

# ◆ Excerpt are from the 2009 - 2010 Student's Guide to Rights and Responsibilities Handbook◆

## **Attendance**

Except when excused, you must go to your classes and other required activities during the school day. Your attendance will be reported to your parents/guardians on your report card. A student is counted present for a full day if a student is in attendance four hours or more of the school day. A student is counted present for ½ day if in attendance for at least two hours of the school day, but less than four hours. According to your local school's procedures, if you are absent from school, the school will follow up on your absence.

## **Excused Absences**

*You may miss school for the following reasons only:*

- Death in your immediate family
- Illness (The principal may require a physician's certificate from the parent/guardian in cases of chronic or extended absences for an illness.)
- Court summons
- Religious holiday
- State emergency
- Hazardous weather conditions (that is, weather conditions that would endanger you on your way to or from school)
- Lack of authorized transportation (for example, if your bus does not show up)
- Permission from your principal

If you miss school for one of these reasons, you must bring a note from your parent/guardian within three school days after your return to school. For example, if you miss school Wednesday and Thursday and then return Friday, you must hand in a note explaining your absence by the following Tuesday.

Otherwise, the absence will be considered unexcused. If you are 18 or older or married, you can write your own note. When a student is exercising his/her age of majority rights and is residing as a dependent child with his/ her parent/guardian, additional notification of unexcused absences may be sent to the parent/guardian. The principal also may allow you to miss school for work or another activity if your parent/guardian (or you, if you have reached the age of majority) has asked permission five school days in advance. The principal usually will excuse you if you miss school to do one of the following:

- Visit a college campus
- Participate in a college orientation program
- Interview for a job
- Work as part of an approved cooperative education program
- Participate in short-term, full-time work

Family vacations usually are not excused. If unusual circumstances arise, however, the principal may excuse the absence.

### **Unexcused Absences**

An absence that is not excused according to the above conditions is an unexcused absence. If you are late to class three times without valid excuses, that counts as one unexcused absence in the class. If you miss a day of school and are not excused, you will have an unexcused absence in each class you miss. Students on block schedule should check their local school attendance policy concerning the calculation of unexcused absences and loss of credit. When you have five unexcused absences in one class, you will not get credit for the class that semester. Every school will take, at minimum, the following actions if you get unexcused absences in a class:

- First unexcused absence—The teacher warns you.
- Second unexcused absence—The teacher warns you again.
- Third unexcused absence—The principal sends a letter to your home requesting a parent conference.
- Fourth unexcused absence—The teacher warns you, indicating that one more unexcused absence will result in loss of credit for the class. When feasible, the school contacts your home again.
- Fifth unexcused absence—The school informs you and your parents/guardians that you will lose credit for the semester. You will receive an LC (Loss of Credit) and will get no credit for the semester. Three unexcused instances of tardiness equal one unexcused absence. The principal may refuse you to participate in extracurricular activities on a day that you have an unexcused absence. The above actions are minimums. Individual schools may have additional rules about unexcused absences. Anyone involved may ask for a conference to talk about particular absences or loss of credit. The conference may include you, your parents/guardians, and appropriate school staff. It will focus on why you have unexcused absences.

### **Work Missed During an Absence**

You are responsible for making up any work you miss during an absence, regardless of the reason for the absence. If the absence is excused or is a result of a suspension, your teacher will help you make up your work. If the absence is unexcused, your teacher does not have to help you make up the work you missed, give you a retest, or give you an extension on work that was due. Even though the teacher does not have to help you get credit for missed work, you still have to make up the work so that you can complete the rest of the course.

### **Loss of Credit**

If you have five unexcused absences in a class, you will lose credit for the class and receive a failing grade for the semester. For the marking period in which you lose credit, a failing grade will be used in calculating your marking period average. The failing grade will be counted in your grade point average. If you lose credit in a class, you may petition the teacher to restore credit. Your school counselor can help you do this. To petition for restoration of credit, tell your teacher, in writing, the reasons why you think you should get credit and how you propose to earn it. The teacher will review your reasons and make a recommendation to the principal, who will then decide whether to restore your credit. If you still are denied credit, you then may petition the principal directly. Give him/her your reasons in writing and he/she will respond within 10 days. The appeal procedure is described in the Appeals-Complaint Procedure—Due Process section (page 11) in the Students Guide to Rights and Responsibility Handbook.

If your credit is not restored, there are two questions to be answered. First, do you need credit in the class to graduate? If you do, you may either repeat the class the following semester or the following year or at night school, Saturday school, or summer school. Second, what will you do for the rest of the year during the class in which you lost credit? That is, if you lose credit in your fourth period class, what will you do during fourth period for the rest of the year? The options are as follows:

- Continue attending the class on an audit basis. If you audit a class, you are required to attend and participate in class activities.
- Drop the class and take a study skills class or other noncredit class in its place, with parent/guardian permission.
- Drop the class and reschedule your classes with parent/guardian permission. Scheduling another class will depend upon availability. Regardless of whether you audit the class or drop it, you will still receive an LC and a failing grade on your report card for the semester. You must, however, still attend a scheduled class.