



STUDENT ATTENDANCE POLICY

(K-8)

This policy was approved by the Governing Council on August 19, 2020.

Attendance

By state law, boards of education are required to adopt written policies setting forth attendance requirements. Mountain Phoenix complies with all Jeffco and Colorado State policies and procedures regarding attendance.

Law requires school attendance by every child between the ages of seven and sixteen years. Attendance in class is an integral part of the successful educational process. Students are required to be in attendance every day school is in session during each academic year. Parents, guardians, and legal custodians of students between the ages of 7 and 16 are obligated by state law to ensure the child's attendance. Students who have four or more unexcused absences in a one-month period, or ten or more unexcused absences from school or from class in a school year, are considered to be "habitually truant" under state law.

Attendance is the responsibility of the student, the parents, and the school. The importance of regular, daily attendance as a basis for learning cannot be overemphasized. Absences have a negative effect upon instructional continuity, regardless of attempts to make up the work. The school believes duplication of the classroom experience can never be accomplished with out-of-school assignments. Teachers cannot teach students who are not present. Additionally, the teaching approach guided by the principles of Public Waldorf Education is particularly challenging to duplicate in make-up work given the interactive and artistic nature of the lessons. Regular contact of students with one another in the classroom and their active engagement in lessons under the tutelage of a competent teacher are vital to this purpose.

Recording Attendance (In person learning)

Daily student attendance is recorded by teachers in Infinite Campus. Attendance is recorded once daily for students in Kindergarten and grades 1-5. Attendance is recorded at the start of each period throughout the day for students in grades 6-8.

Recording Attendance (remote learning)

During remote learning, daily attendance for students in Kindergarten and grades 1 -5 is recorded by the parent/caregiver through an attendance form placed in Google Classroom. These entries are validated daily by the teacher and attendance office as needed using evidence of student engagement in the educational process including, but not limited to, participation in synchronous sessions, logging on to online platforms, completion of assignments, exit tickets, etc.

During remote learning, daily attendance for students in grades 6-8 is recorded by the student through an attendance form placed in Google Classroom. These entries are validated daily by the teacher and attendance office as needed using evidence of student engagement in the educational process including, but not limited to participation in synchronous sessions, logging on to online platforms, completion of assignments, exit tickets, etc.

Tardiness to School

Tardiness is defined as the appearance of a student without proper excuse after the scheduled time that a class begins.

Students arriving after the starting time of school each day (8:00 for middle school, 8:15 for grades 1-5, and 8:30 for Kindergarten) are considered tardy. All tardies are recorded daily and shall be considered unexcused if they do not fall within one of the reasons for an excused absence as specified in this policy.

Because of the disruptive nature of tardiness and the detrimental effect upon the rights of non-tardy students to uninterrupted learning, consequences shall be imposed for excessive tardiness.

Excessive unexcused tardiness (5 tardies per semester) to school will result in a warning letter and 10 tardies in a semester will warrant a parent meeting with a Director.

The parent of a student who is tardy in grades 1-5 or Kindergarten must report to the main office to sign their student in and receive a tardy slip before going to class. Middle school students who are tardy may sign themselves in at the middle school office, unless excessive tardiness warrants a parent meeting with a Director.

Absences

An absence consists of failure to appear and remain at school throughout the entire school day unless dismissed by the proper authority. 13 school absences, excused or unexcused, or repeatedly arriving late or leaving early, initiates the evaluation of retention. COVID-19 Policy Extension: For the 2020-21 school year, this policy will be extended beyond 13 days if the student or someone in the student's family is in quarantine due to COVID-19 or experiencing symptoms of COVID-19.

Excused Absences

The following shall be considered justifications for excused absences:

1. Temporary illness, injury, or medical procedure.
2. Absence pre-approved by the school administration, for appointments or circumstances of a serious nature which cannot be taken care of outside of school hours.
3. Absence for an extended period due to physical, mental, or emotional disability.
4. High school visits, attendance of funerals, legal obligations, religious observations, and extenuating circumstances approved by the Director of Education following discussion with the class teacher.
5. Attendance at a school-sponsored activity or participation in Jeffco educational services/activities.
6. Visitation of a parent or guardian who is an active duty member of the uniformed services and has been called to duty, is on leave from duty, or has recently returned from deployment to a combat zone or combat support posting.

For the 2020-21 school year, additional justifications related to remote learning shall be considered for excused absences. Examples of such justification include, but are not limited to, temporary internet outage for individual students or households; Unexpected technical difficulties for individual students or households, such as failed log-in links, password resets or software upgrades occurring at inopportune times, such as during a teacher-led remote learning lesson. The school shall have broad latitude to determine remote learning absences as excused, especially as student engagement is verified through other means noted for recording attendance for remote learning.

MPCS requires communication from parent or guardian within 24 hours to verify the reason for a student's absence. The school may require suitable proof regarding the above exceptions, including written statements from medical sources.

Absence Due to Illness or Appointment

MPCS encourages parents to schedule appointments outside the school day whenever possible in order to maximize their child's learning experience.

To notify the school of an excused absence due to illness or an appointment, parents should call the school offices at 303.728.9100 ext. 4 before 8:00 am, stating their name, student's name, and reason for the absence such as illness or an appointment.

If the student is absent due to illness for more than four (4) consecutive days, a note from a medical doctor stating the medical reason for the absence may be required in order for that absence to be excused by the school.

Parents are required to call the office each day their student is absent even if the absence is on consecutive days. They are also asked to inform their student's classroom teacher of any circumstances at home that might affect the child's attendance or performance in school.

Make-Up Work for Excused or Pre Arranged Absence

Students are responsible for making up work covered or assigned during the excused absence. Assignments that are not made up will negatively affect the student's performance. All make-up work will be assigned, per teacher direction, after the student returns from the absence.

Teachers may provide alternative assignments for class work that cannot reasonably be made up outside of class (for example, an in-class assignment requiring the student to be present for a lecture, discussion, or assessment, etc). The student is responsible for obtaining and completing the missed assignment(s) after the absence but within the make-up period determined by the teacher in order to receive credit for the work. This applies to tests, quizzes, classroom assignments, and homework. The Grading Policy applies for all late work.

In the case of an extended absence due to a serious medical condition, a doctor's verification of such a condition is necessary, and the designated school nurse will develop a Health Plan for the student.

Prearranged Absence

MPCS gives ample opportunity for vacations throughout the year and requests that families schedule their trips and vacations during scheduled school breaks.

A prearranged absence form must be completed and submitted in order for any absence not specifically covered by another section, such as family vacations, or other extended absence, to be excused. This form must be submitted at least three days prior to the scheduled absence and approved by the Director of Education and teacher. In order for the absence to be excused, the student must meet one or more of the following conditions: 1) is in good academic standing; 2) has no unexcused absences; or, 3) has four or fewer excused absences in a semester or seven or fewer in a school year.

Unexcused Absences

An unexcused absence is any absence that does not meet the criteria for an Excused Absence as defined above in this policy. Classroom instruction and interaction with teachers are essential to a student's education. Because of the importance of classroom instruction and learning, students with unexcused absences will be expected to complete classroom assignments to demonstrate their learning on content standards and to meet the academic expectations of the teacher. As with excused absences, time allowed to make up work is twice the number of classes or days missed (two days allowed for makeup work for each day of absence); however, an extension of this time limit may be approved by the school administration. Students who complete the required makeup work within the required timelines will receive academic credit earned for the makeup work as described below. For grades 1 through 6, makeup work will receive full credit. For grades 7 and 8, makeup work will be allowed for credit with one grade reduction for all work completed. When a student has missed classroom discussions or classroom work that cannot be duplicated through a simple assignment, the teacher may elect to request that the student create a method for demonstration of the learning or the teacher may elect to assign specific work to demonstrate the learning. If the student fails to complete the assignment, no credit will be given.

The maximum number of unexcused absences a student may incur before judicial proceedings are initiated to enforce compulsory attendance is four days in one month or 10 days in one year.

Suspensions

As directed by the teacher, students will make up work missed while serving in-school or out-of-school suspension or after they return to school.

For attendance purposes, any absence from school resulting from out of school suspension will be considered an "excused" absence. Such absences due to suspension, however, shall not be counted in the total of unexcused absences when determining if a student is "habitually truant."

POLICY HISTORY

22-33-104(4) Compulsory school attendance-Attendance policies and excused absences

Original: proposed on November 2015

Approved on January 27, 2016.

July 2020: Policy updated to further define attendance (during remote learning, prearranged, excused, in the case of COVID 19 quarantine) and methods for recording as suggested by State and County during COVID 19 pandemic.