

## **ABSENCES/ATTENDANCE**

Regular school attendance is essential for a student to make the most of his or her education—to benefit from teacher-led and school activities, to build each day’s learning on the previous day’s, and to grow as an individual. Absences from class may result in serious disruption of a student’s mastery of the instructional materials; therefore, the student and parent should make every effort to avoid unnecessary absences. Two state laws, one dealing with compulsory attendance, the other with attendance for course credit, are of special interest to students and parents. They are discussed below:

### **Compulsory Attendance**

State law requires that a student between the ages of six and 18 attend school, as well as any applicable accelerated instruction program, extended year program, or tutorial session, unless the student is otherwise excused from attendance or legally exempt.

A student who voluntarily attends or enrolls after his or her 18th birthday is required to attend each school day until the end of the school year and is subject to compulsory attendance laws, if the student is under 21 years old. In addition, if a student 18 or older has more than five unexcused absences in a semester the district may revoke the student’s enrollment. The student’s presence on school property thereafter would be unauthorized and may be considered trespassing. [See FEA]

State law requires attendance in an accelerated reading instruction program when kindergarten, first grade, or second grade students are assigned to such a program. Parents will be notified in writing if their child is assigned to an accelerated reading instruction program as a result of the reading diagnosis instrument.

### **Exemptions to Compulsory Attendance**

State law allows exemptions to the compulsory attendance requirements for several types of absences if the student makes up all work. These include the following activities and events:

- Religious holy days;
- Required court appearances;
- Activities related to obtaining United States citizenship;
- Service as an election clerk; and
- Documented health-care appointments, including absences for recognized services for students diagnosed with autism spectrum disorders. A note from the health-care provider must be submitted upon the student’s return to campus.

In addition, a junior or senior student’s absence of up to two days related to visiting a college or university will be considered an exemption, provided the student receives approval from the campus principal, follows the campus procedures to verify such a visit, and makes up any work missed.

## **Failure to Comply with Compulsory Attendance**

School employees must investigate and report violations of the state compulsory attendance law. A student absent without permission from school; from any class; from required special programs, such as additional special instruction, termed “accelerated instruction” by the state; or from required tutorials will be considered in violation of the compulsory attendance law and subject to disciplinary action.

A court of law may also impose penalties against both the student and his or her parents if a school-aged student is deliberately not attending school. A complaint against the parent may be filed in court if the student:

- Is absent from school on ten or more days or parts of days within a six-month period in the same school year, or
- Is absent on three or more days or parts of days within a four-week period.

For a student younger than 12 years of age, the student’s parent could be charged with a criminal offense based on the student’s failure to attend school.

If a student between the ages of 12 and 18 violates the compulsory attendance law, both the parent and student could be charged with a criminal offense.

If the student is age 18 or older, the student but not the student’s parents will not be subject to penalties as a result of the student’s violation of state compulsory attendance law. [See policy FEA(LEGAL).]

## **Drivers License Attendance Verification**

For a student between the ages of 16 and 18 to obtain a driver license, written parental permission must be provided for the Texas Department of Public Safety to access the student’s attendance records and, in certain circumstances, for a school administrator to provide the student’s attendance information to DPS.

## **Attendance for Credit**

**See BCISD Board Policy FEC Local which is available on line or from the attendance office.**

## **Absence Procedure**

1. Parent shall notify the school by a phone call before 2nd period on the day of absence. The telephone number is 735-1610.
2. The attendance clerk will attempt to contact the parent as soon as possible if no earlier call has been received.

3. If it is necessary for a student to be absent for personal business that cannot be conducted after school hours, the principal should be notified prior to the appointment to determine if the absence is excused or un-excused.
4. In some situations a medical excuse may be required for absences.

### **Doctor's Note After An Absence for Illness**

Upon return to school, a student absent for more than (8) eight consecutive days because of a personal illness may be required to bring a statement from a doctor or health clinic verifying the illness or condition that caused the student's extended absence from school.

Should the student develop a questionable pattern of absences, the principal or attendance committee may require a statement from a doctor or health clinic verifying the illness or condition that caused the student's absence from school. [See FEC(LOCAL).]

### **Absences from school for school activities:**

1. A student cannot miss more than 15 days during the entire year to participate in field trips and/or extra-curricular activities. Exception: a student may miss 5 extra for post district and 2 for state competition per activity. Other exceptions may be granted with prior permission from the campus principal or designee.
2. A student must check with his/her teacher before leaving and work should be turned in upon return. Teachers may extend this deadline at their discretion.

### **Misc. Student Absence Information**

Students who enroll at BCHS who have missed several weeks because they were not enrolled in school, or were absent – up to a 6 week period – and do not have any grades for this time will be required to make up the work missed in the class they are enrolling in at BCHS. If they do not make up the work they will receive a **50** for that marking period. If a student enrolls and has missed instruction in more than one-half of a semester's class, he or she will receive an NG (No Grade) for the semester based on the state's 90% state attendance requirement. In addition, Students enrolling late in the semester may have to make up time to gain credit.

### **Securing Assignments when Absent:**

It is the responsibility of the student and/or parent to make arrangements for completing assignments if the student is to be absent for an extended period of time. The Counselor's Office will coordinate this procedure if the student will be out four (4) or more consecutive days. This work should be turned in upon returning to school if credit is to be awarded.

BRIDGE CITY INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

George Navarro, Attendance Officer

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Bridge City, Texas 77611

**WARNING NOTICE**

TO PARENTS OR PERSONS STANDING IN PARENTAL RELATION TO CHILDREN:

THE STATE OF TEXAS, COUNTY OF ORANGE

In accordance with the state compulsory Attendance Law (Sec.25.093 or Sec. 25.094 **Education Code**), any parent or person standing in parental relation to a child within the compulsory school attendance age and not lawfully exempt or properly excused from school attendance fails to require such child to attend school for periods as required by law beginning the **24 day of August, 2009.**

It shall be the duty of the proper attendance officer to warn, in writing, the parent/person standing in parental relation that attendance must be immediately required. If after this warning the parent/person standing in parental relation intentionally, knowingly, recklessly, or with criminal negligence fails to require the child to attend school as required by law, and the child has unexcused voluntary absences for the amount of time specified under **Section 51.03 (B) (2) Family Code**, the parent/person standing in parental relation commits an offense. The attendance officer shall file a complaint in the Justice of Peace Court of his resident precinct, or Municipal Court of the City of Bridge City. Each day after the warning has been given may constitute a separate offense.

Sincerely,

George Navarro, Attendance Officer BCISD