

Attendance Policy

The regular school attendance of a child of school age is required by state law. Regular, uninterrupted classroom instruction, classroom participation, and interaction with classmates are essential to the educational process and are integral to the learning process. Preparation and training for subsequent study or employment includes the development of self-discipline through regular class attendance.

The presence or absence of each student must be recorded each school day. Teachers follow CMS directives and state requirements in coding unexcused/excused absences and tardiness.

The New Mexico Attendance for Success Act requires that all school-age children attend school until the age of eighteen, or until they graduate from high school or receive a GED certificate. Maintaining regular school attendance is the joint responsibility of parents and educators. In keeping with that obligation, the following rules for school attendance shall be observed and enforced for all students.

I. Absences

- A. "Absence" – A child not at school for a class or school day, whether excused or not.
 1. Interscholastic extracurricular activity absences are exempt as they are not considered an absence from school. NMAA regulations allow for a student to accumulate 15 activity absences per semester. The student is expected to make arrangements with the teacher prior to being gone for the school activity concerning any missed classwork and/or homework.
- B. "Excused Absence"--An absence from a class or school day (half of the students approved program) for which the student has an allowable excuse, one for necessary and important reasons only.
 1. Types of allowable excused absences: illness (including appointments with mental health care providers), injury, bereavement of a family member, other family emergencies, and observance of major religious holidays of the family's faith or religious instruction and tribal obligations.
 2. At CMS's discretion, a written confirmation may be required by the school when the student returns to school. The letter must be provided by a medical practitioner, a funeral service provider, a provider of religious education, or tribal official.
 - a) Excused Absence due to Religious Instruction: A student may, subject to prior written notice from parents/guardians and the prior approval of the Principal, be absent from school to participate in religious instruction for not more than **one** class period of the school day with the written consent of the parent/guardian, at a time that is not in conflict with the academic program of the school. CMS does not assume responsibility for the religious instruction for any student, nor does it permit religious instruction to be conducted on school property. The student is expected to make arrangements with the teacher prior to being gone for the school activity concerning any missed classwork and/or homework.
 - b) Excused Absence due to Tribal Obligations: A student will, subject to prior written notice from parents/guardians and the prior approval of the Principal, be absent from school to participate in

tribal obligations with the written consent of the parent/guardian. CMS shall provide time for the student to make up the school work missed during the absence.

3. Special family situations may be considered appropriate for excused absence when subject to **prior** written notice from the parents/guardians and **prior** approval is received from the Principal. The Principal's decision on the request shall be considered final.
- C. Pregnant Students: If a student becomes pregnant, a plan will be devised to support the student's educational needs throughout their pregnancy. The recommendations may require a 504 plan and shall be on a case-by-case basis, but would fully support their education through homebound or in school education. Decisions about excused and unexcused absences would be discussed and agreed upon in the meeting.
- D. Partial Day Absences
1. High School/Middle School: Students will be considered absent from each class period after 20 minutes.
 2. Elementary Students: Students Who are 30 minutes or more late, they will be counted absent for half a day for the morning absent report. If a student leaves early 30 minutes or more, they will be counted as absent for the afternoon report.
- E. Appointments: If a student must leave school early for an appointment, the parent *must* notify the school secretary or principal either by phone or written notice. It is highly recommended that all appointments (doctor/dentist) be made on Mondays to avoid unnecessary absences from school. Students must sign-in/out in the school office.
- F. Early Release: Students with early release must sign-out in the school office (see policy).
- G. Truancy policy to apply to all grades: Students will be considered truant if they leave school without permission, or stay out of class without permission. Students are not to miss a class in order to complete work for another class without written permission from the teacher whose class is being missed. Failure to be in class is considered truancy even if the student is on campus. Refer to the Discipline Matrix.
- H. "Unexcused Absence:" An absence from a class or school day (half of the student's approved program) for which the student does not have an allowable excuse.
- I. Homework Policy
1. Homework– Excused Absence: Following an **excused** absence, parents or guardians shall arrange make-up work with the student's teacher. A student shall be given a *reasonable* time as set forth by the teacher in their class syllabus to make- up the work the student missed during the absence.
 2. Homework-Excused Absence: Following an **unexcused** absence, make-up work is at the discretion of the teacher.

II. Attendance for Success Act

A. Understanding the Law

1. The New Mexico Attendance for Success Act requires that all persons between the ages of five and eighteen attend a public, private, or home school, or a state institution, unless that person has graduated from high school or has received a general education development certificate, or that person's parent or guardian provides written, signed permission for that person to leave school for health reasons or in case of hardship, and that permission is approved by the Principal.
2. Parents are expected to notify the school for **each** day of a student's absence by calling the school or by sending a written explanation to the school upon the student's return. In the case of an emergency, the parent may send a note or call the school upon the student's return.
3. Students enrolled in CMS shall attend school for the length of time of the school year as established by the school district.
4. Students are expected to have no more than 5% absentee rate per school year, which includes both excused and unexcused absences.
5. Students are expected to arrive on time to school each day and to remain in school until the scheduled dismissal.

B. Definitions

1. "Chronically absent"/"Chronic absenteeism" means a student who has been absent for ten percent or more of classes or school days for any reason, whether excused or not, when enrolled for more than ten days."
2. "Excessively absent" / "Excessive absenteeism"--" means a student needing intensive support and has not responded to intervention efforts implemented by the public school."
3. "Educationally Neglected Child" means a child who is permitted by his or her parents to be chronically truant may be considered a child of educational neglect. State law requires the schools to report children believed to be educationally neglected for investigation to the Probation Services Office and/or the judicial district in which the student resides .
4. "Whole school prevention" means universal, whole-school prevention strategies for all students, including students who have missed less than five percent of classes or school days for any reason;
5. "Individualized prevention" means targeted prevention strategies for individual students who are missing five percent or more but less than ten percent of classes or school days for any reason;
6. "Early intervention" means interventions for students who are missing ten percent or more but less than twenty percent of classes or school days for any reason; and
7. "Intensive support" means interventions for students who are missing twenty percent or more of classes or school days for any reason.

C. Policy

1. Whole school interventions will be provided to all students with less than 5% absences.
2. An **Individualized Attendance Plan** will be provided to students who have 5%-10% (when enrolled for more than ten days). A school designate shall talk to the parent/guardian (either in writing or in person) and inform them of the student's attendance history, the impact of student

absenteeism on student academic outcomes, the intervention or services available to the family, and the consequences of further absences which may include referral to the Children, Youth and Families Department (CYFD) for chronic absenteeism.

3. An **Early Intervention Plan** for Chronically Absent Students will be put into place for those students who have 10% – 20% absenteeism (when enrolled for more than ten days). The Attendance Administrator shall notify parent/guardian of a child found to be chronically absent in writing, and include the date, time and location for parent/guardian to meet to establish an Early Intervention Plan. This plan will include an Attendance Contract and weekly monitoring and reporting of student attendance to the parent/guardian. Parents of students with any further unexcused absence after meeting with the Principal to develop an Early Intervention Plan and to discuss further consequences such as a CYFD referral.
4. A student reported to have 20% or more absences (when enrolled for more than ten days) is a child deemed “**Excessively absent.**” The Attendance Administrator shall notify parent/guardian of a child found to be chronically absent in writing, and include the date, time and location for parent/guardian and student to meet with the Principal, school counselor, Attendance and SAT Team, PSO, CYFD and/or JPO. An attendance contract will be signed detailing consequences for future absences such as making up time missed through Monday school. Non-Punitive (OSS or Expulsion) consequences will be discussed and put into place.
5. After explicit notification to parent/guardian concerning excessive absences despite the signing of the attendance contract, and the exhaustion of all intervention efforts, the school may consider loss of school credit and a voluntary withdrawal from the school constituted by the student’s excessive absences.
6. The Public Education Department’s truancy prevention coordinator (or designate) or Children Youth and Families Department representative, or representative of the Probation Services Office, shall be permitted access to any records and information related to chronically absent students or excessively absent students

III. TARDIES

- A. Tardiness is a disruption to normal classroom procedures and activities. A student is considered tardy if he/she is not in the classroom after the tardy bell has completed ringing without a written excuse from a teacher, principal, or secretary.
 1. Excused Tardy – A tardy for excused reasons.
 - a) Verified doctor or dental appointment (note required)
 - b) Call-in by a parent or guardian within 24 hours (not to extend 3 excused tardies).
 - (1) Excessive tardies – *tardies will be considered excessive after three parent/guardian call-ins or requests for early dismissal and will be considered unexcused unless*

accompanied by a doctor's note. Parents are encouraged to ensure their student(s) are not chronically tardy.

2. Unexcused Tardy – A tardy for unexcused reasons.
 - a) Entering the school after 7:55 am.
 - b) Late to classes after passing periods without a written or verbal excuse from a teacher, principal or secretary.
 - c) Tardies are subject to disciplinary action per semester
 - (1) Third unexcused tardy-lunch detention
 - (2) Fourth and subsequent tardies will be considered a chronic problem. Parents will be notified and more serious consequences will apply (Reference the student discipline matrix).
- B. When entering school after the tardy bell, all students must enter at the administration office and then report directly to the school office before going to class. An admission slip will be issued and attendance information adjusted accordingly.

IV. TRUANCY

- A. Students are considered truant if they leave school during the school day or stay out of class without permission. Students are not to voluntarily miss a class to work on missed homework unless prior permission has been provided by school administration or teachers.

References

- **22-References NMSA 22-12A-1.**
- **J-0500 © JE-STUDENT ATTENDANCE**
- **I-7261 © IKEA-R -MAKE UP OPPORTUNITIES**