

Dr. Ralph Poteet High School

2011-2012

Attendance Guidelines

General Attendance Rule: We do not excuse absences for students who leave school early for reasons other than their own medical needs. **If a student feels ill and needs to go home, he or she must first go to the clinic.** Our school nurse will make parent contact and release the student from school based on the medical need. Students should never leave of their own accord during the school day without receiving parental permission and signing out. To do so will result in an unexcused absence being recorded and an appropriate disciplinary measure being assessed. No students, regardless of age, will be permitted to “sign themselves out” without prior approval from administration.

Consequences for unexcused absence: Students who are absent (and the absence is unexcused) will not be allowed to make up the work missed in each class. In addition, students may be given a disciplinary measure for unexcused absences. This includes students who oversleep and arrive to school so late. **A student arriving to school after 9:00 AM will be counted absent.** A classroom tardy is considered a partial absence.

Truancy Laws: According to the State of Texas, children between the ages of six and eighteen are required to attend school each day for the entire period that the school is in operation. **Students who accumulate ten or more unexcused absences or partial absences in a class within a six-month period, or three or more unexcused or partial absences within a four-week period are considered truant by the State of Texas.** Four or more tardies are considered partial absences. When this occurs, it is the legal responsibility of the school district to file a complaint with the proper court against both the parent or guardian and the student (Class C Misdemeanor). A truancy-warning letter will be mailed to the student’s home address when a student has incurred two unexcused absences in a four-week period. This information is found on page 1 of the Student Code of Conduct.

Credit for Classes: The State of Texas requires that a student must be in a class 90% of the time it meets in order to receive credit. On block scheduling that means that a students can only miss a class 5 times (whether excused or unexcused) and still receive credit for that class. Students are encouraged to see their administrators for more details. Important: **Credits are awarded and denied at the end of each semester, and recoup cannot be served for a class after credit has already been denied.** Therefore, recoup for first semester classes must be completed during the first semester. This information is found on page 1 of the Student Code of Conduct.

College Days: Each junior and senior is allowed to take two college days and still maintain his or her semester exam exemption for those days. Each day will be marked as an absence but will not prevent a student from being exempt if he or she meets all the other criteria. Students are advised to speak with the attendance principal **before** making arrangements, in order to ensure that the college visit will be honored. Upon returning, an original letter or other documentation from the school must be submitted which verifies the student’s attendance on that day. We do not accept faxes or photocopied letters.

Religious Holy Days: Steps to request for absence for a religious Holy Day

1. Student and/or parent must submit an **advanced written request** for religious Holy Day
2. A campus administrator will review request and make a determination
3. A campus administrator will notify student/parent of decision
4. After absence, student and parent must return with documentation

Exemption Policy: A student may be exempt from the semester exam in a class if he or she meets the following criteria:

- Perfect attendance (class by class basis)
- Passing the course for the semester with at least a 70
- No placement in ISS, MIC, or other alternative setting.
- No more than 3 tardies per class in a semester

Students who are exempt must still attend their classes on exam days during the first semester. Students do not have to attend school on exam day for the second semester.

Calling in for absent students: Any time a student is absent from school, the parent or guardian of the student should call the school attendance office with the reason for the absence at (972) 882-5300 the day of the absence. Parents are provided only 5 call-ins per school year. All absences are considered unexcused if we do not receive a call on the day of the absence, and students are not permitted to make up the work missed in class. **We do not accept written notes for absences; it must be a phone call with verifiable contact information.**

Excused absence: Absences are excused if a student attends a doctor/dentist appointment or has a court date and can provide documentation upon return. Students who are ill are excused if the parent calls in for them **on the day of the absence**. A student who misses three days of school consecutively must have a doctor's note to excuse the absences **after** the initial two days. If a student is excessively absent due to illness, he or she will need a doctor's note for any future absences. We excuse one day absences for students who attend the funerals of family members and provide documentation. These students will not be eligible for exemptions.

Missing school for a doctor/dentist appointment or required court appearance: According to the State of Texas, a student who is in attendance for a portion of the school day (in our case, at least half of one period) and then attends a medical appointment or a required court appearance will be counted present if the student submits a dated doctor's note or court paperwork upon his or her return. This allows the student to maintain his or her semester exam exemptions in the classes they missed. We allow students up to one week to return the doctor/court note, but the absence is marked "unexcused" until the note is turned in to the office. Please note that unexcused absences prevent students from doing any make-up work from the class (es) missed. Unexcused absences that accumulate could result in a complaint being filed with the court for truancy.

What type of absence is unexcused: Going out of town, interviewing for a job, taking the driving test, visiting family, running errands, baby-sitting, taking vacations, parents signing students out or other "personal" reasons are not considered excused absences; and **students will not be permitted to make up assignments missed**. Our expectation at PHS is that our students will be present every day that school is in session. Still, certain situations arise which require students to miss school. We ask that parents work with the school to keep those situations to a minimum and contact the attendance administrator prior to absence. Please make every effort to schedule personal business appointments outside the school day. Students with unexcused absences are not eligible for exemptions.

Arriving late or leaving early: When situations do arise where students miss a portion of the school day, **it is essential that they sign in or out** of the office. This is our documentation of their whereabouts when not in school. Students who leave early or arrive late without signing in or out will be marked "unexcused" from the classes missed. We ask that parents or guardians call

the school in the morning if a student will be late to school that day due to illness or other extenuating circumstances. Without this call absences will be unexcused and appropriate discipline will be assigned to the student.