

Addendum to SPSD Attendance Handbook – Excessive Absence Academic Policy

(Aligned with Board Policy po5200 – Attendance)

Purpose

Consistent with Board Policy po5200, the Saginaw Public School District (SPSD) recognizes that regular, on-time attendance is essential for student achievement, classroom engagement, and long-term success. This policy establishes clear, enforceable consequences for excessive absences to address chronic attendance problems that undermine instructional integrity.

Policy Overview

Students who exceed the absence limits outlined below—without an approved exemption—will be subject to **reduction of grade or course failure (denial of credit)** at the secondary level or grade-level retention at the elementary level unless they successfully complete **appropriate Make-Up Sessions (school-scheduled, documented instructional recovery time directly tied to content missed-not independent homework)** as defined in this policy.

This ensures compliance with Board Policy po5200, which requires that a failing grade not be assigned solely due to attendance, but allows for reduction in grade or denial of credit if a student does not make appropriate use of “**Make-Up Sessions**” provided by the instructor or administrator.

Absence Thresholds

- **Secondary (Grades 6–12):**
 - **15 or more** unexcused absences in a semester-long course = subject to **reduction of grade or course failure (denial of credit)** unless appropriate make-up sessions are completed.
 - **30 or more** unexcused absences in a full-year course = subject to **reduction of grade or course failure (denial of credit)** unless appropriate make-up sessions are completed.
- **Elementary (Grades PreK–5):**
 - **30 or more** unexcused absences in the school year = subject to mandatory summer school, pending review by the Attendance Review Committee (ARC) and administrative approval, unless appropriate make-up sessions are completed.

Reasonable Excuses

The following are considered valid reasons for excused absence under Board Policy po5200 and will not count toward the absence threshold when properly documented:

- A. Illness or recovery from accident
- B. Required court attendance
- C. Professional appointments
- D. Death in the immediate family
- E. Observation or celebration of a bona fide religious holiday
- F. Other good cause as approved by the Superintendent or designee

Extraordinary Circumstances

A student may be exempted from the grade reduction, course failure, or retention provisions only if documentation shows:

- A. A chronic or long-term medical condition verified by a licensed health provider.

- B. Significant mental health or trauma-related concerns.
- C. Other serious hardships (e.g., housing instability, court-ordered absence).

Documentation must be submitted to the building administrator and/or ARC for review. Students with physical or mental impairments who may exceed excused absence limits will be referred for evaluation under IDEA or Section 504.

Appropriate Make-Up Sessions

In alignment with Board Policy po5200, a student's grade or credit will not be unconditionally revoked solely due to lack of attendance; however, the following conditions apply:

- Once a student reaches the absence threshold in this policy, they will be **required** to participate in **district-approved "make-up sessions"** to avoid the academic consequence.
- **Appropriate make-up sessions** are defined as:
 1. **Directly related to the missed instructional content** (e.g., targeted tutoring, teacher-led review, lab or skills completion, or equivalent academic activity approved by the principal).
 2. **Scheduled by the school within 10 school days** of the absence, unless otherwise approved for extraordinary circumstances.
 3. **Fully attended and actively participated in** by the student, with all assigned tasks completed.
 4. **Documented** in the school's attendance and intervention tracking system by the instructor or administrator.

Examples of Acceptable Make-Up Sessions:

- Saturday school sessions with teacher-led academic recovery.
- After-school tutoring or instructional support tied to missed lessons.
- Completion of district-approved online learning modules with monitoring.
- Extended-day sessions for lab work, projects, or targeted instruction.
- Short-term academic boot camps or credit recovery programs.

Failure to complete all required **make-up sessions** within the designated timeframe will result in:

- **Secondary (Grades 6–12):** Reduction of grade or course failure (denial of credit).
- **Elementary (Grades PreK–5):** Recommendation for grade-level retention.

Even when make-up sessions are completed, the student's grade may still be **reduced** to reflect lost instructional time and participation opportunities, at the discretion of the teacher and principal, in accordance with Board Policy po5200.

Appeals Process

Parents/guardians may request a formal ARC review within 5 school days of notification of grade reduction, course failure, or retention. Appeals must include:

- A written explanation of the circumstances.
- Supporting documentation.

The ARC will issue a written decision within 10 school days.

Exemptions from Absence Count

The following do not count toward the absence threshold:

- A. Documented hospitalizations or homebound placements
- B. Religious holidays
- C. Approved school-sponsored activities
- D. Mandated court appearances

Attendance Review Committee (ARC)

The ARC is a school-based team—including a school administrator, the student’s teacher(s), a school counselor, and other relevant staff—that reviews attendance records, verifies documentation, and recommends supports, interventions, or exceptions when warranted. The ARC’s primary role is to ensure fairness while upholding district attendance standards.

Cross-Reference to Board Policy

For additional details on attendance requirements, reasonable excuses, and related procedures, see **Board Policy po5200 – Attendance**. This addendum works in conjunction with po5200 to maintain instructional integrity and accountability while providing due process and defined make-up opportunities.

Implementation

This policy takes effect August 25, 2025, and will be included in the Student Code of Conduct and Parent Handbook. Families will be informed at the start of each school year, during attendance-related conferences, and through district communication channels.

Unexcused Absences – Tiered Truancy Response

(Unexcused = no valid reason reported, or documentation not provided when required.)

Threshold	School Action	Team Lead
2 Unexcused	Teacher contact (call/email/text) to review concern.	Classroom Teacher
3 Unexcused	Attendance Improvement Paraprofessional (AIP) review; parent notification; early supports.	AIP
5 Unexcused or 7 Tardies	District Truancy Letter #1; Parent Conference #1 ; create School Attendance Agreement ; ARC opens case.	Building Admin + AIP + Truancy Officer
7–9 Unexcused	District Truancy Letter #2 (copy to SISD Truancy Officer); Parent Conference #2 incl. Family Engagement Specialist; intensified supports; possible community referrals.	District Truancy Officer
10+ Unexcused	Certified Legal Notice ; case prepared for Truancy Petition / Court ; continued home visits; possible legal sanctions (delayed sentence, probation, fines).	District & SISD Truancy Officers + Court

- Early identification by Attendance Improvement Paraprofessionals
- Parent conferences and School Attendance Agreements
- ARC monitoring and review
- Possible legal action when warranted

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