

Coahoma ISD Attendance Procedures

General Attendance Requirements

Regular school attendance is essential for the student to make the most of his or her education. Absences from class may result in serious disruption of a student's mastery of the instructional material; therefore, the student and parent should make every effort to avoid unnecessary absences. There are two state laws dealing with attendance that should be understood by parents and students. The first law deals with compulsory attendance, and the second law deals with attendance for course credit. The following information summarizes each of these laws:

Compulsory Attendance [TEC 25.087, Policy FEA]

The state compulsory attendance law requires that a child between the ages of 6 and 18 must attend school, as well as any extended year program, and/or district required tutorials sessions, unless the student is otherwise legally exempted. Students enrolled in pre-kindergarten or kindergarten shall attend school and are also subject to compulsory attendance. A student who voluntarily attends or enrolls after his eighteenth birthday is required to attend each school day until the end of the school year. However, if a student eighteen or older has more than five unexcused absences in a semester, the district may revoke the student's enrollment. The student's presence on school property is then unauthorized and may be considered trespassing.

School employees must investigate and report violations of the state compulsory attendance law. A student who is absent from school without permission from any class, required special programs, additional instruction assigned by a placement/attendance committee or required tutorials will be considered in violation of the compulsory attendance law and subject to disciplinary action.

A school aged student deliberately not attending school may also result in assessment of penalties by a court of law against both the student and/or his or her parents. A complaint may be filed in the appropriate court if the student:

- is absent from school ten (10) or more days, or parts of days, within a six month period in the same school year, or
- is absent from school on three (3) or more days, or parts of days, within a four week period.

Legal Exemptions to Compulsory Attendance

State law allows exemptions to the compulsory attendance requirements for several types of absences. With documentation, these absences will be excused. These include the following activities and events:

- Religious holy days;
- Required court appearances;

- Activities related to obtaining United States citizenship;
- Service as an election clerk;
- Documented health-care appointments, including absences for recognized services for students in special education. Please note: Health care appointments should be made for a time that will not conflict with school hours when possible.

District Exemptions to Compulsory Attendance

A person required to attend school due to compulsory attendance law may be excused for temporary absence from any unusual cause acceptable to the District and documented appropriately. Such causes may include, but are not limited to

- personal illness;
- school nurse request;
- family emergency or death;
- board approved extracurricular activities; or
- approved college visitation.

Absences due to personal illness

Any absence documented by a physician's note will be exempted from compulsory law as stated above. However, there are times when parents choose to keep ill children home from school without a doctor appointment. In order to give parents that discretion, but still protect the compulsory attendance laws, the Coahoma Independent School District will excuse absences for illness upon principal approval when the parent or guardian provides a note with the following information upon returning to school.

Illness Excuse note must include:**

- Student's name
- Date of Absence
- Reason for Absence
- Contact Phone Numbers/Email Address
- Signature of Parent

**IMPORTANT: If a note is not provided when the student returns to school, the absences will be unexcused.

When a student's illness exceeds five (5) consecutive days, the student shall provide a statement from a physician or health clinic verifying the illness or other condition requiring the student's extended absence from school.

Absences due to school nurse request

Our district is equipped with a nurse's office on the elementary campus. The nurse's office is designed to treat minor injuries and to act as a temporary "waiting station" for children who have become ill during the school day. Should a student become ill, persons designated on the enrollment card will be contacted to pick up the student.

A student will be sent home if they exhibit the following:

- Fever of 100° degrees or higher
- Vomiting and/or diarrhea
- Itching, red eyes with discharge
- Unknown rash
- Ringworm of the scalp (until treatment has started) Communicable diseases listed by the Texas State Department of Health. [FFAD(LOCAL)]

When a student is sent home by the school nurse or nurse assistant, the student's absence is excused for the day they are sent home and the following day, if the student still shows the symptoms above.

- Head lice or nits

When a child is sent home for lice infestation, he or she shall not be excused for more than 48 hours. The child is expected to return to school the next day. A parent or other adult must accompany the student to the readmission screening to provide transportation home in the event that the student is not free of lice and nits.

Absences due to family emergency or death

Sometimes unfortunate circumstances or unforeseen instances requiring immediate attention, such as a death in the immediate family, may occur causing a student absence. Please contact the school prior to the absence when at all possible. Upon return, please send information documenting the absence so that it may be excused.

Absences due to board-approved extra-curricular activities

The District shall make no distinction between absences for UIL activities and absences for other extracurricular activities approved by the Board. A student shall be allowed in a school year a maximum of twenty extracurricular absences not related to post-district competition, unlimited absences are allowed for post-district or state competition [FM(LOCAL)].

Absences due to approved college visitation

Juniors and seniors are allowed up to two days (one per semester) to visit colleges which they may attend following their high school graduation. Students must be passing and on track for graduation before these days will be approved. In order to take a college day, however, the student must complete the following procedures:**

- Provide written parental permission in advance of taking the college day.
- Pick up a form from the office (one week before) to be used in notifying teachers of when the college day is to be taken. The form must be signed by all teachers and the counselor before the student attends the college day.
- Upon return, the Student must provide Coahoma High School written verification of his/ her college visit, signed by college personnel, on the college letter head paper.
- The student is responsible for all work missed during a college day and should

make arrangements for makeup work BEFORE taking the day.
**Please Note: Failure to comply with the above procedures will result in an unexcused absence. Any extenuating circumstances must be approved by the principal.

Other Absences

Absences for other reasons such as travel, cosmetic appointments (hair appts, etc.), or other discretionary appointments will be unexcused; however, students will be able to make up work missed in accordance with Make Up Work policies and procedures.

Make Up Work

It is not possible to make up class periods missed completely. The student is responsible for contacting teachers of the classes missed to determine what assignments are to be made up. The student shall be allowed equal the number of excused days missed to complete the makeup work. After the allotted time, no credit will be given. Assignments for students with excessive absences or absences due to extenuating circumstances must be arranged through the principal's office.

Tardy to School

Students are expected to be on time for all classes. Students are considered tardy if not in their assigned class when the bell rings and are subject to disciplinary action. In Middle and High School, if a student is more than ten minutes late to class, he/she will be considered truant and subject to disciplinary action. The tardy count begins at the beginning of each semester, and is cumulative of all classes.

COAHOMA ISD COMPULSARY ATTENDANCE NOTICE

OFFICIAL NOTICE PURSUANT TO EDUCATION CODE 25.095, TO THE CHILD AND PERSON(S) STANDING IN PARENTAL RELATION TO THE CHILD.

Failure to comply with the laws and rules governing compulsory attendance may result in legal action or other consequences. Texas requires a child who is at least 6 years of age, or who is younger than 6 years of age and has previously been enrolled in first grade, and who has not yet reached his/her 18th birthday to attend school unless exempt by Sec. 25.086. Students enrolled in prekindergarten or kindergarten shall attend school. [Education Code 25.085]

Except as provided by Texas Education Code 25.092, a student may not be given credit for a class unless the student is in attendance for at least 90 percent of the days the class is offered. [Education Code 25.092] If a student is absent from school on 10 or more days or parts of days within a 6 month period in the same school year or 3 or more days or parts of days within a 4 week period, the student's parent is subject to prosecution under Texas Education Code 25.094.

An offense under either section is a class C misdemeanor punishable by a fine not to exceed \$500 for each offense. Each day may be a separate offense. The burden of proof showing that an absence should be excused is on the student or parent. [Education Code 25.093; Education Code 25.094; Education Code 25.095]

The district will notify parents if the student has been absent from school without excuse under Education Code 25.087. The letter must inform the parents that it is the parent's duty to monitor the student's school attendance and require the student to attend school, and the parent is subject to prosecution under Education Code 25.093. The fact that a parent did not receive the notices described above is not a defense to prosecution for the parent's failure to require a child to attend school or for the student's failure to attend school.

A parent/guardian commits an offense of thwarting compulsory attendance under Education Code 25.093 if, after having been warned in writing, a child has unexcused voluntary absences of 10 or more days, or parts of days, within a 6 month period or 3 or more days, or parts of days, within a 4 week period from school. At this time, a truancy offense may be filed against the juvenile and/or the parent/guardian with a justice or municipal court.

Attendance for Course Credit [TEC 25.092, Policy FEB]

According to Texas Education Code 25.092, to receive credit in a class, a student must attend at least 90 percent of the days the class is offered. A student who attends at least 75 percent but fewer than 90 percent of the days the class is offered may receive credit for the class if he or she completes a plan, approved by the principal, that allows the student to fulfill the instructional requirements for the class. If a student attends less than 75 percent of the days a class is offered or has not completed a plan approved by the principal, then the student will be referred to the attendance review committee to determine whether there are extenuating circumstances for the absence and how the student can regain credit, if appropriate. Any absence, either excused or unexcused, will be deducted when accounting for 90% attendance and/or awarding class credit. In determining whether there were extenuating circumstances for the absences, the attendance committee will use the following guidelines:

- All absences will be considered in determining whether a student has attended the required percentage of days. If makeup work is completed, absences for legal exemptions to compulsory attendance (religious days, court appearances, documented health-care appointments) will be counted as present.
- A transfer or migrant student begins to accumulate absences only after he or she has enrolled in the district. For a student transferring into the district after school begins, including a migrant student, only those absences after enrollment will be considered.

- In reaching a decision about a student's absences, the committee will attempt to ensure that it is in the best interest of the student.
- The committee will consider the acceptability and authenticity of documented reasons for the student's absences.
- The committee will consider whether the absences were for reasons over which the student or the student's parent could exercise any control.
- The committee will consider the extent to which the student has completed all assignments, mastered the essential knowledge and skills, and maintained passing grades in the course or subject
- The student or parent will be given an opportunity to present any information to the committee about the absences and to talk about ways to earn or regain credit. The District shall provide alternative ways for students to make up work or regain credit lost because of absences. These ways shall include, but are not limited to:
 - Satisfactory time-on-task requirements before and/or after school
 - Tutorials
 - Referral to outside agency
 - Referral to truancy officer
 - Referral to counselor
 - Parent/Teacher/Student conference
 - Complete additional assignments as specified by the committee
 - Before/after school or Saturday Classes

Conditions to Receive Credit

For absences evaluated by the attendance committee, the committee may impose conditions on the receipt of credit, such as requiring the student to:

- Complete additional assignments, as specified by the committee
- Satisfy time-on-task requirements before and/or after school
- Attend tutorial sessions as scheduled
- Attend classes outside of school hours
- Maintain the attendance standards for the rest of the semester
- Take an examination to earn credit in accordance with EEJA

In all cases, the student must also earn a passing grade in order to receive credit.

Appeals

The student or parent may appeal the committee's decision to the board of trustees by filing a written request with the Superintendent. Appeals shall be handled as provided by the student complaint policies. [FNG (LOCAL)] The actual number of days a student must be in attendance, in order to receive credit will depend on whether the class is for a full semester or for a full year.