

Attendance Frequently Asked Questions

1. What do I have to do if my child is going to be absent from school?

Please **call** the attendance office at **(310)263-3131** or **(310)263-3132**. You may also **send a note** upon your child's return to school.

The **note or call should include:**

- ✓ **Student's name**
- ✓ **ID number (if you know it)**
- ✓ **Grade**
- ✓ **The reason for the absence**
- ✓ **The date(s) of the absence(s)**
- ✓ **Parent/Guardians name and relationship.**

See the Lawndale High School website (www.lawndalehs.org) if you want to download the Attendance Verification form.

2. What if an emergency occurs and I need to check my child out early? How do I check the student out of school?

You must **stop by the attendance office to sign out the student**. The attendance clerk will need to see a **valid ID** to verify that you are the parent or guardian. You will be asked to **sign the Absent Permit**. If you do not check out the student, the absence will be marked unexcused.

3. What does it mean to "verify" my child's absence?

When a student is absent, parents are required to call/send a note to the attendance office in order to **validate the reason for the child's absence**. This is called "attendance verification."

4. What happens after I verify my child's absence?

The attendance clerk will then proceed to **mark** the student's attendance record with an "**Excused**" or "**Unexcused**" absence according to Ed. Code and District policies.

5. How long do I have to verify an absence?

You can call or send a note to verify your student's absence up to **three (3) days after** your child has been absent. Absences that are **not verified** within the time allowed will be considered **unexcused** absences. Unexcused absences due to non-verification cannot be overwritten or changed

6. What is considered an Excused Absence?

By law [EC § 48205], excused absences are:

- **Illness**
- **Medical/Dental/Optometrlist Appointments** (Doctor's note required for verification)
- **Death in the Family/Funeral** (Need to provide Obituary)
- **Religious Holiday**
- **Court Appearance** (Need to provide official court documents)

Any **other reason** is considered **unexcused**.

7. What if my child's absences do not fall under any of the Excused Absences categories?

State law [EC § 48260-48273] is very specific about these types of absences that can be excused. A student who is absent from school **without a valid excuse is marked "unexcused"** for the day. These types of absences are also called "**Truancies**."

8. How many Excused Absences can my child have in one school year?

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While the school knows students do become ill and are unable to attend school, a student should not miss more than **three (3) days per school year**. **After three (3) unexcused absences**, a student is considered **Truant** by the State of California. The school is obligated to communicate any and all absences to parents.

9. I thought "Truancy" indicates that a child skipped/ditched school. Why would my child be considered "Truant" if I have called to verify the absence?

In accordance with Education Code of the State of California [EC §48260-48273], any pupil who is absent from school for **three (3) days or more without a valid excuse, or tardy in excess of 30 minutes or more** (Tardies are only excused with a parent note for illness, or if student has an appointment) **will be considered "truant"**.

E.g., student ditches 1st period on 3 separate days or student cuts one period for 2 days and is absent for one full day.

10. What about coming in late (tardy) or leaving early for an appointment?

According to State Law [EC § 48260-48273] a student who is **absent** from school in **excess of 30 minutes** during a school day is also considered **"truant."** *Compulsory Education Law* requires a student to attend a *full day* every day!

11. What is the process for a child with more than 3 absences/Tardies?

- **Three (3) absences** → 1st Letter of Truancy or Excessive Excused Absence Letter
- **Six (6) absences** → 2nd Letter of Truancy or Excessive Excused Absence Letter
- **Seven (7) or more unexcused absences** → Student Attendance Review Team (**SART**) meeting with school official
- **Excessive unexcused absences** will result in a referral to the *School Attendance Review Board (SARB)* and possible referral to the District Attorney for prosecution.

12. What can I do if my child needs to be out of school for a length of time?

If your child must go out of town for **five or more days**, you may **request a Short Term Independent Study Contract**. Please note that teachers need at least **one week's notice** in order to prepare materials. Please see the counselor to begin the process.

13. Why is attendance such a big issue?

Regular attendance is vital to student's success in school. A student, who is frequently absent, **misses social activities and direct instruction** from his/her teachers even though written work can be made up. Any day or hour absent is a missed learning opportunity. Also, the school loses funding for each absence, regardless of the reason; including illness or excused.

14. What about homework? If my child is absent can I request homework to be sent home?

Students are given the opportunity to **makeup schoolwork** missed due to illness or a valid excused absence **upon their return**. As a general policy, a student is allowed **one (1) day to complete makeup work for each day of excused** absence from school. This year many of the teachers are **posting assignments to the school website or on Canvas**. Contact the teacher for more information.

15. What if my child is marked absent but he/or she was present?

Ask the teacher to submit an **Attendance Correction Form** so they can verify whether or not the student was absent.

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16. How can I check my child's attendance?

- Check on **PowerSchool** (website)
- **Stop by or call** the attendance office
- **Schedule an appointment** with the Intervention Specialist (Ms. Dawn Ketchens and/or Ms. Kate Piscotta)

17. Why do I get calls about my child being absent when they are on a fieldtrip, or sporting event or school sponsored activity?

If a student is not physically in class, the teacher marks him/her absent. The attendance office will go back and change the attendance code to "V" for activity. No need to worry about it. However, the computer automatically calls to let you know they were not physically at school.

Attendance Terms

Chronic Absenteeism: A student who missed more than **10% of the school year due to excused absences.**

Chronic Truancy: A student who missed more than **10% of the school year due to unexcused absences.**

Habitual Truant: A student who has been reported as **a truant three or more times in one school year** and after an appropriate school employee has made a conscientious effort to hold at least **one meeting with the parent.**

SARB: Student Attendance Review Board (District Level Team)

SART: Student Attendance Review Team (School Level Team)

Truant: A student must be classified and reported as truant if he/she is absent from school without a valid excuse for **3 full days, or tardy or absent for more than 30-minute period on 3 occasions, or any combination thereof** within one school year.