West Ada School District

STUDENT PERSONNEL

Series 500

Policy Title  Elementary Attendance Policy  Policy No. 501.30

Idaho law requires mandatory attendance up to sixteen years of age. State law also requires each school district to establish an attendance policy. Attendance is an indicator of success in school and is necessary for maximum student learning so West Ada School District establishes the following policy for elementary schools:

A. Increase the likelihood of student academic success
B. Increase daily student attendance
C. Encourage students to be academically current in classes
D. Develop student responsibility
E. Increase parental involvement in student attendance
F. Prepare students for attendance expectations in their future careers

Schools shall establish clear procedures to implement this policy, including, but not limited to:

A. Regular and accurate recording of attendance
B. Parental access to current attendance records
C. Clear communication of school hours
D. Advance notice of attendance requirements
E. Parent contact in the event of excessive absences
F. Provide written notification to parents when the unverified absences change to truancy or when a habitual truancy notice will be sent to the Board of Trustees for action.

All students are expected to be in class on time every school day. West Ada School District defines elementary school attendance as missing not more than six (6) days per semester. Elementary school students who do not meet the attendance standard may be assigned other consequences. School staff enforces daily attendance and initiate measures to correct attendance problems, which may include, but are not limited to any of the following:

A. Conference with student
B. Phone or letter contact with parent or guardian
C. Makeup requirements
D. Counseling contract
E. Attendance contract
F. Referral to other governmental agencies
G. Court referrals

To ensure student’s safety, parents are obligated to contact the school regarding each day or portion thereof that a child misses. Upon failure of contact by the parent/guardian, the school will make a reasonable attempt to contact them.
ATTENDANCE
The normal elementary school instructional day consists of 5 hours 35 minutes and students are expected to attend the full day.

Tardies
Kindergarten – Students arriving to class after the tardy bell, or leaving for a period of time during the day, but in attendance for more than 2.5 hours will be marked tardy.

Grades 1-5 – Students arriving to class after the tardy bell, or leaving for a period of time during the day, but in attendance for more than 4.0 hours will be marked tardy.

Absences
Student absences will be marked under two general categories, absent for a half day or absent for a full day. The calculation of average daily attendance (ADA) as defined by Idaho Statue (I.C. 33-101 and IDAPA 08.02.01) is as follows:

Full Day
Kindergarten – A full session consists of 2.5 hours of instruction per day.
Grades 1-5 – A full day consists of at least 4 hours of instruction per day.

Half Day
Kindergarten - There are no shortened days for Kindergarten. A period of instruction of less than 2.5 hours should be recorded as an absence.
Grades 1-5 – A half-day consists of at least 2.5 hours, but less than 4 hours per day.

ELEMENTARY ATTENDANCE CODES
A. Activity (ACT): An absence for a school sponsored program or activity

B. Bereavement (BR): Up to five (5) days for a member of the immediate family, i.e. father, mother, brother, sister, grandparents.

C. Extraordinary (EXT): Administrative discretion, i.e. unforeseen emergencies, court dates, education travel, etc (does not count against attendance standard but will count against perfect attendance).

D. Illness (ILL): Student is absent as verified by parent/guardian phone call (counts against attendance standard).

E. Illness Waiver (WAI): Confirmed with documentation from medical personnel (does not count against attendance standard but will count against perfect attendance).

F. Parent call (PRC): Student is absent as verified by parent/guardian phone call (counts against attendance standard).

G. Truant (TR): Student is absent without permission of parent/guardian or school officials (counts against attendance standard). Persistent/habitual truancy may result in suspension/expulsion from school.
H. Unverified (A): No information regarding absence – an unverified absence will convert to truancy unless verbal communication is received from a parent/guardian within 48 hours (counts against attendance standard).

I. Verified (VER): Phone call initiated by the school to confirm the absence (counts against attendance standard).

EXTRAORDINARY ABSENCES
Extraordinary absences require prior notification from a parent or guardian, except in the cases of illness, accident, emergency, or bereavement. The student will be expected to complete assigned work within a time period agreeable to the teacher(s) of the missed class(es). The following criteria are used to determine extraordinary absences:

A. National or International Activities: Events organized for the purpose of continuing competition or as an extension of an approved school program/contest, or special activities such as Olympic qualifying meets.

B. Court Appearance: Verified by official documentation

C. Professional Appointments: Confirmed with documentation from professional personnel such as counselors, attorneys, etc.

D. Extended Family Educational Trip: In the instance that an extended family educational trip occurs while school is in session, the parent/guardian and student requesting this exception must meet the following:
   1. Submit a letter of request to the principal at least two (2) weeks prior to the trip;
   2. Have passing grades in all classes;
   3. Not exceed six (6) absences in the current semester prior to this request;
   4. Not have any truancies or school suspensions;
   5. Request work from teachers and agree to turn in all pre-arranged work on or before the first day back to class;
   6. Call the attendance office prior to the dates of absence;
   7. Submit a one-page project paper for each class with information that substantiates the educational purpose of the trip as it relates to each specific class missed. The papers are due to the assistant principal upon return to school.

E. Religious Observances: Verified by parent/guardian, church official, or document.

EXCESSIVE ABSENCES
If a student is absent for fifteen (15) consecutive school days, whether or not the absences are verified absences, the student will be dis-enrolled from school. At the time the student returns to school, the student may be re-enrolled. Students served by homebound tutors or absent due to illness documented by licensed medical personnel will not be included in this procedure.

EXCESSIVE TARDIES
“Excessive” tardies is defined as more than five tardies.
MAKE UP WORK
If a student is to be out of school for an extended absence of 15 days or less, it is his/her responsibility to make arrangements for assignments with the teacher. Written assignments will be gathered during the absence and provided to the student upon his/her return to school. Please be aware that up to 70% of the classroom activities consist of class participation, projects, discussion and practice that cannot be duplicated or made up. In all absentee cases, class assignments must be completed within the number of days equal to the number of days of absence to receive credit.

TRUANCY
Truancy occurs when a student intentionally absents himself/herself from school either before arriving or after having arrived at school without previous knowledge and consent of parents or school officials.

A written record of truancies shall be kept with or in the student’s cumulative record folder and forwarded to the receiving school.

HABITUAL TRUANCY
Any child at the elementary school level who accrues fifteen (15) absences and/or truancies may be referred to the prosecuting attorney pursuant to Idaho Code 33-206 which states, in part, “a habitual truant is any public school pupil who, in the judgment of the board of trustees repeatedly has violated the attendance regulations established by the board; or any child whose parents or guardians, or any of them, have failed or refused to cause such child to be instructed as provided in section 33-202, Idaho Code, and the child shall come under the purview of the juvenile corrections act if he or she is within the age of compulsory attendance.”

Principals/assistant principals, as the authorized representative of the board of trustees, will submit documentation of the excessive absences/truancies to the prosecuting attorney in the county of the student’s residence.

ATTENDANCE AWARDS
At the end of each school year, West Ada School District elementary schools issue attendance certificates in recognition of those students who have maintained regular exemplary attendance throughout the school year.
   A. Perfect Attendance – No absences (no more than two tardies)
   B. Faithful Attendance – No more than one day absence (no more than two tardies)

Date of Revision: 6/16/09; 03/19/13; 5/12/15; 9/12/17, 9/11/18

Legal References: Code of Idaho 33-205