COMPULSORY ATTENDANCE

The Tacoma School District affirms that all levels of school attendance can impact student success. Potential effects of excessive absenteeism, both unexcused and excused, can impact academic achievement, dropout rates, and on-time graduation. Through continued attendance, learning environments are enriched and improved by the contributions, perspectives and presence of students.

The Board of Directors believes that the responsibility for student success is broadly shared by our staff, our families/guardian, our community and our student’s own efforts. The District is committed to identifying practices and policies to increase student attendance and engagement as well as provide information and resources throughout each school year.

Parents of any student eight years of age and under eighteen years of age shall cause such child to attend school and such child shall have the responsibility to and therefore shall attend for the full time when such school may be in session unless the child is enrolled in an approved private school, an educational center as provided in chapter 28A.205 RCW or is receiving home-based instruction. Parents of any child six or seven years old, who have enrolled the child in school, shall cause the child to attend school for the full time when such school may be in session, unless the child is formally withdrawn from enrollment by the parents.

Exception may be granted by the Superintendent in the following circumstances:

A. The student is physically or mentally unable to attend school;
B. The student is attending a residential school operated by the Department of Social and Health Services;
C. The student's parents have requested a temporary absence for purposes agreed to by the District and which will not cause a serious adverse effect on the student's educational process;
D. The student is sixteen years of age, regularly and lawfully employed and either has parent permission or is emancipated pursuant to chapter 13.64 RCW;
E. The student has met graduation requirements;
F. The student has received a certificate of educational competence (GED).

Any law enforcement officer authorized to make arrests can take a truant student into custody without a warrant and must then deliver the student to the parent or to school.

The District shall not require enrollment for either (a) a minimum number of semesters or trimesters or (b) a minimum number of courses in a semester or trimester which exceeds the enrollment time or courses necessary for a student to meet established course, credit, and test requirements for high school graduation.
Consistent with Washington law, the District will inform parents and obtain verification of parent receipt of the following information associated with truancy:

- Benefits of regular school attendance.
- Potential effects of excessive absenteeism, whether excused or unexcused, on academic achievement and graduation and dropout rates.
- School's expectations of the parents and guardians to ensure regular school attendance by the child.
- Resources available to assist the child and the parents and guardians.
- Role and responsibilities of the school.
- Consequences of truancy, including compulsory education requirements.

Cross References: Board Policy 3114 Part-time, Home-based, or Off-campus Students
3122 Excused and Unexcused Absences

Legal References: AGO 1980 No. 6 Truancy--Enforcement of compulsory attendance law
RCW 28A.225.010 Attendance mandatory--Age--Persons having custody shall cause child to attend public school--When excused
28A.225.080 Employment permits
28A.225.090 Penalties in general--Defense--Suspension of Fine--Complaints to court
WAC 180-51-020 Additional local standards

Adoption Date: 6/22/00, Revised 09/01/16