



Skamania School District 2 • 122 Butler Loop Road • Skamania, WA 98648 • 509-427-8239  
<http://www.skamaniashooldistrict.org>

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October 2018

Dear Parents/Guardians,

Skamania School is making a special effort to ensure that all students regularly attend school. Your child can start building this habit so they learn that going to school on time, every day is important.

- Consistent attendance will help children do well in high school, college, and at work.
- Too many absences (excused and unexcused) can cause children to fall behind in school.
- Missing 10 percent (or about 2 days per month) increases the chance that your child will not read or master math at the same level as students who attend school regularly.
- Being late to school also leads to falling behind academically.
- By 6th grade, high absenteeism is one of three signs that a student may drop out of high school.

If your child is going to be absent, please call the school office, 509-427-8239. You may also send a note when they return to school indicating the reason they were absent. We know that there are a wide variety of reasons that students are absent from school, from health concerns to transportation challenges. There are many people at our school ready to help if your family faces challenges in getting your child to school regularly.

You can help your child understand the importance of school by:

- Setting a regular bedtime and morning routine.
- Preparing for school the night before, finishing homework and getting a good night's sleep.
- Not letting your child stay home unless they are truly sick; however, if they are obviously ill, do not send them to school.
- Avoiding appointments and extended trips when school is in session.

Please call the school office if you have any questions about the attendance policy or your child's educational experience. Your questions and suggestions are very important to us.

Sincerely,

Dr. Ralph Pruitt  
Superintendent



Your signature below indicates that you have read and understand the attendance policies and procedures of Skamania School District 2. Please return this portion to the Skamania School office.

Parent/guardian signature \_\_\_\_\_

Printed name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/2018



## SCHOOL POLICIES AND STATE LAWS

1. State law requires children from age 8-17 to attend a public school, private school, or a district-approved home school program.
2. Children younger than 8 years old are not required to be enrolled in school. However, if parents do enroll their child younger than 8, the student must attend school. See Washington State law RCW [28A.225.010](#)
3. If your child has **two unexcused absences in one month**, state law (RCW 28A.225.020) requires we schedule a parent conference with. The district is required to develop a plan that may require an assessment to determine how to best meet the needs of your family and reduce absenteeism.
4. In elementary school **after five excused absences in any month, or ten or more excused absences in the school year**, the school district is required to contact you to schedule a conference to determine how we can help you and your child.
5. If your child has **seven unexcused absences in any month or ten unexcused absences within the school year**, we are required to file a petition with the Juvenile court, alleging a violation of RCW 28A.225.010, the mandatory attendance laws.
6. Skamania School District policy #3122 addresses excused and unexcused absences. Our district policy is included in this notice.



## Excused and Unexcused Absences

Students are expected to attend all assigned classes each day. School staff will keep a record of absence and tardiness, including a call log and/or a record of excuse statements submitted by a parent/guardian, or in certain cases, students, to document a student's excused absences.

### Excused Absences

Regular school attendance is necessary for mastery of the educational program provided to students of the district. At times, students may be appropriately absent from class. The following principles will govern the development and administration of attendance procedures within the district:

A. The following are valid excuses for absences:

1. Participation in a district or school approved activity or instructional program;
2. Illness, health condition or medical appointment (including, but not limited to, medical, counseling, dental or optometry);
3. Family emergency, including, but not limited to, a death or illness in the family;
4. Religious or cultural purpose including observance of a religious or cultural holiday or participation in religious or cultural instruction;
5. Court, judicial proceeding or serving on a jury;
6. Post-secondary, technical school or apprenticeship program visitation, or scholarship interview;
7. State-recognized search and rescue activities consistent with RCW 28A.225.055;
8. Absence directly related to the student's homeless status;
9. Absence resulting from a disciplinary/corrective action. (e.g., short-term or long-term suspension, emergency expulsion); and
10. Principal (or designee) and parent, guardian, or emancipated youth mutually agreed upon approved activity.

The school administrator has the authority to determine if an absence meets the above criteria for an excused absence.

- A. If an absence is excused, the student will be permitted to make up all missed assignments outside of class under reasonable conditions and time limits established by the appropriate teacher; except that in participation-type classes, a student's grade may be affected because of the student's inability to make up the activities conducted during a class period.
- B. An excused absence will be verified by a parent/guardian or an adult, emancipated or appropriately aged student, or school authority responsible for the absence. If attendance is taken electronically, either for a course conducted online or for students physically within the district, an absence will default to unexcused until such time as an excused absence may be verified by a parent or other responsible adult. If a student is to be released for health care related to family planning or abortion, the student may require that the district keep the information confidential. Students thirteen and older have the

right to keep information about drug, alcohol or mental health treatment confidential. Students fourteen and older have the same confidentiality rights regarding HIV and sexually transmitted diseases.

### **Unexcused Absences**

- A. Any absence from school for the majority of hours or periods in an average school day is unexcused unless it meets one of the criteria above for an excused absence.
- B. As a means of instilling values of responsibility and personal accountability, a student whose absence is not excused will experience the consequences of his/her absence. A student's grade may be affected if a graded activity or assignment occurs during the period of time when the student is absent.
- C. The school will notify a student's parent or guardian in writing or by telephone whenever the student has failed to attend school after one unexcused absence within any month during the current school year. The notification will include the potential consequences of additional unexcused absences.
- D. A conference with the parent or guardian will be held after two unexcused absences within any month during the current school year. A student may be suspended or expelled for habitual truancy. Prior to suspension or expulsion, the parent will be notified in writing in his/her primary language that the student has unexcused absences. A conference will be scheduled to determine what corrective measures should be taken to ameliorate the cause for the student's absences from school. If the parent does not attend the conference, the parent will be notified of the steps the district has decided to take to reduce the student's absences.
- E. Not later than the student's fifth unexcused absence in a month the district will enter into an agreement with the student and parents that establishes school attendance requirements, refer the student to a community truancy board or file a petition and affidavit with the juvenile court alleging a violation of RCW 28A.225.010.
- F. If such action is not successful, the district will file a petition and affidavit with the juvenile court alleging a violation of RCW 28A.225.010 by the parent, student or parent and student no later than the seventh unexcused absence within any month during the current school year or upon the tenth unexcused absence during the current school year.
- G. All suspensions and/or expulsions will be reported in writing to the superintendent within 24 hours after imposition.
- H. **Students dependent pursuant to Chapter 13.34, RCW**
- I. A school district representative or certificated staff member will review unexpected or excessive absences of a student who has been found dependent under the Juvenile Court Act with that student and adults involved with that student. Adults includes the student's caseworker, educational liaison, attorney if one is appointed, parent or guardians, foster parents and/or the person providing placement for the student. The review will take into consideration the cause of the absences, unplanned school transitions, periods of running from care, in-patient treatment, incarceration, school adjustment, educational gaps, psychosocial issues, and the student's unavoidable appointments that occur during the school day. The representative or staff member must proactively support the student's management of their school work.

The superintendent will enforce the district's attendance policies and procedures. Because the full knowledge and cooperation of students and parents are necessary for the success of the policies and procedures, procedures will be disseminated broadly and made available to parents and students annually.

Cross References:	Policy 3230 Policy 3241	Student Privacy Classroom Management, Corrective Actions or Punishment
Legal References:	<u>RCW 13.34.300</u> <u>RCW 28A.225</u>	Relevance of failure to cause juvenile to attend school to neglect petition Compulsory school attendance and admission
	<u>WAC 392-400-235</u> <u>WAC 392-400-260</u>	Discipline — Conditions and limitations Long-term suspension — Conditions and limitations
Management Resources:	<i>Policy News</i> , December 2011 <i>Policy News</i> , June 2001	Revision of Excused/Unexcused Definitions More Tweaking of Becca Petitions
	<u>OSPI Memorandum No. 052-11M Unexcused Absence Definition</u>	

**Adoption Date: 07/22/13 02/22/16  
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