

September 2009



Dear Parents and Guardians:

In May 1995, the Governor signed new provisions to the Compulsory School Attendance law (28A.225 RCW) with very strict expectations for student attendance at school. This law requires that your child(ren) attend(s) all classes every day. Attendance is important to your child's academic achievement. Students who are absent from school do not keep up with classroom instruction. They miss essential instruction for understanding key concepts and they quickly fall behind in completing assignments.

The following Seattle School District definitions apply to students at all ages:

Excused Absences:

- Unplanned absences are excused when your child's personal illness or injury, or the illness, injury or death of a family member, prevents your child from attending school. The school may require a note from your child's doctor before excusing those absences if your child is absent due to illness or injury for an excessive number of days.
- Planned absences are excused when you submit a request to the principal or assistant principal at least three school days before the start of the planned absence, usually for a family trip of short duration, doctor or dentist appointment, or religious or other special one-time event. However, long-term absences or a succession of long-term absences may affect whether your child will be promoted. Absences for longer than twenty consecutive school days may result in your child being dropped from school enrollment.
- Absences due to short-term discipline of your child are excused on District attendance records unless your child is under court order to attend school without additional truancies or behavior problems.

Unexcused Absences:

- All other absences are considered unexcused, including absences caused by the student or parent oversleeping, student missing the bus, transportation problems, student needed for babysitting, student job requirements, etc.
- Absences by long-term suspended and expelled students for whom space is available in the reentry program, but who do not enroll and attend, are unexcused.

You may notify your child's school about your child's excused absence by telephone or in a written note.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Ruth McFadden".

Ruth McFadden, Ed.D.
Manager, Truancy Office