



## B. J. Smith Elementary School

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2300 Mesquite Valley Rd. • Mesquite, TX 75149 • 972-882-7080

### **B.J. Elementary School Attendance Guidelines**

#### **Notifying the school of student absences:**

Anytime a student is absent from school the parent or guardian needs to send a hand written note with the student on the day he or she returns to school. The note needs to contain the name of student, date(s) of the absence(s), reason for the absence(s), along with the parent or guardian's name and signature. Calling the school on the day of the absence is highly encouraged, but a hand written note is still required for the absence to be excused. The note must be received by the office within five school days of the recorded absence(s) in order to be excused.

**Three absences per semester will be excused by hand written notes.**

#### **What types of absences are excused?**

Illnesses for up to three days per semester will be excused by a note from the parent or guardian.

**More than three absences due to illness will require a doctor's note to be excused.**

Absences are excused if a student attends the funeral of a family member with funeral documentation (program or obituary).

#### **Absence(s) for Religious Holy Days:**

There are two steps to request an excused absence for a religious Holy Day. The parent or guardian must submit **an advanced written** request for the religious Holy Day. The request should include the student(s) name, grade level(s), and teacher(s). The date or dates the parent is requesting be excused along with the parent/guardian(s) name and contact information. The absence needs to be followed up with appropriate documentation upon the student(s) return to school.

#### **Doctor or Dentist Appointments:**

According to the State of Texas, a student who is in attendance for a portion of the school day, and then attends a medical appointment will be counted present if a correctly dated doctor's note is submitted upon the student's return to school. The absence or tardy will be marked unexcused until a doctor's note is presented.

#### **What types of absences are unexcused?**

Going out of town, visiting family, running errands, or other personal reasons are not considered excused absences. Family trips or other out-of-town excursions that occur during the school day are not excused.

Our expectation at Smith Elementary is that our students will be present each day school is held. We understand that certain situations arise that require students to miss school, but we hope that we can work together to keep those situations to a minimum by personal business appointments being scheduled outside the school day whenever possible.

**Arriving late or leaving early:**

If a student arrives to school after 8:15 A.M. or is picked up from school before 2:30 P.M., he or she has missed 15 minutes of instruction and are considered to have a partial day absence. For truancy purposes, partial day absences are considered to be unexcused absences. If the student will be attending or has attended a medical appointment the absences will be changed when the appropriate documentation is provided. If a student is sent home by the school nurse during the school day, the absence will be excused.

**Consequences for unexcused absences and Truancy laws:**

Please be advised that Section 25.085 of the Texas Education Code states that a child who is at least six years of age who has not reached the child's 18<sup>th</sup> birthday shall attend school unless exempted by law. The law also stipulates that "upon enrollment in prekindergarten or kindergarten, a child shall attend school." Children enrolled in PK or K are under the same attendance requirements as all other schoolchildren of the State.

The law (SB 1432. Sec. 25.094) states that a student commits an offense of the law if the student is absent from school on 10 or more days or parts of days within a six month period or on three or more days in a four week period.

Should the total number of absences reach or exceed ten days in a six month period or three days in a four week period, the district may file a complaint against you and/or the student in County, Municipal, or Justice of the peace Court. In the event that you or your child is found in violation of the Texas Compulsory Attendance Law, you would be subject to prosecution under Sec. 25.093 or 25.094 of the Texas Education Code.

**Ninety Percent Rule:**

Sec. 25.092 of the Texas Education Code, a student may not be given credit for a class unless the student is in attendance for at least 90% of the days the class is offered.

**This law does not distinguish between excused and unexcused absences.**

In addition, excessive absences in any elementary grade level will delay your child in being successful with the grade level content. At the end of each semester the Campus Attendance Committee will meet to determine if reinstatement of credit is appropriate. Credit may be reinstated due to good faith efforts and recoup time completed for that grade level. If the Campus Attendance Committee does not reinstate credit, the parent or student may appeal the committee's decision to the District's Board of Trustees by filing a written request with the superintendent within 30 days following the last day of instruction.

If you have any questions or concerns about the Attendance Guidelines, please feel free to contact Mrs. Gibraltar at:

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Mesquite ISD Attendance Policies and state requirements are outlined in the 2011-2012 Student Handbook and Student Code of Conduct.