

Mercer Island High School Attendance Procedures

Position

In addition to Mercer Island School District [Board Policy 3122 A](#), it is the position of the Mercer Island High School community that regular attendance leads to optimum academic progress, prepares students for college and career readiness, and prepares students for active participation in our society. The purpose of this vision is to maximize instructional time and encourage student responsibility. Overall, contact with teachers, students, and the wider community is an irreplaceable and necessary aspect of the learning process.

Attendance

Regular attendance, as defined by Washington state and the United States Department of Education as being present for 90% of all your classes, will be rewarded with open campus and on-campus parking privileges.

- Families are responsible for understanding the potential consequences of class absences, excused or not. Parents are expected to respect the published school calendar and schedule class absences to occur while school is not in session.
- Once students have arrived on campus, they are expected to attend all classes on time.
- Students are expected to sign in and out at the attendance window at the Main Campus, the Front Desk at Crest Learning Center (CLC), or combination thereof as circumstances dictate.
- Students are responsible for completing of prearranged class absence forms and coordinating with staff, teachers, counselors, and administrators prior to any planned class absence.
- Habitual “skipping” and tardiness may result in interventions such as Saturday School, Lunch Detention, or other interventions as deemed appropriate.
- For attendance purposes, block classes (eg. English/History, Crest Block) are treated as separate periods and have attendance recorded independently.
- Mercer Island High School does not recognize nor approve “skip days”. Students outside of their scheduled class without an approved pre-arranged class absence form excusing them will be considered truant and subject to interventions and/or further interventions.
- Students and families are empowered to check and report inaccurate attendance records.

Excused Class Absences

Class absences may be excused for the following reasons if there is timely verification (prior to class absence or within 5 school days upon return) of such reasons provided to the school:

1. Illness or health condition;
2. Pre-arrange medical appointment for the student or person for whom the student is legally responsible*;
3. Family emergency;
4. Religious or cultural holiday or participation in religious or cultural instruction*;
5. Pre-arranged participation in a school-approved activity or instructional program*; and

6. An approved pre-arranged activity that is consistent with district policy and is mutually agreed upon by the principal or designee and a parent, guardian, or emancipated youth*. Vacations and college visitations are not considered activities consistent with district or state policy.

Please see [Board Policy 3122 A](#) for additional reasons a student's class absence may be excused. Any student who is absent without a legitimate reason as described above will be marked unexcused.

*These types of class absences are considered pre-arranged and students are responsible for communicating with the school prior to their class absence.

Tardies

Teachers are expected to take attendance at the start of class. Starting 2nd quarter 2019, students arriving late must sign-in using Tardy Kiosks to be marked present. Each classroom will have a receptacle for Tardy Receipts. Reminder: students and families are empowered to check and report inaccurate attendance records.

A tardy will be recorded as follows:

1. A student is marked "tardy" if they are less than 10 minutes late for a class; and
2. A student is marked "tardy-absent" if they are 10 or more minutes late for a class.

Unexcused Class Absences and Tardies

Unexcused class absences and tardies occur when:

1. The parent, guardian or adult student submits an excuse that does not meet the definition of an excused class absence as defined above (including vacations);
2. The parent, guardian or adult student fails to submit any type of excuse statement for a class absence; or
3. The parent, guardian, or adult student does not submit a signed Attendance Slip with excuse within 5 days of the student's return; or
4. Parents or students fail to follow proper procedure in any other way.

Expectations and Procedures

1. **Parent/Guardian Communication:** The parent/guardian is expected to notify the school attendance office of the reason for the absence within five school days of the student's return to school via signed note, email, phone call or face to face interaction with the attendance office administrative assistant. For pre-arranged class absences, communication is the responsibility of the student and must be done prior to class absence through a WHAMMO.
2. **Class absences due to pre-arranged appointments:** Parents and guardians are expected to schedule appointments, when possible, during a student's off-period or outside of school hours to diminish the impact of their student's class absence on their learning. MIHS understands that this may not always be possible due to scheduling conflicts.

3. **Student Communication:** A student is responsible for observing established classroom routines when communicating with the teachers about work missed prior and/or after a class absence.
4. **Parental/Guardian-Approved Activities during School Sessions:** Prior to a student leaving school for a parental/guardian-approved activity, the parent or guardian of the student must seek approval from the principal or designee to have said class absence(s) excused. A class absence may not be approved if it causes a serious adverse effect on the student's educational progress, is not a valid educational opportunity, or is inconsistent with our list of acceptable excuses.
5. **Make-up Work:** A student will have two makeup days for each day of an **excused** class absence. For example, if a student misses classes on a Monday, that student can turn in work until Wednesday. Teachers may determine if additional time is necessary. In addition, a teacher is **not required** to provide work for an unexcused class absence. Teachers will also have the discretion to require work to be completed prior to a prearranged class absence.
6. **Leaving During Class or School Day:** Students leaving the building before the end of or coming in after the start of their day **for any reason** must sign in and out as appropriate at either CLC, the Attendance Window, or combination thereof.
 - a. If a student needs to leave school due to illness, the student must first check in at the Health Room.
 - b. Students planning to leave during class **must present a signed note with the dismissal time to the teacher on the day of to be released from class.**
 - c. Class absences that take place during the day cannot be excused after the fact. For example, an appointment happening during one class period must be excused prior to departing the building.
7. **Pre-Arranged Class Absence Form:** Students are expected to complete a Pre-arranged Class Absence form/WHAMMO for any and all scheduled activities or events that occur during a regularly scheduled class. The form should be submitted to the Attendance Window no fewer than three days before the class absence. Students are expected to take care of attendance business during their own time such as before or after school, during break, or during lunch.
8. **Attendance Correction:** In the event that an error has been made, attendance correction forms are available at the Attendance Office and on the MIHS website.

Extra / Co-Curricular Activities

Students participating in a co-curricular activity (i.e. athletic practices, club events/meetings, rehearsals) must attend at least 60% of their assigned class periods in a given day to be eligible for participation in the activity or event. Exceptions may be granted by an administrator or designee in advance.

Health-Related Class Absences

1. **Extended illness or health condition:** If a student is confined to home or hospital for an extended period, the school will arrange for the accomplishment of assignments at the place of confinement whenever practical.
2. **Excused class absence for chronic health condition:** Students with a chronic health condition that interrupts regular attendance may qualify for placement in a limited attendance and participation program.