

Morgan High School

Attendance Policy

Adopted by the Morgan Board of Education

June 17, 2003

(Revised August 9, 2011)

Purpose

The Morgan School Board recognizes that regular attendance at school greatly enhances the opportunity for student learning through instruction provided by teachers. Frequent absences from the day-to-day classroom experience disrupt the instructional process. The benefits of instruction once lost cannot entirely be regained. The entire process of education requires continuity of instruction, class participation, learning experience and study. The purpose of this policy is to help increase the academic achievements of students at Morgan High School and is not intended to be disciplinary in nature. It is the belief of the Morgan School Board that academic credentials should reflect the product of quizzes, examinations, papers, classroom participation, and regular school attendance. In order for students to achieve their highest level of academic achievement and to earn credit at Morgan High School, they should be in school at least 90% of the time each trimester. The "State Compulsory Education Requirements" (Utah Code, Section 53A-11-101) directs parents and schools as follows:

1. A person having control of a minor between 6 and 18 years of age shall send the minor to a public or regularly established private school during the school year of the district in which the minor resides.
2. It is a misdemeanor for a person having control of a minor under subsection (1) to willfully fail to comply with the requirements of this chapter.
3. A local board of education shall report cases of willful noncompliance to the appropriate juvenile court.
4. Officers of the juvenile court shall immediately take appropriate action.

The law allows parents of students enrolled in public schools to excuse their student from school, but only when the student is absent for a "legitimate or valid reason" such as illness or family emergency. The Second District Juvenile Court has jurisdiction over all juveniles residing in Morgan County. It is the expectation of the court that students within its jurisdiction will be in regular attendance at the school in which they are enrolled. The court is obligated to adjudicate truancy matters for those students who are habitually absent without allowable excuse. To accomplish this goal, the court requires that public school officials refer to above said court those students who are in violation of the compulsory education requirements. Prior to referral, the court expects parents and schools to demonstrate earnest and persistent effort to deter truant behavior. In order for the court to adjudicate truancy, the court requires that schools have attendance policies that enforce consequences for truant behavior and teach students that such behavior is illegal and unacceptable.

The Board wants to make every effort to be in compliance with state law and work together with the Second District Court to encourage the regular attendance of all Morgan High School students. It believes this to be in the best interest of the student, the school, and the community. Morgan High School is committed to work in harmony with parents and to assist them with their responsibility to have their children in attendance at school. Again, this

policy focuses on the relationship between academic evaluation and attendance and is not disciplinary in nature. With this end in mind, the following attendance policy has been adopted.

Overview

- Parents must excuse all verified absences within ten days of the absence.
- All students with more than 6 verified absences, more than 4 tardies, any unverified absence, any late absence, any truancy or a suspension in any class will be required to take an end-of-trimester comprehensive final exam (competency test) in that class.
- All students with 4 or more tardies, any unverified absence, any late absence, or any truancy will be required to complete attendance restitution.
- Students who take the competency test must demonstrate competency by passing the exam with a score of 60% or higher.
- Students who are passing the course but score below the 60% level will receive an NG (no grade) and will be required to repeat the course if necessary to meet graduation requirements.
- Students who have a cumulative course grade of “F” (failing grade) following the competency test will have that grade reported rather than an NG (no grade).
- Students with continual attendance problems will be referred to administration for habitual truancy and will be considered for placement in the district’s alternative high school.

Competency Test

This exam will be comprehensive in nature and cover the basics of the curriculum found in the course. Students who take the competency test must demonstrate competency by passing the exam with a score of 60% or higher. Students who score below the 60% level will receive an NG (no grade) and will be required to repeat the course if necessary to meet graduation requirements. Students must take the exam within 5 school days following the end of the previous trimester. Students may attempt the competency test twice (2) within that 5-day period in order to reach the 60% competency level. Upon request of the student, teachers may provide a study guide prior to taking the test.

Verified Absence

Each absence verified by a parent (other than those that qualify as an exempt absence) will count towards the 6 total absences a student may have during the trimester. In order for an absence to be considered a verified absence, the parent must notify the school either by phoning the attendance secretary in the counseling office, visiting the attendance secretary in the counseling office, or writing a note or email to the attendance secretary in the counseling office. Parents must give notification within 10 school days of the absence. After this time, the absence may not be verified and the student will be required to take the competency test and complete attendance restitution. Students with more than 6 verified absences will be required to pass the competency test. Students who do not pass the competency test will receive an NG (no grade) and may be required to repeat the course if necessary to meet graduation requirements. Parents cannot verify an absence if the student misses a class or classes but remains on campus. An example would be a student missing a social studies class and going to the media center to prepare for a test in an upcoming math class.

Unverified Absence

An unverified absence is any absence not excused in accordance with the definition for a verified absence. Students with any unverified absences will be required to pass the competency test and complete attendance restitution. Students who do not pass the final exam will receive an NG (no grade) and may be required to repeat the course if necessary to meet graduation requirements.

Truancy

Truancy is when a student leaves home for school but does not arrive, comes to school but does not attend class, leaves school without checking out properly, or obtains permission to go a certain place but does not report there. A truancy is also when a student chooses not to attend an assembly or advisory without prior permission from a parent or school official. A truancy mark will be assessed to the class prior to the assembly. Students with any truancy will be required to pass the competency test and complete attendance restitution. Students who do not pass the competency test will receive an NG (no grade) and may be required to repeat the course if necessary to meet graduation requirements. Work missed on the day of the truancy cannot be made up and may impact the student's academic grade as well. Students not in their assigned area during class time may receive a truancy. Students who are signed up for Release Time must exit the building during that class period. Students found on school premises during such time may be given a trespassing ticket and issued a fine of \$10.00

Suspension

Students suspended from school will be required to pass the competency test. If students do not pass the competency test, they will receive an NG (no grade) and may be required to repeat the course if necessary to meet graduation requirements. Absences occurring from suspension will not require attendance restitution. Students will be required to make up class work missed during the suspension.

Administrative Excused Absences

Absences that qualify as administrative excused are listed below. These are not counted as an absence if the school receives the required notification. Students who are given exempt absence status are responsible for completion of the missed work. All exempt absences must be approved by the high school administration.

School Sponsored – absences resulting from participation with a school class, school team, school group, or school club.

Homebound or Chronic Illness – illness or injury that causes absences to exceed 6 days. Chronic health problems may or may not interfere with attendance at school and learning in the classroom. It is extremely important that parents notify the school concerning health-related problems that their student may have. If chronic illness hinders a student's attendance and academic learning, the parent is invited to contact a school administrator or counselor to formulate an individual academic and attendance plan that will meet the student's needs. It is the responsibility of the parent to make the contact and to provide verification of the illness from a medical doctor or practitioner.

Funeral – absences due to attending the funeral service of a family member. Each absence will be considered on an individual basis by the administration.

Vacation – Students must complete a pre-approval form prior to missing school. This cannot be done after returning to school. Forms are available in the counseling center.

Tardy

A tardy is defined as reporting to class any time after the bell to start class has sounded. Tardies can be excused for doctor and dental appointments and official school related reasons only. On the 4th tardy in any class, students will be required to pass the competency test and complete attendance restitution for each tardy thereon. Students who do not pass the competency test will receive an NG (no grade) and may be required to repeat the course if necessary to meet graduation requirements.

Late Absence

Students who arrive to class more than 10 minutes late without an admit slip will receive an unverified absence that cannot be parent excused. Students will be required to pass the competency test and complete attendance restitution. Students who do not pass the competency test will receive an NG (no grade) and may be required to repeat the course if necessary to meet graduation requirements.

Checkout

It is required that a student check out through the counseling center with the attendance secretary before leaving during the school day. A student who becomes ill or needs to leave campus other than for lunch, cooperative learning, or early college must report to the attendance secretary in the counseling center to receive a street pass. Failure to check out with the attendance secretary may result in a truancy. In case of an emergency, the student's parents will be notified. Parents are requested to arrange transportation to the doctor or home as soon as possible. If a parent cannot be reached, emergency transportation must be cleared through an administrator before transporting the student. A student who has checked out of school must leave campus.

Check-in

Any student who arrives at school after the beginning of the school day must check in with the attendance secretary in the counseling center. Students must report to class with a check-in form and will receive a tardy or absence accordingly.

Falsification of Parental Excuse or Other Excuse

Students found falsifying excuses will be given a U (unsatisfactory) citizenship grade in each class for which they are absent under that falsified excuse.

Attendance Restitution

Unexcused absence, late absence and truancy restitution can be completed in one of the following ways:

- Serving one hour in an attendance restitution session for each absence or truancy.
- Paying \$5.00 for each absence or truancy.

Tardy restitution can be completed by doing one of the following:

- Attend class for 10 consecutive days for each tardy without any attendance mark other than school excused absences (S). This must be done in the same class as the tardy and must be completed in the same trimester.
- Make up time with the teacher. Student must have prior approval from the teacher of the class with the tardy and pick up a form in the counseling center for the teacher to sign after the work has been completed. Time and task for the make-up will be determined by each individual teacher. Make-up time cannot be done for a previous trimester.
- Paying \$3.00 for every tardy over 3 in each class.

Tardy restitution that is completed prior to competency testing at the end of the trimester will exempt the student from taking the competency test. This applies to tardies only. Any tardy received after taking the test will require restitution.

Students are given two weeks following the end of the trimester to complete the restitution or pay the fee. Restitution not completed during that time will result in a \$25.00 fee per class that must be paid prior to checking out at the end of the year.

Fines collected from attendance restitution and truancy tickets will be used to pay personnel cost for supervising the sessions. The balance of the funds will be placed in a high school account for textbook and technology purchases. Fines are subject to change. Payment of fines is not required for a student to receive their earned grades, but must be paid prior to the final check out at the end of the school year.

Morgan High School will withhold Official Transcripts until all fines are paid in full.

Assignments and Tests

Students are expected to complete assignments and tests missed during absences. Contact will need to be made with individual teachers regarding missed assignments, tests, etc., and the deadlines for completion. It is the responsibility of the student and/or parent to make contact with each teacher.

Failing Grades

Students who have a cumulative course grade of "F" (failing grade) following the competency test will have that grade reported rather than an NG (no grade).

Eligibility

Students have 10 school days following the end of the trimester to complete all attendance restitution and pass all competency tests. If these are not completed within this time period, the student will remain ineligible until the following trimester concludes.

Attendance Postings

Students may check their previous day attendance record by viewing the attendance report at the counseling center. The report will be updated daily.

Parent Notification

Parents are encouraged to monitor their student's attendance on a regular basis. Student attendance information is available by contacting the attendance secretary in the counseling

office or by using the PowerSchool computer system. Parents may also be notified through an automated email or phone voice system. It is the responsibility of the parent to make contact with the counseling office once the notification is received for information regarding absences, tardiness, and restitution requirements.

A parent, teacher, counselor, or administrator may request a conference to discuss the attendance for a student whom they deem to have an excessive number of absences. At the conference, consideration will be given to steps needed to improve attendance. A request for such a conference would precede a referral to juvenile court for truancy.

Attendance codes will be marked on the records as follows:

- A = Absences that have not been verified by parents or the school
- T = Tardy
- E = Excused tardy
- P = Parent verified absence
- L= Late Absence
- W= Principal approved absence
- S = School excused activity
- X = Truancy
- C = Court detention
- H = Holiday
- O = Out-of-school suspension
- OS = Out-of-school suspension w/services
- I = In-school suspension
- B = Homebound
- R=Restitution
- M = Made-up tardy

Morgan High School **Policy for Dealing With Truant Behavior**

Utah State Law requires that every individual under the age of 18 be enrolled in and attending school. Truancy is against the law and is an offense that is prosecuted in Second District Juvenile Court. The administration of Morgan High School is accountable to the court to uphold the law. The following policy established by Morgan High School is considered by the court to demonstrate earnest and persistent effort on behalf of the school to deter truant behavior.

When a student has demonstrated truant behavior, the following steps will be taken in order to attempt to correct the truant behavior and provide the student with the most effective education possible:

Step 1 – Counselor Meeting

1. Confidential meeting between student and counselor.
2. Truancy policy will be explained to the student.
3. The student will be given the opportunity to solve the problem on his or her own.
4. The student will meet with a counselor and a notification will be sent home.

Step 2 – Continual Absences - Parental Notification

1. The attendance secretary will notify parent and student.

2. Truancy policy explained to student by counselor.
3. The student will be placed on an attendance contract.
4. Parental support will be encouraged.

Step 3 – Continual Absences - Administrative Contract

1. Parent will receive certified letter requesting conference with administrator.
2. Consequences from attendance contract previously signed will be enforced to full extent.
3. Student attendance record will be forwarded to the superintendent for consideration of further actions.

Step 4 – Continual Absences - Court Referral

1. The court will notify parent and student.
2. Student will be referred to Second District Juvenile Court for truant behavior.

Step 5 – Continual Absences - Alternative Educational Placement

1. Parent and student will be notified.
2. Student will be referred for alternative educational placement.

Due Process Request Form

This form is for parents and students who feel there are mitigating circumstances that should be considered as to why they should not comply with the standing Morgan High School policy. Policies may include (but are not limited to) attendance, citizenship, and eligibility policies.

A Due Process Board consisting of the vice principal, a counselor, parent member of the Community Council, and one student body officer will consider this form.

State which policy applies to your request, i.e. attendance, citizenship, eligibility, etc.

Please write in your own words the circumstances that merit this request for a hearing.

Please attach any other documentation that would support your case, i.e. medical documentation, doctor requests, appointment schedules, etc.