

ATTENDANCE POLICY

6.10.8 NMAC states that “Attendance” refers students who are in class or in a school-approved activity. If a student is in attendance up to one half the total instructional time during a school day, the student will be counted as having attended one-half of a school day. If the student attends school for more than one-half of the total instructional time, the student will be counted as having attended for the full day. In addition, 6.10.8.8 NMAC requires that each local school board and charter school develop a written attendance policy.

Student attendance in New Mexico is compulsory and failure to attend is regarded as educational neglect as stated in Section 32-1-L (2) NMSA 1978, the educational neglect section of the New Mexico Children’s Code, N.M.S.A., 1978. **Educational Neglect is interpreted to be chronic absences and or excessive tardiness.**

Compulsory Attendance Laws

The Compulsory School Attendance Law changed definitions of truants, habitual truants, and unexcused absences. It requires school districts to maintain an attendance policy that provides for the early identification of students with unexcused absences and truancy while providing intervention strategies that focus on keeping truants in an educational setting and prohibiting out of school suspension and expulsion as a punishment. Class attendance is taken on every student, during every instructional day, within every public school or school program in school districts. It is required that school districts report their truancy and habitual truancy rate to the Public Education Department in a format and when required by PED. It is important for those to understand the definitions related with these laws.

- A. **Habitual truant** refers to a student who has accumulated the equivalent of ten or more unexcused absences within a school year.
- B. **Truant** refers to a student who has accumulated five unexcused absences within any 20-day period.
- C. **Unexcused Absence** is an absence from a school or a class for which the student does not have an allowable excuse pursuant to the Compulsory School Attendance Laws or rules of the local school board.
- D. **Chronic Absences** are excused and unexcused absences that equal missing 10% of school or more.

Taos High School will enforce the following to comply with the NM State Compulsory Attendance law:

1. All teachers will take attendance in every class and record it on the school’s student data system within 15 minutes of established start time.
2. Students will be marked TARDY if they are not in class when the bell rings for the established start time for the class.
3. Students will be marked ABSENT 15 minutes after the establish start time for each class if the tardy is not excused.
4. Teachers will keep attendance in a separate attendance book. This book is a legal document that is property of Taos High School and must be presented upon request by the administrative staff of the school or district.
5. Three (3) unexcused days tardy in a class will result in one (1) unexcused absence for that

class. Four (4) class absences equal one (1) unexcused day absence.

Daily Student Attendance

Daily attendance is mandatory for students to benefit most fully from the instructional program. However, Taos High School recognizes that there are situations that cause a student to be absent from school. Students will be allowed up to nine (9) absences from a class per semester without penalty of loss of credit. Therefore, in accordance with the district guidelines, absences MAY be excused for the following reasons:

Parents and Guardians- Power-school, the software used to track grades and attendance, is open to you. If you do not have a log in or need support in using the program, please let us know and we will be happy to help you learn how to navigate the system. Knowledge is Power!

EXCUSED ABSENCES

- Medical Appointment- (with note from Doctor)
- Illness- (not to exceed 3 days or a Doctor's note required)
- Diagnostic Testing
- Death of a family member
- Religious and/or cultural commitment
- Family emergency-with principal's approval
- All school related activities-not to exceed NMAA policy of 15 days per semester
- Extenuating circumstances with PRIOR approval from administration.
- Travel, not covered above with PRIOR approval from administration.

UNEXCUSED ABSENCE: is an absence from school or a class for which the student does not have an allowable excuse pursuant to the Compulsory School Attendance Law or rules of the local school board; Family vacations not approved by administration, haircuts, shopping trips, sleeping in, taking siblings to school, babysitting siblings, etc.

Notification

- It is the parent's/guardian's responsibility to notify the school's attendance office (751-8016) when a student is absent.
- Notification is to take place within 24 hours of the absence to be considered excusable should an appeal be required.
 - Failure to notify within 24 hours will result in an unexcused absence.
- In cases involving partial day absence for medical appointments, etc. parents must request an off-campus pass to be used in advance of departure. Parent/guardian must sign the off-campus authorization log located in the attendance office and obtain the pass in person or fax in a letter to be signed by the principal or designee.
- **18 year old students** continue to be the responsibility of the parent until graduation from Taos High School. Parents must call in absences and come in to the school to sign out the student.

Missed Work

- It is the students' responsibility to request make-up work following an excused absence.
- Students may make-up missed work within 3 days of returning from an EXCUSED absence.
Athletic absences, the work is required in 2 days.

Responsibility of the School

The school as a reporting agent has the responsibility of informing the parent/guardian of the student's non-attendance and of arranging of parent conferences as necessary. As a rule, the following provisions shall apply:

1. Teachers will take accurate attendance
2. Notification of attendance will be sent to parent/guardians at 3, 5, 7, and 10 days of unexcused absence.
3. Date and Time available to meet will be provided in the notification of truant student's letters to discuss attendance related issues and create a corrective action plan with follow up procedures.
4. Truancy Court Referral (may be utilized at 5+ unexcused absences)
5. Juvenile Probation and Parole Office Referral (10 or more unexcused absences)
6. Loss of Privileges (Off Campus, Lunch Pass, electronics, ect)
7. Students will not be suspended or expelled as punishment for unexcused absences and habitual truancy.
8. Withdrawal of student after exhausting intervention efforts to maintain the student at school.

Loss of Academic Credit

Any student who accumulates **10** or more non-school related absences (excused or unexcused) in a **SEMESTER** may have the credit for that class **denied**. This will remove the need for parents/guardians to succumb to the pressure to call and cover for their student. In order to have credit reinstated the student and parent must meet with the principal or designee. The principal may ask the student and parent to fill out a Request for Credit Reinstatement. Any unexcused absence, after the 24-hour notification period, needing appeal must be accompanied by hard copy proof (ex. medical excuse, court ordered document, etc.) in order to be considered. Unexcused absences can not be appealed and will not be considered in re-instatement hearings.

Early Identification of non-attending students with follow-up procedures

WITHDRAWAL FROM SCHOOL

A parent or legal guardian must accompany students withdrawing from Taos High School so that the proper information can be presented on the withdrawal form. All textbooks must be returned to teachers and teachers will in turn issue a cumulative grade. A copy of the withdrawal form will be given to the parent/guardian. All school fees must be paid before grades will be issued or transcripts mailed out.

Adult Learning Centers that provide High School Equivalency Certificates are not alternative high schools and extreme circumstances or hardships will be considered only.

Automatic office withdrawals will be done for a student who has been absent ten (10) consecutive school days along with JPO (Juvenile Probation Office) referral, if the school has not been notified of a valid reason for the absence. If this happens and the student returns to school after ten (10) days, he/she will be re-enrolled after a parental conference is held with the Assistant Principal.

Minimum requirements for Attendance Success Interventions:

- 1- 3 Unexcused (UX) or 5 excused (EX) absences or a combination of 7 UX/EX
 - a. Letter or call home
 - b. Request for meeting
- 2- 5 UX or 10 EX or a combination of 10 UX/EX absences

- a. Letter sent home with a date and time to meet
 - b. Attendance Support Team (AST) meeting to review and establish intervention strategies focused on maintaining the student in school.
 - c. Consequences of further absences including possible referral to Teen Court, CYFD and/or JPPO
 - d. Weekly progress monitoring
 - e. Attendance contract
- 3- 10+ UX or 15 EX
- a. Letter sent home with a date and time to meet
 - b. Attendance Support Team (AST) meeting to review and update previous intervention plan.
 - c. Weekly progress monitoring
 - d. Attendance contract update
 - i. With non-punitive consequences at the school level
 - e. Consequences of continued absences
 - i. Teen Court (Truancy class)
 - ii. JPPO for UX absences
 - iii. CYFD for excessive EX absences ¹(if it is determined that the family is in need of services).
 - f. Referral to appropriate services: (as appropriate)
 - i. Community Mental Health Provider

Provisions of excused Absences for expectant and parenting teens

E. Taos High School will allow at least ten days of excused absences for a student who provides documentation of the birth of the student's child and allow the student a time period to make up the work that the student missed that equals the number of days the student was absent for the birth of a child; and will provide excused absences for any additional days missed by a pregnant or parenting student for which a longer period of absence is deemed medically necessary by the student's physician and allow the student a time period to make up the work that the student missed that equals the number of days the student was absent.

Law charges the parent or guardian with responsibility for the student's school attendance. The Superintendent will enforce the laws regarding attendance, with consideration for the variables that affect children and families. The Superintendent will place emphasis on the prevention and correction of the causes of absenteeism.

Intergovernmental Agreements:

While all children attending public schools are subject to the reporting provisions of the Compulsory School Attendance Law, the Superintendent takes into consideration the sovereignty of Native American tribal members (with 506 documentation) and will excuse absences due to tribal customs and religious

¹ Attendance Policy proposed amendment 8/10/2018

practices. Intervention for Native American students will involve Native American resources or other agreed upon resources.

LEGAL REF. [22-12-1 NMSA \(1978\)](#) *et seq.* [22-12-8 NMSA \(1978\)](#) [22-12-9 NMSA \(1978\)](#)
[6.10.8.7 NMAC](#) [6.10.8.8 NMAC](#) [6.10.8.9 NMAC](#) [6.10.8.10 NMAC](#)

If you need assistance or have questions regarding the Attendance Policy change, please contact the coach associated with your school.

Attendance Success Coaches

Ranchos Elementary: Renea Been	575-737-6150
Enos Garcia Elementary: Renea Been	575-737-6070
Taos Middle School: Crispin Roque	575-737-6000
Taos High School: Necia Ethridge	575-751-8746