



Sequoia Union High School District

Attendance Handbook

Student Services Department

Sequoia Union High School District Attendance Handbook

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Introduction

The Sequoia Union High School District (“District”) is committed to the education of all students. The District believes that regular attendance plays an important role in student achievement and that absenteeism, whatever the cause, may put students at risk of dropping out of school. The District desires to ensure that all students attend school in accordance with the state's compulsory education law and take full advantage of educational opportunities provided by the district. It is the intent of the District that intensive guidance and coordinated community services are provided to meet the special needs of pupils with school attendance and/or school behavior problems.

Did You Know?

- Absences can be a sign that a student is losing interest in school, struggling with school work, or facing some other potentially serious difficulty
- By 6th grade, absenteeism is one of three signs that a student may drop out of high school
- By 9th grade, regular attendance is a better predictor of graduation rates than 8th grade test scores
- Missing 10 percent (18 days) of the year can drastically affect a student’s academic success
- Students can be chronically absent even if they only miss a day or two every few weeks
- Attendance is an important life skill that will help your child graduate from college or keep a job

What You Can Do

Make school attendance a priority

- Talk about the importance of showing up to school every day, make that the expectation
- Help your child maintain daily routines; finishing homework and getting a good night’s sleep
- Try not to schedule dental and medical appointments during the school day
- Don’t let your child stay home unless truly sick; complaints of headaches or stomach aches may be signs of anxiety

Help your teen stay engaged

- Find out if your child feels engaged by his classes and feels safe from bullies and other threats
- Make sure he/she is not missing class because of behavioral issues and school discipline policies; if any of these are problems, work with your school
- Stay on top of academic progress and seek help from teachers or tutors if necessary; make sure teachers know how to contact you
- Stay on top of your child’s social contacts; peer pressure can lead to skipping school, while students without many friends can feel isolated
- Encourage meaningful afterschool activities, including sports and clubs

Communicate with the school

- Know the school’s attendance policy – incentives and penalties
- Talk to teachers if you notice sudden changes in behavior
- Check on your child’s attendance to be sure absences are not piling up
- Ask for help from school officials, afterschool programs, other parents or community agencies if you’re having trouble getting your child to school

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Excused Absences

The California Education Code directs all public school districts in California as to how to treat excused absences. The Education Codes below refer to the California Department of Education's excused absence reasons; SUHSD attendance codes are listed after each provision in parentheses, and explained on pg. 5.

48205 (a) Notwithstanding Section 48200, a pupil shall be excused from school when the absence is:

- (1) Due to the pupil's illness. **(H)**
- (2) Due to quarantine under the direction of a county or city health officer. **(H)**
- (3) For the purpose of having medical, dental, optometrical, or chiropractic services rendered. **(H)**
- (4) For the purpose of attending the funeral services of a member of the pupil's immediate family, so long as the absence is not more than one day if the service is conducted in California and not more than three days if the service is conducted outside California. **(EXC)**
- (5) For the purpose of jury duty in the manner provided for by law. **(EXC)**
- (6) Due to the illness or medical appointment during school hours of a child of whom the pupil is the custodial parent, including absences to care for a sick child for which the school shall not require a note from a doctor. **(H)**
- (7) For justifiable personal reasons, including, but not limited to, an appearance in court, attendance at a funeral service, observance of a holiday or ceremony of the pupil's religion, attendance at religious retreats, attendance at an employment conference, or attendance at an educational conference on the legislative or judicial process offered by a nonprofit organization when the pupil's absence is requested in writing by the parent or guardian and approved by the principal or a designated representative pursuant to uniform standards established by the governing board. **(EXC)**
- (8) For the purpose of serving as a member of a precinct board for an election pursuant to Section 12302 of the Elections Code. **(EXC)**
- (9) For the purpose of spending time with a member of the pupil's immediate family who is an active duty member of the uniformed services, as defined in Section 49701, and has been called to duty for, is on leave from, or has immediately returned from deployment to a combat zone or combat support position. Absences granted pursuant to this paragraph shall be granted for a period of time to be determined at the discretion of the superintendent of the school district. **(EXC)**
- (10) For the purpose of attending the pupil's naturalization ceremony to become a United States citizen. **(EXC)**
- (11) Other reasons authorized at the discretion of the principal or designee based on the student's specific circumstances. **(W)**

48205 (b) A pupil absent from school under this section shall be allowed to complete all assignments and tests missed during the absence that can be reasonably provided and, upon satisfactory completion within a reasonable period of time, shall be given full credit therefor. The teacher of the class from which a pupil is absent shall determine which tests and assignments shall be reasonably equivalent to, but not necessarily identical to, the tests and assignments that the pupil missed during the absence.

48205 (c) For purposes of this section, attendance at religious retreats **shall not exceed four hours per semester.**

48205 (e) "Immediate family," as used in this section, means the parent or guardian, brother or sister, grandparent, or any other relative living in the household of the pupil.

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District's Daily Attendance Codes

A = Absent	C = Cuts	EXC = Excused Absence
H = Health/Illness	I = In-School Suspension	J = Court System
S = Suspension	SA = School Activity	SS= School Sports
T = Tardy	TE = Tardy Excused	UNX = Unexcused Absence*
W = Warranted**		

* **Any absence outside of CA E.C. 48205 will be marked as an Unexcused Absence (UNX)**

** **In very rare instances, administrators may approve other absences at their discretion, based on the student's specific circumstances. (W)**

Makeup Work

Students with excused absences (including suspensions) shall be given the opportunity to complete all assignments and tests that can be reasonably provided. As determined by the teacher, the assignments and tests shall be reasonably equivalent to, but not necessarily identical to, the assignments and tests missed during the absence. Students shall receive full credit for work satisfactorily completed within a reasonable period of time. (Education Code 48225.5(b); Board Policy 6154)

Upon the request of a parent/guardian/educational rights holder, a teacher shall provide to a student in any of grades 1 to 12, inclusive, who has been *suspended from school for two or more school days* the homework that the student would otherwise have been assigned. If a homework assignment that is requested and turned into the teacher by the student either upon their return to school from suspension or within the timeframe originally prescribed by the teacher, whichever is later, is not graded before the end of the academic term, that assignment shall not be included in the calculation of the pupil's overall grade in the class (Education Code 48913.5 (a) (b)).

Clearing Student Absence(s)

Parents have five (5) school days from the day of the absence(s) to contact the school Attendance Clerk in order to excuse their student's absence(s). Absences not excused within five school days are marked as C (Cuts) and cannot be excused.

18 Year Old Students

Absences shall be verified by the student's parent/guardian, other person having charge or control of the student, or the student if age 18 or older. (Administrative Regulation 5113)

A student 18 years of age or over, with respect to their own absences from school, shall have all of the responsibilities and powers which, in the case of a minor, would be charged to the parent, guardian, or other person having charge or control of the minor. (Education Code 46012)

Method of Verification

Absences shall be verified within five (5) school days from the day of the absence by the student's parent/guardian, other person having charge or control of the student, or the student if age 18 or older. (Education Code 46012; AR 5113)

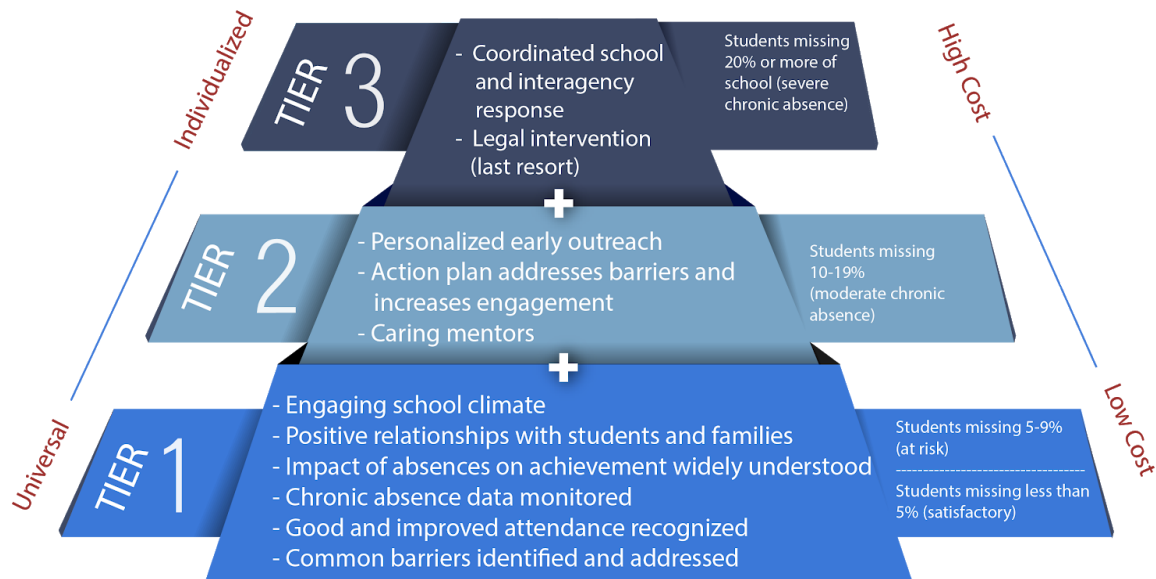
When an absence is planned, parents/guardians or students if age 18 or older shall notify the school Attendance Clerk prior to the date of the absence when possible.

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The following methods may be used to verify student absences:

1. Written note, fax, email, or voice mail from parent/guardian or parent representative.
2. Conversation, in person or by telephone, between the verifying employee and the student's parent/guardian or parent representative. The employee shall subsequently record the following:
 - a. Name of student
 - b. Name of parent/guardian or parent representative
 - c. Name of verifying employee
 - d. Date(s) of absence
 - e. Reason for absence
3. Visit to the student's home by the verifying employee, or any other reasonable method which establishes the fact that the student was absent for the reasons stated. The employee shall document the verification and include the information specified in item #2 above.
4. Physician's verification.
 - a. **Chronic Absenteeism** When excusing students for confidential medical services or verifying such appointments, district staff shall not ask the purpose of such appointments but may request a note from the medical office to confirm the time of the appointment.
 - b. If a student shows a pattern of chronic absenteeism due to illness, district staff may require physician verification of any further student absences.

Maintaining / Improving Student Attendance



Maintaining and improving attendance fits into a three-tiered system: Tier 1 represents universal strategies to encourage good attendance for all students. Tier 2 provides early intervention for students who need more support to avoid chronic absence. Tier 3 offers intensive support for students facing the greatest challenges to getting to school.

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Tiers 1 & 2: Prevention & Early Intervention

All efforts to improve student engagement should be rooted in prevention; this includes maintaining and/or improving attendance. Prevention activities cultivate school connectedness, promote positive school climate, enhance school safety and set high expectations for accountability, all of which are essential to positive academic outcomes.

Tier 3: Student Attendance Review Board (SARB)

If prevention and early interventions have failed to produce needed changes in a student's problem attendance or behavior, a referral to the District's School Attendance Review Board (SARB) may be a viable option to getting support services in place for both the student and family. (E.C. 48263)

Failure of the student and parent/guardian to appear at the District SARB meeting or comply with the District SARB's directives may result in the involuntary transfer to another District or county educational program or referral to the San Mateo County Student Attendance Review Board. The County SARB has the ability to impose interventions for failure to abide by the County SARB's directives, to include forwarding of a petition to the district attorney's office for court action.

Definitions

Chronic absentee means a student who is absent for any reason on 10 percent or more of the school days in the school year, when the total number of days the student is absent is divided by the total number of days the student is enrolled and school was actually taught in the regular schools of the district, exclusive of Saturdays and Sundays. (Education Code 60901)

Whenever chronic absenteeism is linked to a health issue or nonschool condition, the District may recommend school or community resources and/or collaborate with community agencies and organizations to address the needs of the student and his/her family.

Addressing Chronic Absenteeism

When a student is identified as a chronic absentee, the school shall communicate with the student and his/her parents/guardians to determine the reason(s) for the excessive absences, ensure the student and parents/guardians are aware of the adverse consequences of poor attendance, and jointly develop a plan for improving the student's school attendance. The student may be referred to a student success team or school-site attendance review team to assist in evaluating his/her needs and identifying strategies and programs to assist him/her. A student who is struggling academically may be offered tutoring or other supplemental instruction, extended learning opportunities, and/or alternative educational options as appropriate.

Refer to the ["School Attendance Review Process"](#) for more information.

Truancy

Truant means a student who is absent from school without a valid excuse three full days in one school year, or tardy or absent for more than any 30-minute period during the school day without a valid excuse on three occasions in one school year, or any combination thereof. (Education Code 48260)

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For purposes of classifying a student as a truant, valid excuse includes, but is not limited to, the reasons for which a student shall be excused from school pursuant to Education Code 48205 and 48225.5. (Education Code 48260)

Habitual truant means a student who has been reported as a truant three or more times within the same school year, provided the district has made a conscientious effort to hold at least one conference with the student and his/her parent/guardian after either of the two previous reports. (Education Code 48262, 48264.5)

Chronic truant means a student who has been absent from school without a valid excuse for 10 percent or more of the school days in one school year, from the date of enrollment to the current date, provided the district has met the requirements of Education Code 48260, 48260.5, 48261, 48262, 48263, and 48291. (Education Code 48263.6)

Refer to the “[School Attendance Review Process](#)” on page 12 for more information.

Addressing Truancy

The District shall investigate a complaint from any person that a parent/guardian has violated the state compulsory education laws contained in Education Code 48200-48341. (Education Code 48290)

When a student has been identified as a truant as defined above, the following steps shall be implemented based on the number of truanancies he/she has committed:

1. Initial truancy
 - a. The student shall be reported to the Superintendent or designee. (Education Code 48260)
 - b. The student's parent/guardian shall be notified by the most cost-effective method possible, which may include in person, email or a telephone call, that: (Education Code 48260.5)
 - i. The student is truant.
 - ii. The parent/guardian is obligated to compel the student to attend school. If the parent/guardian fails to meet this obligation, he/she may be guilty of an infraction of the law and subject to prosecution pursuant to Education Code 48290-48296.
 - iii. Alternative educational programs are available in the district.
 - iv. The parent/guardian has the right to meet with appropriate school personnel to discuss solutions to the student's truancy.
 - v. The student may be subject to arrest or held in temporary custody by a probation officer, a peace officer, a school administrator or designee, or attendance supervisor or designee pursuant to Education Code 48264 if found away from home and absent from school without a valid excuse.
 - vi. The student may be subject to suspension, restriction, or delay of his/her driving privilege pursuant to Vehicle Code 13202.7.
 - vii. It is recommended that the parent/guardian accompany the student to school and attend classes with the student for one day.
 - c. The student may be required to attend makeup classes on one day of a weekend pursuant to Education Code 37223. (Education Code 48264.5)
 - d. The student and, as appropriate, his/her parent/guardian may be requested to attend a meeting with a school counselor or other school designee to discuss the root causes of the attendance issue and develop a joint plan to improve the student's attendance. (Education Code 48264.5)

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- e. The Superintendent or designee may notify the district attorney and/or probation officer of the student's name and the name and address of his/her parents/guardians. (Education Code 48260.6)
2. Second truancy
- a. Any student who has once been reported as a truant shall again be reported to the Superintendent or designee as a truant if he/she is absent from school without a valid excuse one or more days or is tardy on one or more days during the school year. (Education Code 48261)
 - b. The student may be required to attend makeup classes on one day of a weekend pursuant to Education Code 37223. (Education Code 48264.5)
 - c. The student may be assigned to an after-school or weekend study program within the county. If the student fails to successfully complete this study program, he/she shall be subject to item #3 below. (Education Code 48264.5)
 - d. An appropriate school staff member shall make a conscientious effort to hold at least one conference with the student and his/her parent/guardian by communicating with the parent/guardian at least once using the most cost-effective method possible, which may include in-person, email or a telephone call. (Education Code 48262)
 - e. The student may be given a written warning by a peace officer. A record of that warning may be kept at the school for not less than two years or until the student graduates or transfers from the school. If the student transfers, the record may be forwarded to the new school. (Education Code 48264.5)
 - f. The Superintendent or designee may notify the district attorney and/or probation officer when the student continues to be classified as a truant after the parents/guardians have been notified in accordance with item #1b above. (Education Code 48260.6)
3. Third truancy (habitual truancy)
- a. A student who is habitually truant, irregular in school attendance, or habitually insubordinate or disorderly during attendance at school may be referred to, and required to attend, a school attendance review board (SARB) program, a truancy mediation program established by the district attorney or the probation officer, or a comparable program deemed acceptable by the Superintendent or designee. (Education Code 48263, 48264.5)
 - i. See section on this page below, “Referral to District SARB”
 - b. Upon making a referral to the SARB or the probation department, the Superintendent or designee shall provide the student and parent/guardian, in writing, the name and address of the SARB or probation department and the reason for the referral. This notice shall indicate that the student and parent/guardian shall be required, along with the district staff person making the referral, to meet with the SARB or a probation officer to consider a proper disposition of the referral. (Education Code 48263)
 - c. If the student does not successfully complete the truancy mediation program or other similar program, he/she shall be subject to item (d) below. (Education Code 48264.5)
 - d. If the Superintendent or designee determines that available community services cannot resolve the problem of the truant or insubordinate student or if the student and/or his/her parents/guardians have failed to respond to the directives of the district or to services provided, the Superintendent or designee may so notify the district attorney and/or the probation officer. (Education Code 48263)
 - i. See section below, “Referral to the County SARB”

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Student Attendance Review Board (SARB)

Note: the District reserves the right to modify the student attendance review board (SARB) and any/all associated processes and procedures to improve upon best practice and research-based models during the school year. Alternative practices may be implemented as a result of any emergency situation, condition, or extenuating circumstance.

Referral to the District SARB

Step 1: Site Records Review: Prior to making a referral to the District SARB, the school should initiate a review of measures taken to address truancy and behavior concerns. This review should reveal any oversights that might have occurred in working with the student and parent/guardian. The following suggested review should provide the information needed to determine if the school has exhausted its resources for working with students.

1. Collect information & complete the “Confidential District SARB Referral Form”
2. Collect information & complete the “Pre-SARB Checklist”
 - a. Attention to the following:
 - i. Truancy Letters sent
 - ii. SART or Conference with student/parents
 - iii. Full review of Cumulative Folder
 - iv. Additional testing?
 - v. Involvement of Community Resources
 - vi. Confer with staff (are/should be concerned)

Step 2: Case Preparation: The school is required to submit the SARB Referral Packet to the Student Welfare & Attendance (SWA) Office. This Packet is to include:

1. Completion of “Confidential District SARB Referral Form” and attachments:
 - a. A2A Attendance Report
 - b. Copies of Truancy Notification Letters
 - c. Current class schedule
 - d. Discipline summary
 - e. Transcript
 - f. Last Report Card
 - g. Pre-SST, SST, SART documentation/information
 - h. Contact Log report
 - i. Intervention report
 - j. Other documentation/information
2. Completion of the “Pre-SARB Checklist”

The SWA Office will review the Packet for completeness and will notify the family, school and District SARB Board of the date and time for the impending District SARB meeting. The SWA Office may ask the parents/guardians to sign a Release of Information so that all participating agencies may relate information that could be useful in solving the problem. The school administrator or designee must make arrangements to be present at the scheduled District SARB meeting to review the case.

Step 3: District SARB Meeting: The District SARB may consist of, but not limited to:

- SWA Coordinator
- Director of Student Services
- Health & Wellness Coordinator
- School Resource Officer

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- Special Education representative(s)
- Continuation school representative(s)
- Counselor, Intervention, Mental Health
- Social Service Agencies
- Probation Officer
- County Mental Health
- Other District Administrators
- Other service agencies
- Interpreter

The SWA Office will produce Packets for each member of the SARB panel. The site administrator/designee should be prepared to have their packet ready for distribution a ***minimum of ten (10) days*** prior to the scheduled meeting date.

Each case is scheduled for approximately 30 minutes to allow for a review of the data presented, oral presentations and deliberation. At the SARB meeting with parent(s)/guardian(s), student and appropriate school personnel present, the school will be asked to present its case with documentation of efforts made to address the problem. After presentations by the school site, the panel hears from the parent(s)/guardian(s) and student. After the presentations, the SARB deliberates and comes to a decision and recommendations. At this point, the school representative, parent(s)/guardians and student are invited to hear the suggested solutions and recommendations regarding the problem. The District SARB may offer the following solutions:

- All of the options previously provided/offered by the school
- Assessments for Special Education services
- Referrals to school, District, or community based organizations
- Alternative placement to another District or County program

Prior to adjourning the meeting, the District SARB will formalize a District SARB improvement plan. The “SARB-Contractual Agreement” will be completed, and will form an that will include a timeline for implementation and follow-up of the results of the interventions. The site administrator/designee, along with the SWA Coordinator, will monitor compliance with the SARB Improvement Plan with periodic updates to the District SARB.

PARENT NOTE: Failure to appear at the District SARB or to abide by the SARB improvement plan (“Contractual Agreement”) will result in additional interventions, to include but not limited to, referral to the County SARB (below).

Referral to the County SARB

If the student, parents/guardians have not responded to or complied with the interventions and SARB improvement plan, a referral is made to the San Mateo County SARB. The County SARB consists of representatives from the San Mateo County Office of Education, local school districts, law enforcement, probation, county health and service agencies, and other community based agencies. The SWA Coordinator will work with the school administrator to refer the student to the County SARB and prepare the necessary referral and presentation packet.

The County SARB has the authority to:

- Make a referral to the probation department
- Make a referral to the District Attorney’s Office
- Refer student and parent/guardian back to school and District level services
- Refer student and parent/guardian to County and community based organizations
- Refer student to alternative education program

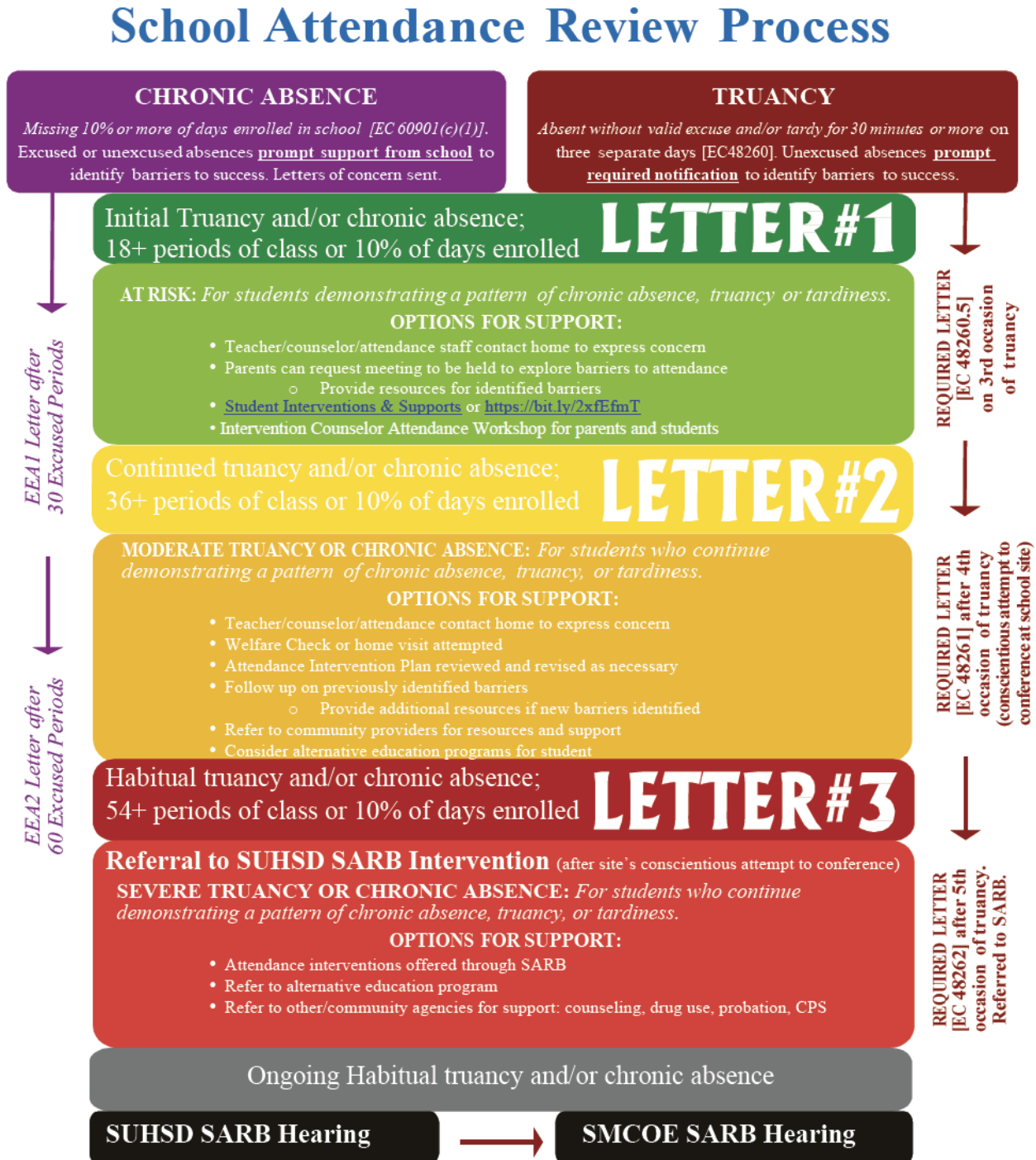
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At the conclusion of the County SARB meeting, the student and parent/guardian is presented with a County SARB Improvement Plan. The County SARB assumes responsibility for monitoring the effectiveness of the interventions. If the student/parent/guardian have not responded or complied with interventions and the improvement plan, then, if the County SARB, the County Superintendent of Schools/designee, and the probation officer agree, the probation officer will forward a petition to the district attorney's office for court action. (EC 48263)

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School Attendance Review Process

The graphic below describes the District’s Attendance Review process, as described in the above sections.



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Board Policies & Administrative Regulations

The table below references the District's policies and regulations related to student attendance. Click each link for more information.

BP/AR	Content	Revised Date
BP 5113 AR 5113	Absences and Excuses	3/27/2019
BP 5113.1 AR 5113.1	Chronic Absence and Truancy	3/27/2019
AR 5113.11	Attendance Supervision	3/27/2019
BP 5113.12 AR 5113.12	District School Attendance Review Board	3/27/2019
BP 6154	Homework/Makeup Work	3/27/2019

Information below includes important references to Board Policy / Administrative Regulation. For the complete Policy / Regulation, click the link.

[BP 5113 Students: Absences and Excuses](#)

The Board of Trustees believes that regular attendance plays an important role in student achievement. The Board shall work with parents/guardians and students to ensure their compliance with all state attendance laws and may use appropriate legal means to correct problems of chronic absence or truancy.

Absence from school shall be excused only for health reasons, family emergencies, and justifiable personal reasons, as permitted by law, Board policy, and administrative regulation... (Education Code 48205). Inasmuch as school attendance and class participation are integral to students' learning experiences, parents/guardians and students shall be encouraged to schedule medical and other appointments during non-school hours...

[AR 5113 Students: Absences and Excuses](#)

Excused Absences and Method of Verification, as reviewed in the [Introduction](#) section of this handbook.

[BP 5113.1 Students: Chronic Absence and Truancy](#)

The Board of Trustees believes that absenteeism, whatever the cause, may be an early warning sign of poor academic achievement and may put students at risk of dropping out of school. The Board desires to ensure that all students attend school in accordance with the state's compulsory education law and take full advantage of educational opportunities provided by the district...

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AR 5113.1 Students: Chronic Absence and Truancy

Definitions, addressing Chronic Absenteeism / Truancy, as reviewed in the [Definitions](#) section of this handbook.

AR 5113.11 Students: Attendance Supervision

The Superintendent or designee shall appoint an attendance supervisor and any assistant attendance supervisor(s) as may be necessary to supervise the attendance of district students. (Education Code 48240). The Superintendent or designee shall ensure that any person appointed as an attendance supervisor has been certificated for the work by the County Board of Education. (Education Code 48241, 48245). Such supervisors shall perform duties related to compulsory full-time education, truancy, compulsory continuation education, work permits, and any additional duties prescribed by the Superintendent or designee...

BP 5113.12 Students: District School Attendance Review Board

The Superintendent or designee shall establish a comprehensive and integrated system for the early identification of attendance problems and shall implement strategies to encourage students' attendance. After other interventions have been exhausted, students with a pattern of unexcused absences may be referred to a school attendance review board (SARB), in accordance with applicable law, in order to receive intensive guidance and assistance.

AR 5113.12 Students: District School Attendance Review Board

Upon receiving a referral of a student with attendance and/or behavior problems, a designated member of the school attendance review board (SARB) shall review the case and may meet with school personnel to determine whether the school has provided sufficient information about the student's attendance record or behavior. If the referral is complete and is an appropriate matter for the SARB to consider, the SARB chairperson shall provide written notification to the student's parents/guardians stating the reasons a referral has been made, explaining the SARB process, advising whether additional information is needed, and describing school-level interventions that have previously been attempted.

The SARB shall meet with the student and his/her parents/guardians, give them an opportunity to present their understanding of the problem, and discuss the school and/or community resources appropriate for the student's circumstances...

BP 6154 Instruction: Homework/Makeup Work

Students who miss school work due to excused absences shall be given the opportunity to complete all assignments and tests that can be reasonably provided. As determined by the teacher, the assignments and tests shall be reasonably equivalent to, but not necessarily identical to, the assignments and tests missed during the absence. Students shall receive full credit for work satisfactorily completed within a reasonable period of time.

The Superintendent or designee shall notify parents/guardians that no student may have his/her grade reduced or lose academic credit for any excused absence when missed assignments and tests are satisfactorily completed within a reasonable period of time. Such notification shall include the full text of Education Code 48205. (Education Code 48980)

The teacher of any class from which a student is suspended shall allow the student to complete any assignments and tests missed during the suspension... (Education Code 48913)

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Appendix

Communication Templates

[Truancy Letter 1, 2, and 3](#)

[Excessive Excused Absence Letter 1, and 2](#)

SARB Documents

[Confidential District SARB Referral Form](#)

[Pre-SARB Checklist Form](#)

[SARB Contractual Agreement 1 Sample](#) | [Español](#)

[SARB Contractual Agreement 2 Sample](#) | [Español](#)