



# Evergreen Public Schools

## SCHOOL ATTENDANCE INFORMATION

Dear Parent or Guardian:

Welcome! We are committed to your child's success and consider it essential that your child maintain daily regular attendance at his/her school to attain optimum results. Washington State law (RCW 28A.225.010) requires parents/guardians of all children between the ages of eight and eighteen years of age to have the child attend the public school of the district in which the child resides each school day throughout the school year. In 1996, the law included that students could not drop out of school at age sixteen unless certain educational and legal emancipation provisions were met. If a parent enrolls a child who is six or seven years of age in public school, they have the responsibility to see that the child attends for the full time school is in session, unless the parent formally removes the child from school. Please review the attendance section in your child's "School Handbook." Our purpose for providing you this information is to better assist you in working with your child's school on matters relating to attendance and becoming partners with us.

### **Please take a minute to read the following guidelines:**

**1. Notification of Absence to Parent/Guardian:** We will attempt to notify you daily by phone or voice-mail whenever your child is absent from school. Your child's safety and attendance are essential and we ask that you please ensure the school has your current home and work phone numbers at all times. If you would like to be notified at your place of work, please let the school know.

**2. Excused Absences – District Policy:** All student absences will require a parent/guardian to make either a personal (via telephone or in person) contact or provide a written excuse to the school's attendance office. I encourage you to read your child's "School Handbook" for the particular contact method used at your school. It's always best to follow-up with a written excuse to confirm and validate the absence. All student absences that are not excused within three (3) days of the student's return to school will not be excused (unless approved by a school administrator). When a student is absent from school for five (5) or more consecutive days due to illness or health conditions, a note from your doctor or healthcare provider must be provided to the school or the absence may be classified as **unexcused**.

### **Valid reasons for excused absences include the following:**

- a. Illness or health conditions
- b. Family emergencies
- c. Participation in a school-approved activity
- d. Parental-approved activities (Please refer to your child's "School Handbook").
- e. Disciplinary action or short or long-term suspension
- f. Observance of a religious holiday
- g. Otherwise permitted by law

All other absences will be considered unexcused and may result in disciplinary action and/or may impact on the student's grade. (Please refer to your child's "School Handbook.").

**3. Unexcused Absences (Truancy/Skipping): All absences that are not excused shall be unexcused.** In accordance with RCW 28A.225.020 and 28A.225.030, the school district is required to take the following actions when a child who is enrolled in school has **unexcused absences**:

a. On the first unexcused absence in any month, we will notify you by phone or in writing of your child's absence and the potential consequence of unexcused absences. Whether this is done by automated messaging machine or letter, please ensure contact with your child's school and written follow-up within the third day of your child's return to school.

b. On the second unexcused absence in any month, a conference with you and your child will be scheduled to discuss the reasons for the absence and to take steps to eliminate the absence. During this meeting or within the fifth (5th) day of an unexcused absence, an attendance agreement contract shall be initiated to address the attendance problem with a recommended plan of action. At this point, it is very important that we all work together to solve the underlying causes/reasons for the absences so the matter does not have to go beyond the attendance office level.

c. Not later than the seventh (7th) day of unexcused absences in the same month and/or not later than the tenth (10th) day of unexcused absence during the current school year, we shall file a petition with supporting documentation in the Juvenile Court alleging a violation of RCW 28A.225.010, "Washington Compulsory School Attendance Law," by you (as parent/guardian), by your child, or by both you and your child.

**4. Pre-arranged Absences:** Parents/guardians of students may request a school administrator approve a **pre-arranged absence** prior to the event if the absence is listed as a valid reason for excused absences.

**5. Attendance/Homework Information:** You may obtain attendance information regarding your student at any time by contacting the attendance office. Evergreen Public Schools supports a highly advanced student reporting system containing attendance information that includes absence codes entered directly by teachers and attendance staff. To understand attendance reports requires some knowledge of the **Absence-Type code** used.

**The most important Absence-Type codes to be familiar with are:**

- "E" for Excused
- "U" for Unexcused
- "W" for Unexcused by the Teacher
- "T" for Tardy
- "L" for Tardy by the Teacher
- "X" for Excused Exempt code often used for school event

These **Absence-Type codes** are most important to understand and sometimes followed by an **Absence Reason code** (i.e., "E-S" means Excused – Sick). There are nineteen absence reason codes which your attendance office can provide you an explanation of if needed. Homework may be obtained from school when your child is absent three or more days.

If you have further questions or require assistance, please contact your school principal or attendance office.

Best regards,

John Deeder  
Superintendent