

Alta High School Attendance Policy 2023-2024

The single greatest factor determining the likelihood of high school graduation is school attendance. Opportunities for success during and beyond secondary school are also directly affected by a student's attitude toward attendance in high school. Research has shown that school performance significantly declines once a student exceeds a 10% absentee rate. In order to prepare for success, students are expected to attend school 90% of the time. This includes both excused and unexcused absences. If students fall below the 90% threshold, they increase the likelihood that they will not be successful in their coursework and may not complete the graduation requirements for high school.

During the worldwide pandemic, effectively managing school attendance became a significant factor in terms of trying to curb the spread of disease. Schools attempted to develop different methods of instruction to try and meet the various needs of families. As we return to regular instructional practices, the objectives of the Alta High School Attendance Policy are:

- To provide students with successful learning experiences in each class.
- To teach responsible behavior by encouraging students to be accountable for their attendance
- To support parents in their efforts to promote student attendance
- To provide a safe, effective, and uninterrupted learning environment for each student.

In order to encourage positive attendance, Alta High School, with the support of Canyons School District, is promoting a proactive approach. Areas of focus will include: recognition of students maintaining at least a 90% positive attendance/on-time rate; personalized communications via Skyalert when students are absent; inclusion of participation credit in academic classes; inclusion of an attendance requirement with regard to extracurricular participation (see AHS Athletics and Activities Participation Agreement); and early access to interventions when additional support is needed (see Tiered Supports below).

Alta High School supports State and District attendance policies which call for fairness and provide flexibility and accountability on the part of students, parents, and the school. Attendance is a student-parent-school responsibility which involves all three entities in order to resolve attendance concerns. Students who demonstrate excessive attendance problems (defined as unexcused absences and tardies) will be subject to school disciplinary actions.

In order to afford students the opportunity to be academically successful and responsible citizens, Alta High School expects students to be in class, prepared, and on time each day. Each student is expected to keep their attendance under the following thresholds:

1. No more than 5 unexcused absences per class period during the duration of each quarter.
2. No more than 5 tardies per class period during the duration of each quarter.
3. No more than a combination of 2 verified truancies in all class periods during the duration of each quarter.

Absences

Any time a student misses class it will be recorded as an absence. Parents must call the attendance office at 801-826-5610 to excuse an absence. Once the absence is excused it will be recorded in Skyward as either a “G” or an “E”. As per state code, students will be held harmless for absences that are excused by a parent or guardian. This does not mean that students are not responsible to complete any work that is missed as a result of absences. Students are expected to complete all work, regardless of the type of absence that is recorded. Any absence that is not excused by a parent or guardian will be recorded in Skyward as an “A”. Once a student exceeds 5 unexcused absences in any class during a quarter, they will advance to a Pre-Intervention attendance level. Parents may excuse absences through the attendance office for up to four days after a full-day absence occurred.

Verified Truancies

A student who is supposed to be in class but is found elsewhere in the building without an appropriate hall pass will be marked as verified truant. These are typically the most problematic absences in a school setting as most verified truancies are a result of students not going to class but remaining in the building in locations where they are not supposed to be. Because these absences are so problematic, the threshold for this type of absence is very low. Once a student exceeds 2 verified truancies in any combination of classes they will advance to a Tier 1 attendance intervention.

Tardies

Punctuality is an important life skill and tardiness is extremely disruptive to the educational process. A student is considered tardy if they are not in the classroom when the bell rings. If a student arrives more than 10 minutes late to class it is recorded as a “W” which refers to “Way Late”. This still only counts as a tardy but serves as a reference for teachers, students, and families regarding the significance of the late arrivals. Any student that exceeds 5 tardies in the same class period during a quarter will advance to the Pre-Intervention attendance level.

Check in / Check Out

Check-in: Upon arrival during 1st or 5th period, students should go directly to class, unless they have written documentation confirming an appointment. The teacher will mark the student tardy (T) if the student arrives within the first ten minutes of class and will mark the student way late (W) if the student arrives after the first ten minutes of class.

If a student enters campus for the first time during any other period throughout the day, a parent/guardian must call to check-in the student through the Attendance Office.

Check-out: If a student needs to leave school during the day, the student must check-out through the Attendance Office. A parent/guardian must call the Attendance Office and give permission for the student to check-out. The student will then need to pick up their check-out slip from the Attendance Office, before heading to class, permitting him/her to leave. The check-out will be coded as a GUARDIAN (G) excused absence.

A parent/guardian may not retroactively check-in/out a student. Those calls need to come the same day before 3pm.

If a student waits to check-out until the last 30 minutes of a period, he/she will be given a check-out slip but will not be given an attendance code or considered absent. When a student has checked out and then returns to school, he/she must check-in (with your check-out slip) with the Attendance Office. A parent/guardian may not retroactively checkout his/her student.

Our attendance office appreciates parents calling ahead of time for pre-set appointments when possible so they can prepare a check-out slip ahead of time and avoid interrupting the student's class.

Attendance Interventions/Consequences

Pre-Interventions: Once a student has exceeded 5 unexcused absences and/or tardies in any of their classes, the school will have a conversation with the student and send an email to the parent regarding the student's attendance.

Tier 1: Once a student has exceeded 8 unexcused absences and/or tardies in any of their classes, a phone call home will be made to discuss the attendance issues.

Tier 2: Once a student has exceeded the 10 unexcused absences and/or tardies or 4 verified trancies in any of their classes, the administration will schedule an attendance mediation with the student and the parent. At this mediation we will discuss the students' current grades and attendance and potential solutions to the attendance problem. At this mediation, the student and parent will agree to and sign an attendance contract indicating what measures will be put into place to help the student to improve attendance efforts, a time frame for compliance, and the potential consequences for further attendance deficiencies.

Tier 3: When a student fails to meet the terms of the Tier 2 attendance contract and continues to struggle with attendance and/or tardies, we will schedule a second attendance mediation with the student and the parent. At this mediation we will implement the consequences agreed upon in the first contract and work on a contract with more significant potential consequences for failure to comply. At this mediation, the student and parent will agree to and sign the attendance contract indicating what measures will be put into place to help the student to improve attendance efforts, a time frame for compliance, and the potential consequences for further attendance deficiencies.

Some of the potential consequences that may be contained in the Tier 2 and Tier 3 attendance contracts include but are not limited to:

- Placement on a daily attendance tracker
- Lunch Detention
- In-School Suspension
- Referral to Mentor or "check and connect" counselor
- Revoked parking privileges
- Revoked participation at school dances/spectator privileges at UHSAA activities
- Assignment of an escort to class
- Parent spend the day with the student at school
- Suspension from participation in UHSAA sanctioned activities
- Other consequences developed in collaboration with parents and students

Tier 4: Once we have worked through the first two tiers of interventions with a student and these interventions have failed to help improve student attendance and/or punctuality, students will be referred to our district attendance specialist and peer court. The student will appear before peer judges and explain their situation. Peer court has additional consequences at their disposal including service hour requirements, fines, after school classes, and required mentoring.

Checking on Student Attendance & Excusing Absences

Student attendance and grades can be checked at home or work over the internet at the AHS homepage at: ahs.canyonsdistrict.org To access the information, you will need your Skyward login information. If you need Skyward help, please contact our attendance office at 801-826-5610.

Parents may excuse absences by calling the attendance office at 801-826-5610 between 7:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m.

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Definitions of Absences

Below is a list of codes that may appear on Skyward related to your student’s attendance.

Description	SKYWARD CODE	SKYWARD REASON	Definition
Absent	A	n/a	No Communication
	A	VT	Verified Truancy
Guardian Excused Absence	G	n/a	Parent/guardian approved
Excused Absence	E	EL	Pre-Approved Ed-Release (vacation) or other specified, written documentation for absence

CHECK-IN	C	IN	Arrived late with excuse
CHECK-OUT	C	O	Left early with excuse
School Excused Absences	N	FT	Field Trip
		C	Counselor Meeting
		A	Administration Meeting
		T	Testing
		IS	In-School Suspension
		HH	Home/Hospital
	S	S	Out of School Suspension
Tardy	T		Tardy
	W		Way Late Tardy (more than 10 min late)

ATTENDANCE CODE DESCRIPTIONS

An absence is defined as any class period that a student did not attend. Students are marked according to the following codes:

ABSENCE (A): When a student misses class, the teacher will mark the student absent. An “A” constitutes an unexcused absence which means that students may forfeit their opportunity to make up the work they missed in class that day.

GUARDIAN EXCUSED ABSENCES (G): If a student misses a full day, the parent/guardian shall notify the Attendance Office within five days of the absence. Excusals shall not be accepted after this time or for previous quarters. No documentation is needed for this absence.

EXCUSED ABSENCES (E): Should a parent/guardian have documentation for an absence (doctor’s appointment, a family event, or other prior approved educational release), they may submit it to the attendance office and it will be coded in this manner. Neither a (G) nor an (E) code count adversely towards a student’s overall attendance.

TARDY (T): A student will be marked tardy if he/she arrives to class within the first ten minutes after the starting time of each class period. Students are given five minutes to get from one class to the next and should use their time wisely to arrive on time to class.

WAY LATE (W): When a student arrives to class any time after the ten minutes allowed for a tardy, the student will be marked as way late.

TRUANCY (A-VT): If police or school personnel verify an absence as truancy, the absence code (A) will be changed to a truancy code (A-VT). School activities and assemblies that are scheduled during school hours are considered part of the regular school day. Students are required to attend the activity or be in a school-supervised alternate area during said time. Students forfeit the opportunity to make up work that was missed during class when verified as truant.

EXCUSED EDUCATIONAL LEAVE (E-EL): Canyons School District policy allows a student to miss up to ten (10) school days per year for pre-approved educational leave (previously known as vacation release). The parent/guardian gives approval by calling the attendance office prior to the student's leave of absence. It is the responsibility of the student to contact their teachers regarding assigned work and grades prior to the leave of absence for an educational release. Seniors attending college visits need to request an educational release.

SCHOOL ACTIVITY (N): Students participating in activities sponsored by Alta High School or Canyons School District will be excused administratively.

SUSPENSION (S): When a student is placed on suspension, they are not allowed on school property or to attend school sanctioned activities.

HOME & HOSPITAL (E-HH): Due to medical issues, a student may not be able to attend school for a period of ten days or longer. The parent/guardian should contact the Attendance Office to arrange home and hospital services.