



# Montgomery ISD

## Attendance Policies FAQ

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Dear Parents,

Our students and their success are incredibly important to us. In order to make the most of their educational opportunities, students must have consistent, punctual daily attendance. Excessive unexcused absences can hinder a student's progress, hinder the district's ability to provide for his/her educational needs, and, at the secondary level, may result in the loss of credits. In addition, students must be in the classroom when roll is taken to be counted present.

The information below is intended to explain state and district policies on student attendance. When thinking about absences, it may be helpful to consider the various ways in which absences impact students. In the state of Texas, there are two important ways in which absences are monitored for students: compulsory attendance and attendance for credit (90% rule).

### **(1) Compulsory Attendance (and Truancy)**

State law ([Texas Education Code Section 25.085](#)) requires that all students at least 6 years of age and not yet 19 attend school each day. Compulsory attendance also applies to students who are younger than six who have been voluntarily enrolled in pre-kindergarten or kindergarten. State law requires every child in school to attend school daily. If a student is absent for 10 or more days or parts of days within a 6 month period in the same school year parents and the student can be subject to referral to truancy court for truant conduct under Section 65.003(a) of the Family Code. [Board Policy FEA](#)

### **(2) Attendance for Credit (90% Rule)**

In order to receive credit in a class or final grade, students in kindergarten-grade 12 must be in attendance at least 90% of the time the class is offered. State law makes distinction between an excused absence and an unexcused absence in determining the attendance requirement. Students who are in attendance fewer than 90% of the time in a semester shall not receive credit for the class unless the attendance committee finds that the absences are the result of extenuating circumstances. [Board Policy FEC](#)

### **What is an excused absence?**

An excused absence allows a student to be excused from attending school, and therefore not subject to truancy enforcement. Certain excused absences listed in the Texas Education Code will also allow the student to be included in average daily attendance for that day for school funding purposes. For those absences, the student shall be allowed a reasonable time to make up schoolwork. Once the student satisfactorily completes the work, the day of absence shall be counted as a day of attendance for compulsory attendance purposes. In addition, the student cannot be penalized for such an absence. Tex. Educ. Code § 25.087(d). **Any absence that is NOT listed in the state of Texas exemption list, must be considered unexcused—even if it has a parent note documenting the absence.**



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### **Exemptions to Compulsory Attendance (i.e. Excused Absences)**

State law allows exemptions to the compulsory attendance requirements for several types of absences if the student makes up all work. If a student absence does NOT fit any of the state allowed exemptions, the absence will be noted in the attendance system as "Unexcused" for compulsory attendance purposes. However, the campus will still note the absence has documentation from the parent stating why the absence occurred and this documentation will be considered for any truancy implications. The allowable exemptions are defined by the state of Texas and include the following activities and events:

- observing religious holy days;
- attending a required court appearance;
- appearing at a governmental office to complete paperwork required in connection with the student's application for citizenship;
- taking part in a naturalization oath ceremony;
- serving as an election clerk or serving as a voting clerk during early voting;
- a student in the conservatorship of the Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS) participating in a documented activity that is ordered by a court in accordance with Texas Family Code chapters 262 or 263 and could not be scheduled outside of school hours, or an activity required under a service plan pursuant to Texas Family Code chapter 263, subchapter B;
- being temporarily absent for a health care appointment for the student or student's child if the student starts classes or returns to school on the same day of the appointment;
- an absence resulting from a serious or life-threatening illness or related treatment that makes the student's attendance infeasible, if the student or the student's parent or guardian provides a certification from a physician licensed to practice medicine in this state specifying the student's illness and the anticipated period of the student's absence relating to the illness or treatment;
- visiting with a parent, stepparent, or legal guardian who is an active duty member of the uniformed services and has been called to duty for, is on leave from, or immediately returned from continuous deployment of at least four months;
- conducting activities related to pursuing enlistment in a branch of the armed services of the United States or the Texas National Guard. The student must be 17 years of age or older to qualify for this exception;
- visiting an institution of higher education during a student's junior or senior year; or
- a student in grades 6-12 sounding "Taps" at a military honors funeral held in this state for a deceased veteran:
- student is participating in an approved/documented educational activity in a different location - e.g., off-campus dual credit program, off-campus WBL opportunity, co-curricular activity, extra-curricular activity;
- misses school for the purpose of visiting a driver's license office to obtain a driver's license or learner permit. The student must be enrolled in high school and 15 years of age or older. Your district may not excuse the student for more than one day of school during the period the student is enrolled in high school for each purpose (obtaining a driver's license and obtaining a learner license).



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In Montgomery ISD, we also monitor absences for qualification of high school FINAL EXAM EXEMPTIONS. The chart below details how absences impact each of these areas.

<b>Compulsory Attendance (State Law)</b>	<b>Truancy (State Law)</b>	<b>Final Exam Exemptions (Montgomery ISD)</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All students at least 6 years of age and not yet 19 must attend school each day. Compulsory attendance also applies to students who are younger than 6 who have been voluntarily enrolled in PK or Kindergarten.</li> <li>• Districts are required to enforce the 90% rule which states that students in grades Kindergarten through 12<sup>th</sup> must attend a class for 90% of the time it is offered <u>to receive credit or a final grade</u>.</li> <li>• This rule applies even if your child has an IEP or 504 Plan.</li> <li>• <i>The 90% rule applies to all absences <u>other than those exempt by state law</u>.</i></li> <li>• <a href="#">Board Policy FEA</a></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If a student is absent for 10 or more days or parts of days within a 6 month period in the same school year, parents and the student can be subject to referral to truancy court for truant conduct under Section 65.003(a) of the Family Code.</li> <li>• Also, a school district shall notify a student's parent if the student has been absent from school, without excuse under Section 25.087, for 3 days or parts of days within a 4-week period.</li> <li>• If a student absence does NOT fit any of the state allowed exemptions, the absence will be noted in the attendance system as "Unexcused" for compulsory attendance purposes. However, the campus will still note the absence has documentation from the parent stating why the absence occurred and this documentation will be considered for any truancy implications</li> <li>• Truancy Prevention Measures may include parent contact made by teacher, attendance clerk, counselor, administrator or attendance intervention specialist, parent/student conferences, tutorials, referrals to outside agencies that aid in preventing truancy and home visits.</li> <li>• <a href="#">Board Policy FED</a></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The purpose of the final exam exemption policy is to incentivise students for grades, attendance and behavior</li> <li>• Any absence listed under the state of Texas exemption criteria will NOT be counted against the student for FE exemption qualification.</li> <li>• Any unexcused absence (those NOT listed on the exemption list) will count against the student for FE exemption qualification–this includes parent notes for absences (documented) and undocumented absences (truancy).</li> </ul>



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### Here are a few tips to consider:

- Have your student arrive at school on time and attend every class period, especially the official attendance-taking period (9:15 AM JH and HS; 10:00 AM Elem).
  - A student who is tardy to class will be subject to the consequences established at each campus in accordance with the possible consequences in the MISD Student Code of Conduct.
  - What happens if your student needs to see a doctor/dentist/therapist? If possible, we encourage you to schedule appointments outside of school hours. Obtain and submit a medical note for documentation to provide to your student's Campus Attendance Specialist. Documentation is needed so the absence will be coded correctly.
  - When you receive an absence notification, please follow up with your student and the campus attendance specialist. If you have documentation for your student's absence, please submit as early as possible (it is recommended to submit within 48 hours). If you believe a teacher has marked a student incorrectly, please have your student reach out to the teacher of the marked period.
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In Skyward Family Access, the Student Attendance screen displays **Current Year Attendance Totals** and any absences or tardies recorded for the student and the date they were recorded for the current year. You may also see the C icon indicating that an office comment is attached to the attendance record.

#### CURRENT YEAR ATTENDANCE TOTALS

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Days Absent 0.00   Days Excused 0.00   Days Unexcused 0.00   Days Other 0.00   Tardy Count 0

Click the  icon to the left of an attendance record to view the Student Attendance Details. This screen displays any comments regarding the attendance record, as well as the period, Attendance Type, Attendance Reason, and Office Comments



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## Final Exam Exemption Policy

The purpose of the final exam exemption policy is to incentivise students for grades, attendance and behavior.

### **ELIGIBILITY**

**Students may earn a specific course exam exemption by meeting the following criteria in that course:**

- Semester average of 80 or above with 3 or fewer absences
- Semester average of 90 or above with 4 or fewer absences
- Student must be clear of fines, fees, and/or holds
- Student meets campus specific deadlines related to exemption submission

**Students CANNOT exempt any final exam if the following DISCIPLINE occurs:**

- A student received an In-School Suspension, Out of School Suspension during the **semester**
- A student received a DAEP or JJAEP placement during the **school year**

**Students are eligible for the following number of final exam exemptions:**

- 9th graders - 0 fall final exam exemptions & 2 spring final exam exemptions
- 10th graders - 2 fall final exam exemptions & 3 spring final exam exemptions
- 11th graders - 3 fall final exam exemptions & 4 spring final exam exemptions
- 12th graders - 4 fall final exam exemptions & ALL spring final exam exemptions
- Students with 3 or more exemptions may only exempt up to 2 core content courses
- Semester courses CANNOT be exempt (except for seniors during the spring semester)
- Students CANNOT exempt the same course for both the fall and spring exams
- Students CANNOT exempt the fall final exam in an EOC tested course

Absences that DO NOT count against exemptions	Absences that DO count against exemptions
School sponsored trip/activity (including UIL)	Parent Note  OR  Truancy (Unexcused Absence)
Class absence initiated by school personnel	
College Visits (2 per year for 11th and 12th graders) with official note from college campus	
DPS license appointment, Court, Funeral, Religious Holiday, Workplace visit (up to 2 days)	
Partial Day Medical - doctor's visit during part of the day, in class the rest of the day	
Entire Day Medical - doctor's note for illness	

**Final exam exemption clarifiers:**

- Students must be present in class on the day of the final for the exemption.
- Students may NOT exempt dual credit (DC) final exams.
- If a student registers and sits for an AP exam, they are exempt from the spring semester final exam. The final exam exemption in which the student successfully takes the AP exam does not count toward the maximum number of exemptions for that student's grade level.
- An extenuating circumstances committee for absences will be convened at the campus level.