

StudentsStudent Attendance

Scottsbluff Public Schools complies with the attendance policies outlined within Nebraska Revised Statute § 79-201, which defines the criteria for excused absences. These regulations are mandated by state law to ensure consistent attendance practices across all Nebraska schools. While the District is required to enforce attendance rules, staff are committed to work collaboratively with students and their parents/guardians to support student attendance and success.

Attendance Policy and Excessive Absenteeism

Regular and punctual student attendance is required. The administration is responsible for developing further attendance rules and regulations, and all staff are expected to implement this policy and administrative rules and regulations to encourage regular and punctual student attendance. The District will maintain an accurate record of student attendance.

Attendance and Absences

The circumstances for all absences from school will be identified as School Excused or Not School Excused. Absences should be cleared through the principal's office in advance whenever possible. All absences, except for illness and/or death in the family, require advance approval.

1. School Excused. Any of the following circumstances that lead to an absence will be identified as a School Excused absence, provided the required attendance procedures have been followed:
 - a. Impossible or impracticable barriers outside the control of the parent/guardian or child prevent a student from attending school. The parent/guardian must provide the school with documentation to demonstrate the absence was beyond the control of the parent/guardian or child. This could include, but is not limited to documented absence for illness (including physical or mental illness) or court, death of a family member, or suspension.
 - b. Other absences as determined by the principal or the principal's designee.
2. Not School Excused. Absences that are Not School Excused may result in a report to the county attorney and may be classified as follows:
 - a. Parent/guardian acknowledged absences are those in which the parent/guardian communicated with the school in the prescribed manner that the child is absent and is the parent/guardian's responsibility for the extent of the school day. This includes, but is not limited to, vacations, undocumented illness, and undocumented medical appointments.
 - b. Other absences are those in which the parent/guardian has not communicated a reason for the student's absence.

Scottsbluff Public Schools respects the right of the parents/guardians to responsibly report their child will be absent from school when necessary and encourages open communication regarding student attendance. Based on the outlined criteria above, an absence or tardy, even if reported by

the parent/guardian, may still be classified as Not School Excused. This classification system ensures compliance with Nebraska State Statutes.

Excessive Absenteeism

Excessive absenteeism is defined as unexcused and excused absences exceeding 10 percent of days enrolled or the hourly equivalent. Such absences shall be determined on a per day (or hourly equivalent) basis for elementary students and on a per class basis for secondary students.

Duty to Report Excessive Absenteeism

Any administrator, teacher, or member of the Board of Education who knows of any failure on the part of any child of mandatory school attendance age to attend school regularly without lawful reason, shall within three days report such violation to the appropriate school administrator as the Superintendent's designee to be the attendance officer (hereafter, "attendance officer"). The attendance officer shall immediately cause an investigation into any such report to be made. The attendance officer shall also investigate any case when of his or her personal knowledge, or by report or complaint from any resident of the District, the attendance officer believes there is a violation of the compulsory attendance laws. The school shall render all services in its power to compel such child to attend some public, private, denominational, or parochial school, which the person having control of the child shall designate, in an attempt to address the problem of excessive absenteeism. Such services shall include, as appropriate, the services listed **below** under "Excessive Absenteeism" and "Reporting Excessive Absenteeism."

Responding to Excessive Absenteeism

When a student has excessive absences, school officials will have verbal or written communication with the person or persons who have legal or actual charge or control of any child.

When a student accumulates 10 absences which are Not School Excused and the absences are of concern due to the effect of the absences on the student's academics, the student's attendance history, the time of the school year, the reasons for the absences, or other circumstances, one or more meetings will be held between the school (a school attendance officer, a school administrator or his or her designee, and/or a social worker), the child's parent/guardian, and the child, when appropriate, to address the barriers to attendance. The result of the meeting or meetings shall be to develop a collaborative plan to reduce barriers identified to improve regular attendance. The plan shall include, if agreed to by the person who is responsible for making educational decisions on behalf of the child, an educational evaluation to determine whether any intellectual, academic, physical, or social-emotional barriers are contributing factors to the lack of attendance. The plan shall also consider, but not be limited to:

1. The physical, mental, or behavioral health of the child;
2. Educational counseling;
3. Referral to community agencies for economic services;
4. Family or individual counseling;
5. Assisting the family in working with other community services; and/or,
6. Referral to restorative justice practices or services.

If the parent/guardian refuses to participate in such meetings, the principal shall place documentation of such refusal in the child's attendance records.

Reporting Excessive Absenteeism to the County Attorney

The school may report to the county attorney of the county in which the person having control of the student resides when the school has documented the efforts to address excessive absences, the collaborative plan to reduce barriers identified to improve regular attendance has not been successful, and the student has accumulated more than 20 absences per school year. The school shall notify the child's family in writing prior to making the referral to the county attorney.

Illness, including physical or mental illness, that makes attendance impossible or impracticable shall not be the basis for referral to the county attorney. A report to the county attorney may also be made when a student otherwise accrues excessive absences as herein defined.

Legal Reference: [Neb. Rev. Stat. § 79-201](#)
[Neb. Rev. Stat. § 79-209](#)

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