

Provo City School District

Policy Series: 3000 Students



Policy No. 3150

Student Attendance & Compulsory Education

I. Introduction

The Provo City School District believes that student learning and achievement are directly related to attendance and engagement at school. Furthermore, personal responsibility and accountability demonstrated by regular school attendance is an essential life skill. These procedures are developed as an effort to be in compliance with state law, as well as work proactively together with parents and community resources to encourage the regular attendance of all Provo students. The district believes this to be in the best interest of the students and the community, and is committed to work in harmony with parents/guardians to assist them with their responsibility to have their children in attendance at school.

Parents, guardians, students, and school personnel should make decisions that lead to excellent classroom attendance:

1. Students are expected to arrive on time and attend each period for each class in which they are enrolled unless excused as provided in this policy and accompanying procedure.
2. Parents/guardians are expected to ensure that their school-age child attends school as required by [Utah law](#), and to notify the school when their student is absent for a valid reason as set forth in the provisions, definitions, and procedures.
3. Teachers shall create a safe and engaging classroom that will encourage students to come to school and shall reach out to chronically absent students in a supportive manner to find out why they are missing school and what would help them attend more regularly.
4. The school's administrative staff shall reasonably accommodate parents and document efforts to resolve a student's truancy and chronic absenteeism problems.

The Board directs the Superintendent to develop procedures for managing student attendance and the requirements outlined in the State's compulsory attendance and education law to help students receive the benefits of the district's education program.

II. Definitions:

- A. Absence/Absent: the failure of a student assigned to a class or class period to attend. "Absence" or "absent" does not mean multiple tardies. A parent will be notified by automated message each time the parent's student is marked absent without prior excuse.
- B. Approved School Activity/Office Excused Absence: an event or activity sponsored by the school and approved by the school's administration. A student may attend an approved school event or activity as a member of a team, class, club, or group. An "approved school activity" and "office excused absence" are excused absences; however, students are responsible to complete any missed school work resulting from the absences.
- C. Attendance Concern Notice: a proactive communication in writing to notify parents when a student becomes chronically absent (missing ten percent (10%) or more of school days/class periods), or has at least five (5) truancies during the current school year.
- D. Attendance Resolution Conference: a meeting requested by school authorities with students and their parents/guardians, directing them to cooperate with the school in securing regular school attendance by the student.
- E. Behavioral Health: the impact a student's actions can have on a student's physical or mental health, and includes conditions in which services provided by social workers, counselors, psychiatrists, neurologists, behavior analyst, psychologists, and physicians would be appropriate.
- F. Chronic Absenteeism: a condition in which a student has missed at least ten percent (10%) percent or more of school days/class periods due to absence for any reason (excused, unexcused absences, or suspensions), which can translate into students having difficulty learning to read in elementary school, achieving in middle school, and graduating from high school.
- G. Compulsory Education Law (53G-6-202): the parent of a student who is at least six (6) years of age and not more than eighteen (18) years of age, shall enroll and send their school-age minor to a public or regularly established private school during the school year of the district in which the student resides. Attendance shall be in District schools or in some other district to which the student may legally be transferred, or in a regularly established private school. It is a class B misdemeanor for a parent to intentionally or without good cause fail to enroll a school-age minor

in school, unless exempted as outlined in [Utah Code 53G-6-204](#). The Provo City School District shall report violations of this law to the appropriate city, county, or district attorney.

- H. District Attendance Class: a truancy and chronic absenteeism prevention class required of students and their parents/guardians.
- I. District Attendance Mediation: a restorative truancy intervention program conducted by the district to the parents/guardians when a habitually truant student has not sufficiently improved attendance (has at least five (5) additional trancies during the current school year) after being directed to participate in an Attendance Resolution Conference.
- J. District Truancy Hearing: a disciplinary hearing conducted by the district for a habitually truant school-age child in grade seven (7) or above when a student has not sufficiently improved attendance (has at least five (5) additional trancies during the current school year) after being directed to participate in an Attendance Resolution Conference.
- K. Excused Absence: a student's absence from school may be requested by a parent/guardian and excused by the school administration for any of the following valid reasons:
 - 1. an illness, which may be either mental, behavioral, or physical; the school may not require documentation from a medical professional to substantiate the illness
 - 2. a medical, dental, or orthodontic appointment
 - 3. the death of a family member or close friend;
 - 4. a family emergency;
 - 5. a family activity;
 - 6. an approved school activity/office excused absence;
 - 7. An absence for a family vacation if the parent submits a written statement at least one school day before the scheduled absence and if the student agrees to make up course work for the missed days according to District or school policy;
 - 8. An absence excused through a health care or other accommodation plan, an Individualized Education Program (IEP) under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), or a Section 504 accommodation plan
 - 9. any other excuse established as valid by the district consistent with Utah law. Note: A parent may excuse an absence via a school approved

messaging method within a reasonable timeframe as determined by the individual school, but not to exceed one week after the absence.

- L. Habitually Truant: a school age student in grade seven (7) or above who fails to cooperate with the efforts of school authorities to resolve the student's attendance problems in the Attendance Resolution Conference by being truant at least five (5) additional times during the current school year.
- M. Home School: means a school comprised of one or more students officially excused from compulsory public school attendance under this policy and [Utah Code § 53G-6-204](#).
- N. Intervention: means a series of non-punitive and increasingly frequent and individualized activities that are designed to create a trusting relationship between teachers, students, and parents, improve attendance, improve academic outcomes, and reduce negative behavior referrals. It can include mentorship programs, family connection to community resources, academic support through small group or individualized tutoring or similar methods, and teaching executive function skills (planning, goal setting, understanding and following multi-step directions, and self-regulation).
- O. Mental Health: a person's emotional, psychological, and social well-being which can affect how a person thinks, feels, and acts including how a person handles stress, relates to others, and makes healthy choices.
- P. Parent/Guardian: a custodial parent of the minor, a legally appointed guardian of a minor; or any other person purporting to exercise any authority over the student which could be exercised by a custodial parent or legally appointed guardian.
- Q. Private School: means a school satisfying the following criteria: maintained by private individuals or entities;
 - 1. maintained and operated not at public expense;
 - 2. generally supported, in part at least, by tuition fee or charges;
 - 3. operated as a substitute for, and giving the equivalent of, instruction required in public schools;
 - 4. employs teachers able to provide the same quality of education as public school teachers;
 - 5. established to operate indefinitely and independently, not dependent upon the age of the students available or upon individual family situations; and
 - 6. licensed as a business by the Utah Department of Commerce.

- R. Reasonably Accommodate: a requirement of the district to make its best effort to enable a parent/guardian to exercise a parental right without substantial impact to staff and resources, including employee working conditions, safety and supervision at school and for school activities, and the efficient allocation of expenditures; and while balancing (1) parental rights, (2) educational needs of the students, (3) the academic and behavioral impacts to a classroom, (4) a teacher's workload, and (5) the assurance of the safe and efficient operation of a school, as outlined in Utah Code 53G-6-801.
- S. School-Age Child: means a minor who is at least six years old, but younger than 18 years old; and is not emancipated.
- T. Skipping/Cutting: a deliberate absence by a student's own free will that is intentional, unjustified, and unauthorized, often identified when a student is found not in class or leaving campus without permission. Skipping or cutting class is considered an unexcused absence that generally may not be excused by a parent/guardian.
- U. Tardy/Late: when a student arrives at a class after the tardy bell has rung. If a student arrives to class over fifteen (15) minutes late, the tardy will be considered a "late tardy." If a student arrives to class after more than one-half ($\frac{1}{2}$) of the total class (secondary) or school day (elementary) has expired, the tardy will be marked as a "tardy absence," and is subject to the provisions of this policy for an unexcused absence unless properly excused. A tardy that results in a student arriving late to school may be excused by a parent/guardian for valid reasons comparable to excused absences.
- V. Truant: a condition in which a student is absent without a valid excuse for at least one-half of the school day. A student may not be considered truant under this policy more than one time during one day. (A student may not be considered truant more than one time in a day.) If the student is enrolled in a learner verified program as defined by the State Board of Education, the time period which will result in truancy is defined by the district's policy about the District's continuing enrollment measure as it relates to truancy. [Utah Code § 53G-6-201\(11\) \(2024\)](#)
- W. Unexcused Absence: a student absence that is not excused by a valid reason as outlined by the definitions and provisions of this policy. An unexcused absence shall be counted as a truancy if not excused within one (1) week of the absence.

- X. Student Family Advocate: individuals hired by the district to support students and families, including policies and laws related to school attendance. The Student Family Advocate may assist in the following ways:
1. Assist the Director or Assistant Director of Student Services or any school-based administrator in investigating unexcused absences.
 2. Support schools and the district in enforcing compulsory attendance laws
 3. Keep written records of interventions and supports provided to students and families struggling to follow attendance policies and protocols.

III. Notices Provided to Parents

- A. **Compulsory Education Attendance Laws:** Prior to or no later than school registration, the parent or legal guardian of each student in grades 1-12 shall be provided written notice from the school or district informing the parents or legal guardians of Compulsory Education attendance laws, discipline or consequences progress; and opportunities to appeal a notice of truancy or disciplinary measures. This notice shall be provided with registration materials or as part of the registration process and shall also be provided at appropriate locations on the District website and school websites.
- B. Notice of Compulsory Education Violation for Elementary Students: a formal notice issued by school administration to the parent/guardian of a school-age child in grades one (1) through six (6) if the school-age child is truant at least ten (10) times during the school year. The notice of compulsory education violation shall:
1. Direct the student's parent(s) to meet with a school authority in an Attendance Resolution Conference to discuss the student's attendance, and shall be personally delivered or mailed by certified mail to the parent/guardian of the school-age child
 2. State that it is a class B misdemeanor for the student's parent to intentionally or without good cause fail to meet with the designated school authorities to discuss the student's attendance problems or fail to prevent the student from being truant an additional five (5) or more times during the remainder of the school year.
 3. The district shall report violations of this policy to the appropriate city, county, or district attorney.

4. Notice of Public School Options: The District shall place a link on its website to the public school options web page maintained by the Utah State Board of Education.

C. Notice of Truancy for Secondary Students: a formal notice issued by school administration to a school-age child and his/her parent/guardian in grades seven (7) or above if the school-age child is truant at least ten (10) times during the school year. The Notice of Truancy includes a directive to the student and his/her parent/guardian to meet with a school authority in an Attendance Resolution Conference to discuss the student's attendance, and shall be personally delivered or mailed by certified mail to the parent/guardian of the school-age child.

1. Identify each of the five (5) or more dates when the student was truant.
2. Direct the student and his or her parent to meet with the designated school authorities and cooperate with the school in securing regular attendance by the student;
3. Allow for contesting the notice of truancy. If the student and/or his or her parent desires to contest the notice of truancy, the parent must meet with the principal or the principal's designee to voice any concerns about the accuracy of the notice of truancy. If the parent cannot meet with the principal or the principal's designee, he or she can submit a written review to the principal outlining the concerns about the accuracy of the notice of truancy. After reviewing the concerns, the principal shall make a determination to either revise or affirm each of the dates when the student was allegedly truant. The principal's determination is final. The principal shall notify the parent or legal guardian of the determination. If the principal affirms the notice of truancy, the principal shall direct the parent to follow step 2 outlined above.
4. Be mailed to, or served on, the student's parent.

IV. Powers and Duties of Administrators and Student Family Advocates:

- A. School administrators may report or take a minor into custody if there is reason to believe the minor is truant.
- B. If the minor is taken into custody, the administrator shall release the student to the following:
 1. The principal of the child's school
 2. A School Resource Officer who will return the student to the child's school
 3. A parent or legal guardian of the student.

- C. If the child taken into custody refuses to return to school or to go to the truancy center, the officer or administrator shall, without unnecessary delay, notify the child's parents, guardian or custodian and release the child to their custody. If the parents of a truant minor in custody cannot be reached or are unable or unwilling to accept custody, and if none of the other options in the preceding paragraph are available, the child shall be referred to the Division of Child and Family Services.

V. Exemptions from Compulsory Attendance:

Students who meet one or more of the following conditions to the satisfaction of the Board shall be exempt from compulsory attendance requirements and shall be given documentation issued by Student Services stating that the student is excused from attendance during a specific time.

- A. A child over 16 years old may receive a **partial** release from school to enter employment, or to attend a trade school, if the child has completed the eighth grade. Children receiving this exemption must still attend school part-time
- B. On an annual basis, a school-age child under 18 years old may receive a **full release** from attending a public, regularly established private or part-time school or class if one of the following is established to the district's satisfaction:
 - 1. The child has already completed the work required for graduation from high school.
 - 2. The child is in a physical or mental condition, certified by a competent physician which renders attendance inexpedient and impracticable.
 - 3. Proper influences and adequate opportunities for education are provided in connection with the child's employment.
 - 4. The Superintendent or designee determines in partnership with the parent that the child, if over 16 years old, is unable to profit from attendance at school because of inability or a continuing negative attitude toward school regulations and discipline.
 - 5. The child's parent or legal guardian files a signed affidavit with the child's school district of residence that the child will attend a home school and that the parent or legal guardian assumes sole responsibility for the education of the school-age child except to the extent that the child is dual-enrolled in a public school. A parent or legal guardian who has been convicted of child abuse or has been the subject of a substantiated finding of child abuse by a court of competent jurisdiction may not file an

affidavit or assume responsibility for the education of the child and an affidavit shall not be accepted from such a person. A child receiving a partial release in order to enter employment under item (1) above may be excused from attending required part-time school to attend home school part time.

a) When the Board excuses a child from attendance under the homeschool exemption, Student Services shall annually issue documentation that excuses the child from attendance for the specified school year. The documentation shall be issued within 30 days after the initial receipt of the signed affidavit filed by the child's parent or legal guardian. Students Services shall issue subsequent documentation on or before August 1 of each year thereafter unless:

- (1) the child enrolls in a district school
- (2) the parent or legal guardian notifies the district that the child no longer attends a home school, or
- (3) the parent or legal guardian notifies the district that the child's district of residence has changed.

C. A parent or legal guardian of a child who attends a home school is solely responsible for:

1. the selection of instructional materials and textbooks;
2. the time, place, and method of instruction, and
3. the evaluation of the home school instruction.

D. A local school board may not:

1. require a parent or guardian of a child who attends a home school to maintain records of instruction or attendance;
2. require credentials for individuals providing home school instruction;
3. inspect home school facilities; or
4. require standardized or other testing of home school students.

E. Upon request of a parent or legal guardian, the district shall identify the knowledge, skills, and competencies a student is recommended to achieve by grade level and subject area to assist the parent or legal guardian in achieving college and career readiness through home schooling. [Utah Code § 53G-6-204 \(2024\)](#)

VI. Reporting to the State Board of Education:

The district shall annually report to the State Board of Education (a) the number of absences with a valid excuse and (b) the number of absences without a valid excuse.

VII. School Efforts to Resolve Attendance Problems

- A. Parent(s) of all students in grades 1-12 shall be provided written notice from the school or district informing parents of Compulsory Education attendance laws and encouraging parental cooperation.
- B. A student registering in the school district during the school year shall be provided written notice explaining the school and school district's compulsory education policy.
- C. A student moving from one school to another within the same district may be provided written notice explaining the school and school district's compulsory education policy.
- D. The notice to parents shall also include a description of the appeals process for contesting a notice of truancy or contesting disciplinary action against a student under this policy.
- E. The district shall make reasonable efforts to promote regular attendance and resolve school absenteeism and truancy issues for its students, including the following, as deemed reasonably feasible by the Board or its designee in individual cases:
 - 1. counseling of the student by school authorities;
 - 2. issuing a Notice of Truancy to the student or notice of compulsory education violation to the student's parent;
 - 3. adjusting the curriculum and schedule if determined necessary to meet special needs of the student;
 - 4. considering alternatives proposed by the parent or legal guardian;
 - 5. incorporating attendance into the student's course score and grade if that is determined to be appropriate through an individualized plan developed by the student's parent and teacher with written consent from the parent and with the parent having the right to revoke the consent at any time;
 - 6. monitoring school attendance of the student;
 - 7. voluntarily participating in truancy mediation, if available;
 - 8. providing the student's parent or legal guardian, upon request, a list of resources available to assist the parent or legal guardian in resolving the student's attendance problems; and
 - 9. enlisting the assistance of community and law enforcement agencies and organizations for early intervention services as appropriate and reasonably feasible and to the extent permitted under [Utah Code § 53G-8-211](#).

- F. This policy and related statute do not impose civil liability on the school district or its employees.
- G. Each school in the district shall establish procedures to promote regular attendance and resolve school absenteeism and truancy issues which are consistent with this policy. These procedures shall include processes to monitor for chronic absenteeism and to implement interventions for students with chronic absenteeism which are appropriate for the particular circumstances and needs of the school's students and the school. District administration shall provide support to schools in establishing procedures and in implementing efforts to promote regular attendance.

Legal References:

[Utah Code § 53G-8-211.](#)

[Utah Code § 53G-6-204 \(2024\)](#)

[Utah Code § 53G-6-203\(5\) \(2023\)](#)

[Utah Code § 53G-6-203\(2\) \(2023\)](#)

[Utah Code § 53G-6-202 \(2021\)](#)

[Utah Code § 53G-6-201\(11\) \(2024\)](#)

[Utah Admin. Rules R277-932-2\(4\) \(July 8, 2024\)](#)

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