

Article 4 - Attendance

Section 1 Attendance Policy

Regular and punctual student attendance is required. The Board's policies require such attendance, the administration is responsible for developing further attendance rules and regulations, and students and parents are responsible for developing behaviors which will result in regular and punctual student attendance. Sutton Jr/Sr High School students have the responsibility to be in school each day, to be to school on time, and to report on time to their classes each period.

A. High School

1. Students who are absent from school (non-school related, excused and unexcused) more than 10 days or who miss a class more than 10 times in a semester will be placed in a non-credit status. Grades will be recorded for classes, but the student will not receive credit toward graduation. In case of serious or long-term illness, it is assumed that medical treatment will be sought. Absences while under a doctor's care or because of a doctor's orders will be credited beyond the limit of days allowed as leave if documented, in writing, by the physician in charge. Make-up work will be expected at the fastest rate possible under the individual circumstances and in good faith.
2. A record of a student's absences will begin upon the first day of enrollment in school. Students who attended Sutton Public Schools at the end of the previous school year will be considered enrolled on the first day of school.
3. Absences from classes for school activities will not count within the ten (10) day limit. Students must make up work for classes prior to being excused for these activities. Absences caused by administration, counselor or teachers will not count unless the absence is due to disciplinary problems. The principal will make the final determination if the absence is to count as one of the ten days.
4. Parents or guardians of high school students will be notified by mail of the possibility of loss of credit after their son/daughter has missed five, **seven and ten days** of school in a semester. Once a student has missed five days of school in a semester, administration may require a doctor, dentist or other note for verification of appointments.

B. Junior High

1. Junior High students who are absent for more than 20 school days in a school year will be reviewed at the end of the school year for possible retention in that grade. A recommendation will be made to the principal by the student's teachers.
2. Protocol for junior high students will follow that of senior high students. Parents of junior high students will be notified by mail of the possibility of retention after 10 absences have occurred during the school year.

Section 2 Attendance and Absences

Absences From School - Definitions. An absence from school will be reported as: (a) an excused absence or (b) an unexcused absence.

1. Excused Absences. Absences should be cleared through the Principal's office in advance whenever possible. An absence or tardy, even by parental approval, may not be excused. All absences, except for illness and/or death in the family, require advance approval. An absence for any of the following reasons will be excused, provided the required procedures have been followed:

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- (A) Attendance at a funeral for a member of the immediate family (parents, siblings, and grandparents),
- (B) Illness which causes a student to be absent from school,
- (C) Doctor or dental appointment which require student to be absent from school, with note from doctor or dentist to verify excuse.
- (D) Court appearances that are required by a court order and the student is not responsible for needing to be in court,
- (E) Family emergencies
- (F) Church observances with prior approval.
- (G) College visitations – 2/school year for Juniors and Seniors. The student must make an appointment with the college and have a campus visitation form completed and on file in the high school office at least one week or five school days prior to the visitation.
- (H) School sponsored activities which require students to be absent from school,
- (I) Family trips in which student accompanies parent(s)/legal guardian(s),
- (J) Other absences which have received prior approval from the Principal.

The Principal has the discretion to deny approval for the latter three reasons, depending on circumstances such as the student's number of other absences, the student's academic status, the tests or other projects which may be missed, and in the case of a family trip, whether the trip could be taken during non-school time and the educational nature of the trip.

2. Unexcused Absences: An absence which is not excused is unexcused. If a student's absence is unexcused the student will receive zeros in those classes.

Examples of reasons for unexcused absences are:

- (A) Oversleeping
- (B) Shopping
- (C) Haircuts or permanents
- (D) Study for another class
- (E) Babysitting
- (F) Driving students to appointments unless the student is a member of the immediate family.
- (G) Attending non-school related music concerts
- (H) Turning in an excuse signed by someone other than the parent or guardian.

A student who engages in unexcused absences may be considered truant as per state law, Neb.Rev.Stat. § 79-201. Truancy is a violation of school rules. The consequence of such action may include suspension from classes and the student may be required to make up the time missed. Students who leave the school premises without permission during the school day will be considered truant.

Absence Procedure. A student will not be allowed to enter class after an absence until an admit slip, based upon a written or verbal parental excuse, is issued by the Principal's office. Work must be made up within the time allowed on the admit slip. Students missing classes for school activities must present a completed activities dismissal slip (white form) to the sponsor before being allowed to leave for the activity.

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For excused absences, two school days will be allowed to make up the work for each day missed with a maximum of ten (10) days allowed to make up work. If requested, assignment sheets will be prepared for students who are ill. If parents and/or students request assignment sheets the school should be contacted by no later than 9:00 a.m.

For unexcused absences, the student will receive a failing mark **for or** in each class period missed.

Reporting and Responding to Truant Behavior. Any administrator, teacher, or member of the board of education who knows of any failure on the part of any child age 7 to 16 to attend school regularly without lawful reason, shall within three days report such violation to the Superintendent. The Superintendent shall immediately cause an investigation into any such report to be made. The Superintendent shall also investigate any case when of his or her personal knowledge, or by report or complaint from any resident of the district, the Superintendent believes that any child is unlawfully absent from school. 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 remediate the child's truant behavior. Such services shall include, as appropriate, the services listed under the "Excessive Absenteeism" and "Reporting Habitual Truancy" policies.

Excessive Absenteeism. Students who accumulate five (5) unexcused absences in a quarter shall be deemed to have "excessive absences." Such absences shall be determined on a per class basis for secondary students. When a student has excessive absences, the following procedures shall be implemented:

1. One or more meetings shall be held between a school attendance officer, school social worker, or other person designated by the school administration and the parent/guardian and the student to report and attempt to solve the truancy problem. If the parent/guardian refuses to participate in such meeting, the principal shall place in the student's attendance records documentation of such refusal.
2. Educational counseling to determine whether curriculum changes, including but not limited to, enrolling the child in an alternative education program that meets the specific educational and behavioral needs of the child.
3. Educational evaluation, which may include a psychological evaluation, to assist in determining the specific condition, if any, contributing to the truancy problem, supplemented by specific efforts by the school to help remedy any condition diagnosed.
4. Investigation of the truancy problem by the school social worker, or if such school does not have a school social worker, another person designated by the administration to identify conditions which may be contributing to the truancy problem. If services for the child and his or her family are determined to be needed, the person performing the investigation shall meet with the parent/guardian and the child to discuss any referral to appropriate community agencies for economic services, family or individual counseling, or other services required to remedy the conditions that are contributing to the truancy problem.

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Reporting Habitual Truancy. Students who accumulate twenty (20) unexcused absences per year shall be deemed to be habitually truant. If the student continues to be or becomes habitually truant, the principal shall serve a written notice to the person violating Neb.Rev.Stat. § 79-201, (i.e., the person who has legal or active charge or control of the student) warning him or her to comply with the provisions of that statute. If within one week after the time such notice is given such person is still violating the school attendance laws or policies, the principal shall file a report with the county attorney of the county in which such person resides.

Section 3 Tardiness

Tardy to School: Students will be considered tardy to school if they are not seated in their assigned class or ready and attentive in their assigned area when the bell for their first class rings.

Tardy to Class: Students will be considered tardy to class if they are not in their classroom when the tardy bell rings, unless they have a pass (planner) from the teacher who detained them. Specific tardy guidelines once students are in the classroom doorway are at the discretion of the classroom teacher. Students have a sufficient time period between all class changes to make it to their next assigned class on time.

Teachers will record and report all tardies throughout the day. First period tardies will be recorded and counted as a tardy even with an admit slip from the office. Each student is allowed 5 tardies within each quarter. Each tardy in excess of this limit will be considered a discipline infraction (discipline list) and treated as such, **20** minutes detention will be assigned for each tardy in excess of 5. Excuses will be heard, but not necessarily accepted. A student who is more than **15** minutes late for any class is not tardy, but will be considered absent.

Section 4 Leaving School

Students who must leave school for any reason during the school day must check out at the office before leaving. Students leaving school must be cleared in advance by a note or phone call from the student's parent or legal guardian. Upon returning to school that same day, students are expected to sign in at the office. Students who leave without permission and without signing out in the proper manner will be considered truant.

Section 5 Attendance is Required to Participate in Activities

Students must attend school one-half (8:15-12:00PM or 12:00PM-3:32PM) on the day of the scheduled activity. Students absent for more than one-half day will be ineligible for the activity, athletic event, practice or rehearsal that day. The principal retains the right to grant participation should exceptional circumstances prevail.

Section 6 Make-up Work

Written make-up work may be assigned for each day missed regardless of the type of absence. If make-up work is not completed, students will receive no credit for the work required. The time each student is allowed will be determined by mutual agreement between the student and teacher with a minimum of 2 days for every 1 day absent up to 10 total days. The student has the responsibility to contact teachers, initially, regarding make-up assignments. Assignment sheets will be sent only for extended absences such as chicken pox, hospitalization, or other prolonged illnesses. No assignment sheets will be sent out

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until after at least three (3) days of absence. If the parents or students have concerns prior to the three (3) days, they are encouraged to contact the teacher.

UNEXCUSED absence – all work missed for these reasons may be entered as zero credit at the teacher’s discretion. If make-up is allowed in any class, the deadline may be set at whatever time the teacher feels is appropriate. PLANNED absence – since this type of absence is known in advance, work may be required to be made up in advance. If the individual teacher agrees to accept work after return from the absence, that teacher may set whatever deadline he/she feels is appropriate. Students who do not accept responsibility for informing teachers of absences which may reasonably have been foreseen will not be guaranteed an opportunity to make up the work. EMERGENCY absence – illness or death in the family cannot be planned in advance, so make-up work for emergency absences will generally be allowed at the rate of two days for each day absent. This means that work due the first day absent must be turned in by the second day back, and so on. Current assignments must be kept up during the period of make-up, as well. OUT-OF-SCHOOL SUSPENSIONS – work missed because of a student’s being suspended for disciplinary infractions will not be allowed to be made up for credit. IN-SCHOOL SUSPENSIONS – all work assigned during in-school suspension will be turned in by the deadline established by the teacher or no credit will be allowed.

Work not turned in by the deadline, whatever the reason for the absence, may be graded down or not accepted and zero credit given for the assignment. Teachers are responsible for informing students of any upcoming major exams (other than pop quiz) at least four school days in advance. Students who are duly informed, although absent, will be required to take exams on schedule. Note that the two-day period for make-up work applies only to emergency absences. It is important that parents notify the school right away as to the nature of an absence, because it may affect the student’s opportunity to make up the work.