

# **ATTENDANCE POLICY 2022-2023**

*Flowers, balloons and other deliveries  
(including fast food) WILL NOT be accepted for students at school. NO EXCEPTIONS.*

The Pasadena Unified School District Board of Education has established the following policies in relation to attendance:

- Students shall attend school regularly and punctually.
- Pasadena High School is a closed campus.** Students shall not leave school premises during school hours without prior permission from a parent/guardian and consent of the principal or designee.

Regular attendance is associated with success at school. Many prospective employers, colleges, and branches of the armed services ask the office for attendance information on students. It is very important a student attend school regularly.

If a student has **35 or more** period absences during the school year, they are ineligible for participation in extracurricular activities such as dances and games. **Please note that this means students will lose their privileges to attend Prom, Grad-Nite, Dances, and other activities if they have 35 or more unexcused period absences.** While recognizing the importance of graduation ceremonies, the Board also desires to maintain high standards of student conduct and behavior. The principal may deny the privilege of participating in these ceremonies in accordance with school rules which provide for due process (PUSD Board Policy 5127(a)).

## **To clear an absence**

Students who have been absent must bring a **signed note** to the attendance office from a parent/guardian, which contains the following information:

- Student name and ID number**
- Reason for the absence**
- Day(s) of the absence**
- Accurate contact number to verify note with parent**

- ❖ **A note may be sent through e-mail or faxed from a parent/guardian as long as it contains the above information and can be verified. Notes may be faxed to (626) 791-5276 or emailed to Lorena Ramirez at ramirez.lorena@pusd.us or call (626)396-5880 ex.84090**

**PLEASE NOTE: PUSD Board of Education policy states that parents/guardians have up to five (5) school days to provide the school with documentation to excuse a student's absence. After five days, all unverified absences will be changed to unexcused. NO EXCEPTIONS**

## **Verification of Absences**

**Parents are responsible for informing the school attendance clerk of the reason for the student's absence.** The student's absence will be recorded as unexcused if a parent does not provide a note with the reason for the absence. The attendance office will verify a random sample of notes from parents/guardians on a regular basis. If the school is not provided with an acceptable reason (Per EC 48205) for the student's absence within five (5) school days of the student's return to school the absence will remain on the student's attendance record as unexcused,

### **The following methods may be used for verifying absences:**

Written note from parent/guardian.

- 18 year old students cannot write their own notes unless they are an emancipated minor with documentation on file at PHS.**
- Visit to the student's home by the school staff, or any other reasonable method, which establishes that the student was actually absent for the reason(s) indicated.
- Written verification of confidential medical appointment(s) by the student's physician. District staff may contact the medical office to confirm the time of appointment.

### **Valid Reasons for Excused Absences**

- Personal illness/injury: a doctor's note after a student has accumulated ten (10) absences in the school year for illness.
- Quarantine: under the direction of a county or city health officer.
- Medical, dental, optometry or chiropractic service appointments
- Attending the funeral of an immediate family member: one (1) day if the funeral is conducted in California and three (3) days if the service is conducted outside of California (EC 45194). Documentation needed for School purposes to the Attendance office.
- Section 48205 also excuses the absence of a pupil who is the custodial parent of a child who is ill or has a medical appointment during school hours.
- Appearance in court. Documentation needed for School purposes to the Attendance office.
- Religious instruction and exercises: student shall at least attend the minimum school day and shall be excused for this purpose no more than four (4) days per month. Documentation needed for School purposes to the Attendance office.
- Observance of a holiday or ceremony of the student's religion.
- Approved participation in school activity.
- Exclusion from school to obtain required immunizations if the absence is no longer than 5 days.

### **Parent/Guardian Role in Improving School attendance**

- Parent/guardians are encouraged to support school attendance policies by allowing students to miss school only when they meet the preceding definitions and specifications for an excused absence. Our curriculum is based on 180 days, 64,800 minutes. Each moment of instruction is important.**
- Parents/guardians are encouraged to make dental/medical and other health related appointments after school or on non-school days.**
- Only parents/guardians or listed emergency contacts are permitted to pick up students. *(INDIVIDUALS MUST PRESENT VALID CALIFORNIA IDENTIFICATION).*

### **Emergency Information**

Parents/guardians must keep the school informed of any changes in work/home telephone numbers/E-mails and addresses. A valid telephone number for contacting a parent/guardian must be on file with the student's emergency information. Parents/guardians are also encouraged to **contact teachers if the student was marked absent from a class or late and they were present, and counselors** regarding attendance,

### **Unexcused Period Absences**

- Phone calls and emails are made each evening to the homes of those students who were absent or Late (30 min) for periods of instruction that day. If a parent would like these attendance calls to go to a phone number other than the home number – please let the attendance office know to make those arrangements.
- Teachers are to make at least one direct parent contact after 5 unexcused period absences. Teachers may also assign after school detention, class beautification, weekly or daily progress reports for

academic or attendance purposes, or provide other interventions as necessary. Saturday School will also be assigned.

- If excessive unexcused period absences are documented, counselor intervention will be required. This may include parent contact via U.S. Mail and may include a parent meeting, Student Study Team (when appropriate), joint intervention/remediation with Hathaway-Sycamores support, and/or group counseling; and any other interventions deemed necessary including SART (School Attendance Review Team) or SARB (School Attendance Review Board).

### **Classification of a Truant**

A pupil subject to full-time compulsory education or to continuing education who is absent from school without a valid written excuse for three (3) days or periods, (or who is tardy for more than 30 minutes for three (3) days in one school year) is considered a truant and Section 48260 requires that the student be reported to the attendance supervisor or to the district superintendent. 48260. (a) Any pupil subject to compulsory full-time education or to compulsory continuation education who is absent from school without a valid excuse three full days or for three periods of instruction in one school year or tardy or absent for more than any 30 minute period during the school day without a valid excuse on three occasions in one school year, or any combination thereof, is a truant and shall be reported to the attendance supervisor or to the superintendent of the school district. Such absence is in violation of California Law. The Education Code requires student's ages 6-15 to attend school full-time. Students ages 16-17 must attend a regular school, continuation high school or a district alternative program. If, upon reaching the age of 18, a student has a record of unsatisfactory scholarship, citizenship, or attendance, that student may be withdrawn from school by the site principal after a parent/student conference has been held. By law, any absence that is not explained by a parent note is considered a truancy (EC 48200 & 48400).

### **Truancies & Unexcused Absences**

***Reasons NOT acceptable for being absent from school and are considered truancies or unexcused absences during the regular school year.*** A truancy occurs if a student misses school due to any of the following reasons:

- Going to work with parent or other family members
- Baby-sitting, taking care of other family members, going out of town to visit sick relatives. VACATION
- Personal problems/family issues, going out of town. DMV, traffic,
- Repairing car/car trouble/or other transportation issues
- Waiting for service or repair people to arrive
- Waking up late/alarm didn't go off
- Bus not available/missed bus
- Rainy weather
- Bus not available/missing bus
- Participating in a student demonstration off campus.
- Any other reason not included in "Acceptable Reasons for Excused Student Absences."

### **Irregular in Attendance**

A student who has excused absences but is missing one quarter attendance out of one school month (5 days out of 20) is considered irregular in attendance. Like employers, schools can ask for medical verification for consecutive absences of three or more days. Ten (10) excused absences and/or 15 tardies are considered to be excessive and irregular in attendance and **student will be assigned Saturday School as a consequence**. When a parent takes their child out of school early, for reasons not acceptable as excused, for longer than a 30 minute period, more than three times during the year, that child is at risk of being identified as truant.

**Students can make up an unexcused full day absence by attending Saturday School.**

### **Student Attendance Review Team**

Each school site shall form a Student Attendance Review Team (SART) to deal with students who are IN habitually truant or have excessive absences. An existing school guidance team, such as a Student Success Team (SST) may serve as the SART. The SART may be composed of a counselor, teacher, and a support person, such as a School Nurse, School Psychologist, Social Worker, depending on the reason for the absences, and meets with the family prior to referral to the District SARB.

Pasadena High School, in conjunction with PUSD Policy, issues intervention letters to families to inform them of truancy status.

Letter #1 notifies parents/guardians that a student has 3 unexcused period or full day absences have accrued.

Letter #2 notifies the parent/guardian that a student has experienced 4 unexcused period or full day absences have accrued. In addition, this letter invites parents/guardians and students to attend a group meeting to receive a presentation on the importance of school attendance, suggested interventions and to develop and sign a SART contract designed to improve attendance.

Letter #3 notifies parent/guardian of additional trancies (at least one additional day).

Letter #4 notifies the parent/guardian of Truancy-Habitual Truancy (now mandatory for parent/guardian and child to attend a SARB hearing. Contact will be made by the Office of Child Welfare, Attendance & Safety regarding scheduled appointment).

### **Role of SARB**

To assist school districts in resolving problems related to behavior and truancy, the Legislature provided for, and most counties have established, a **School Attendance Review Board**. Commonly known as SARB, this board includes representatives of school districts, county probation, county welfare, community-based youth service centers, school guidance personnel, and Child Welfare and Attendance personnel. Ideally, other support groups may also be represented.

The purpose of a SARB is to propose and promote the use of alternatives to the Juvenile Court system by using community and regional resources to resolve school behavior problems. (Education Code Sections 48320, 48321)

To accomplish its mission, the SARB is given broad powers, including subpoena power, to compel attendance. If the parent or guardian willfully fails to respond to directives of the SARB or to the services provided, SARB is required to direct the school district to make and file a criminal complaint against the parent/guardian charging a violation of compulsory education laws. (Education Code Section 48291) Los Angeles County uses District Attorney facilitated mediation as a first step.

**PARENT/GUARDIAN PLEASE NOTE:** Legal action may be taken against a student/parent when a student is declared a habitual truant.

Parents are obligated by law to compel the attendance of the pupil at school. Parent/guardians who fail to meet this obligation may be guilty of an infraction and subject to prosecution (EC 48260, 48260.5, 48261, 48262, and 48263). Students who are truant during school hours are subject to police citation and may be assigned after school detention or Saturday School.

### **PENALTIES (Education Code Section 48293)**

SARB Hearing – The School Attendance Review Board (SARB) will ask the parent to sign an attendance contract. Failure to comply with the contract will result in the order of a citation to appear in court.

1<sup>st</sup> Conviction – a fine of not more than \$100.00 plus penalties could amount to as much as \$375.00. 2<sup>nd</sup> Conviction – a fine of not more than \$320.00 plus penalties could amount to as much as \$750.00. 3<sup>rd</sup> Conviction – a fine of not more than \$500.00 plus penalties could amount to \$1,500.00.

**Parents are responsible for a child's attendance from the age 6 until age 18 (48200 Ed. Code)**

