in which the student is enrolled.

A student whose absence is excused will be permitted the same as the number of days absent to make up missed work. Parent/guardians should contact the attendance office before school in the morning if their child is going to be absent.

### **Extenuating Circumstances [FDD (LOCAL)]**

For the purpose of granting credit for a class, LISD recognizes the following extenuating circumstances:

1. Board approved extracurricular activity or public performance subject to limitations in FDD (LEGAL) preceding.
2. Required screening, diagnosis, and treatment for Medicaid-eligible students.
3. Documented health care appointment, if the student begins classes or returns to school on the same day as the appointment.\*
4. Temporary absence resulting from any cause acceptable to the principal or the superintendent.
5. Juvenile court proceeding documented by a probation officer.
6. Absence required by state or local welfare authorities.
7. Family emergency, unforeseen, or unavoidable instance requiring immediate attention.
8. Approved college visitations for juniors or seniors (two days per year).
9. Any activity required under a court order or service plan or other court-order that is practical to schedule the student's participation in the activity outside of school hours. (SB206).

\*Class time is important. Doctor's appointments should be scheduled, when possible, at times when the student will not miss instructional time.

### **Returning to School after Absence**

Immediately upon returning to school after any absence, a student must bring a note, signed by the parent, describing the reason for the absence. Lancaster ISD may investigate any case in which an excused absence is requested.

1. Illness with a written note from parent/guardian given to campus attendance office.

**NOTE DUE WITHIN 3 DAYS FOR EXCUSED CONSIDERATION.**

1. Doctor or dental appointments with notes when returning to school.
2. Death in the family.
3. Observance of a National Religious Holiday.
4. Extenuating circumstances with prior approval from the building principal.

**Extended Absence**

When a student's absence for personal illness exceeds five (5) consecutive days or a total of ten (10) days in a six-week grading period, the parent is required to present a statement from a physician or health clinic verifying the illness or other condition requiring the student's extended absence from school.

**Denial of Credit Parent/Guardian Notification [FDD (LOCAL)]**

A student and the student's parent/guardian will be given written notice prior to or upon a student's attendance dropping to the point in which the student will be in jeopardy of not meeting the 90% attendance law. Students must attend each class at least ninety percent (90%) of the time a class is offered in order to receive credit. The student, parent, or representative may, upon receipt of such knowledge, submit a written petition to the school's attendance committee requesting award of credit. The deadline for filing petitions is no later than three (3) days after receipt of the letter of notification.

**Regaining Credit**

Students who have been denied credit because of unexcused absences will be afforded the opportunity to regain credit during the current semester in which the absence took place by fulfilling the requirements established by the attendance committee. The committee may set more stringent requirements for regaining credit when absences are unexcused. All options for regaining credit will be established through a written contract, which will be administered by the attendance committee.

The following options are ways in which students may regain credit:

1. Complete additional assignments as specified by the attendance committee.
2. Make up lost academic time before and after school or evening school.
3. Summer School, and/or Saturday classes.

The attendance committee's decision may be appealed to the superintendent by submitting a written request that includes the basis for the disagreement with the committee's decision.

Students participating in a free or reduced lunch program can have the fee waived upon parent/guardian request. Extenuating circumstance will be considered and approved by the campus principal.

**Absences due to Extracurricular Activities**

Students who participate in an extracurricular activity approved by the Board and under the direction of a professional staff member, in accordance with the limits and eligibility criteria, will not be counted absent from school.

**School Activities/Athletics**

A student absence from school for any reason other than for a documented health care appointment will not be allowed to participate in school-related activities on that day or evening.

**Excusing Students from School**

Only the principal, the assistant principal, or his/her designee shall excuse a student from school for any cause. In all instances, people who come for students, telephone for them, or send for them must present a driver's license or state identification card, or the principal must be able to identify them, so as to make certain that unauthorized persons are not taking custody of the student. The parent/guardian who enrolled the student shall be the person to whom the school looks for authority and to whom the student may be excused for any purpose. The parent/guardian who does not have custody of the student shall not be permitted to take charge of the student under any condition without the personal approval of the parent/guardian who has custody. Should a court order or other legal process be served on the school, the school attorney should be consulted for appropriate action to be taken.

A student who becomes ill during the school day should, with the teacher's permission, report to the school nurse. The nurse will decide whether or not the student should be sent home and will notify the student's parent/guardian.

**Perfect Attendance Awards**

Perfect Attendance awards may be given on local school campuses during each six-week period or at the end of the school year. The guidelines require the student to have attended school each day during the period being considered for recognition. Please contact your student's teacher and the office personnel or principal before allowing your student to leave school during any part of a school

day, especially if a perfect attendance award is desired. Students who accumulate more than three tardies will not be eligible for the "Perfect Attendance Award" at the end of the year.

### **Release of Student from School**

**[See policy FDG (LOCAL)]**

A student will not be released from school at times other than regular dismissal hours, except with the principal's or designee's permission. The teacher will determine that such permission has been granted before allowing the student to leave. In the case of illness, the nurse shall serve in an advisory capacity to the principal/designee.

### **Tardies**

**[See Policy FDD]**

Parent/guardians are asked to help students learn to value education and to understand the importance of arriving at school on time and being consistent in attendance. The habits developed by children during their school years will last a lifetime. For that reason, tardiness to class and excessive absences will not be acceptable. Serious consequences may include requiring parent/guardian court summons and/or fines if warranted.

The District will use Tardy sweeps and other techniques routinely to discourage persistent or chronic tardiness. The sweeps will be conducted in a manner that is fair to all children, and disciplinary actions will be consistently applied.

After three unexcused tardies, a parent/guardians will be contacted and appropriate action will be taken. Disciplinary options include warning letter to parents, before or after school detention, Saturday school, In-School Suspension (ISS), **Each campus has established its own tardy policies. Contact the campus principal for the policy.**