

Attendance

One of our primary goals in the East Whittier City School District is to ensure that each child has every opportunity to achieve personal and academic excellence in every endeavor. On time, daily attendance is an easy way to support this goal. Because your child's future is important we have included attendance information that you should know in regard to your legal responsibilities so that we can work together as a team to support your child.

If students are engaged in academic instruction and learning for any portion of the day, they are considered present for that day. This means that a student who is sent home by the health office, due to illness or injury, is **not** marked absent for that day. A student is considered present for the entire day when attending any "fraction" of the scheduled school day. In order for a student to be counted as present, there must have been an intent for the pupil to attend school that day. The student must have been engaged in instruction and been under the immediate supervision of a credentialed District employee. Students who come to school solely to turn in completed work or projects or to receive work to complete are not considered present for that day of school.

Excused Absences/tardies

The following is a list of excused absences:

1. Illness
2. Hospitalization
3. Quarantine of student by county health department
4. Observance of a holiday or ceremony of his or her religion
5. Religious retreats (shall not exceed 4 hours per trimester).
6. Funeral of an immediate family member (1 day if the service is in California; 3 days if the service is out of state)
7. Student is subpoenaed to appear in court
8. Attendance at an educational conference on the legislative or judicial process offered by a nonprofit organization.
9. Medical, Dental, optometrical or chiropractic services

If you are scheduling medical appointments, it is in your child's best interest if you can make them before or after school so as not to interrupt their learning. However, we realize that this is not always possible. Therefore, if your child would receive at least one hour of instruction before or after the appointment, then your child should be in attendance at school during that time. If your child has a doctor's appointment, they will not be excused for an **entire** school day.

Students who have been absent 5 or more consecutive days due to illness must present a doctor's note verifying the illness in order for the absences to be excused. This means that up to four consecutive days may be excused with only a parent note. Starting on the 5th day of absence, there must be a doctor's note in order for that day, or any subsequent days, to be excused.

If your family has religious beliefs that may conflict with holiday activities at your school, please discuss this, in advance, with your principal. An alternative activity will be arranged so that your child does not miss an entire day of instruction.

Unexcused Absences/tardies

The following is a list of unexcused absences:

1. Minor headache, stomachache or cramps.
2. Asthma (if not an acute attack)
3. Conflict with students or staff

4. Vacations or day trips (unless on independent study)
5. Too tired/ woke up late
6. Weather: too cold, too hot, rain, wind
7. Lice for more than the minimum number of days to treat
8. Babysitting, errands, chores at home
9. Transportation problems: missed the bus, have no car, ran out of gas, flat tire
10. Didn't do homework
11. Going to work with parent/family member (Unless you receive prior approval for "Take Your Child to Work" day.
12. Missing the whole day for a medical appointment
13. Waiting for service or repair people to arrive
14. Translating for a parent at an appointment
15. "Personal business"

Verification of Absences

Also, it is a parent/guardian's responsibility to ensure that the appropriate school personnel receive the verification of absences. The parent/guardian should assess the maturity level of his/her child to determine if he/she should be responsible for turning in absence verifications or if it would be more secure for the parent/guardian to submit the verifications to the office or call the office directly. When students return to school after an absence, they must present a satisfactory explanation verifying the reason for the absence **within four weeks** of the date of the absence. **Verifications not received during this period are considered unexcused and will not be changed.**

Attendance Interventions

The East Whittier City School District has a partnership with the Los Angeles County District Attorney's Office to implement the Abolish Chronic Truancy (A.C.T.) Program. The District Attorney's Office monitors the attendance of our students and requests that any student with 15 or more absences in one school year or 10 or more absences in one trimester be referred to A.C.T. Absences that have been verified by a doctor's note are not included in this total.

Also, District policy states that any student who has 10 or more absences in any school year due to illness that have only been verified by a parent/guardian will be placed on "medical verification" (AR 5113).

Once a student is placed in the A.C.T. Program or on "medical verification," it is required that a neutral medical professional, who is not a friend or relative of the parent/guardian, provide written verification for any absences due to illness in order for an absence to be excused. The written verification must include:

- a. The date of the student's appointment
- b. The dates that the student will be absent from school
- c. The date the student may return
- d. Physician's signature

Absences prior to the date of the doctor appointment **will not be excused.**

Because it may be difficult to get a same day appointment or it may be a financial hardship to access medical services, we also provide the option for you to see the school nurse. **Absences before the date that the student sees the school nurse will not be excused.**

If you were to call or write a note stating that your child was ill **once he/she was placed in the A.C.T. Program or on "Medical Verification"**, the absence would be considered unexcused. A student who has 3 or more unexcused absences in a school year is classified as a truant by California state law.

Vacations

If you know, in advance, that your child will be absent from school 5 or more consecutive days, it is requested that the parent consider enrolling the student in the Independent Study Program. It is important to give the school at least one week's notice that you are interested in this program so that they can make appropriate arrangements.

Alternative Learning Experiences

The new attendance policy recognizes that students may have unique opportunities in which to participate that may occur during school hours that may include activities that promote athletic, artistic, social and/or leadership skills. The District will consider excusing a limited number of absences due to these activities each year if the parents/guardians meet with the principal and receive prior approval **and** the student is in good standing in regard to grades, attendance, and behavior.

Please contact **Amy Larson, Director of Student Services, at 562-907-5933** if you have any questions or need assistance.