



2019-2020 Student Attendance Procedures

The Des Moines Public Schools student attendance policy is created based on the belief that all families value the importance their child's education. Through a meaningful partnership with schools and consistent communication, together we can overcome obstacles that impact regular school attendance.

Attendance is the foundation for learning and achievement. When students attend class regularly they are exposed to fundamental reading and math skills and build habits of good attendance that carry them into the next stage of their life. Des Moines Public Schools is committed to working with students, families, and the community to ensure each student's personal and academic success.

In accordance with Iowa Code, Chapter 299, "The parent, guardian, or legal or actual custodian of a child who is of compulsory attendance age (6-16 years old), shall cause the child to attend some public school, an accredited nonpublic school, or competent private instruction."

Des Moines Public Schools strongly encourages parents/guardians maintain communication with school staff regarding their student's attendance in school. Parents/ guardians should make every attempt to notify a school in a timely manner when their student will be absent from school.

1. **Health related absences**

- **Medical appointment**
- **Illness or medical injury**

If a student misses more than 3 days in a row due to illness, parents/ guardians are encouraged to access their medical provider or DMPS Community Center and Clinic.

The DMPS Community Center and Clinic located at Central Campus is available to any student who does not have a regular medical provider or does not have insurance. Please call the Community Center and Clinic (515-242-8488) or contact your student's school nurse if you would like additional information about this service or other health services.

2. **Participation in school related activities-** students may participate in school sponsored events or activities such as: athletics and activities, college and/ or career related visits, official DMPS community partner sponsored events, and others as pre-approved by a Principal or Associate Principal.
Students may participate in student support services at school (i.e.: school-based therapy, visit to school nurse, visit to school counselor, etc.).
3. **Participation in religious or cultural activities/ observances-** parents should notify their student's school in advance for absences related to religious holidays or cultural observance.
4. **Family related circumstances-** students may miss school due to family related circumstances which may include: illness of a family member, family emergency, death of an immediate family member, or participation in a family activity.
5. **Other circumstances-** other events that may result in a student's absence from school include: attendance at court or legal proceedings.

All other absences or absences without contact will be considered unknown. Examples include: skipping class or missing school without notification.

When a student reaches 10 unknown absent days in a school year, schools will review to determine if a referral to attendance mediation or truancy court will be made in addition to other interventions provided.

Tardy to school/Early leave school

Des Moines Public Schools bell times for the 2019-2020 school year are:

- Elementary: 7:45 AM to 2:40 PM
- Middle (and Cowles): 8:30 AM to 3:25 PM
- High: 8:25 AM to 3:25 PM

The beginning of the school day is filled with important opportunities for students including announcements, school breakfast, introduction of learning targets, and classroom community building. Parents/ guardians should ensure their student's prompt arrival at school. Parents/ guardians should also ensure their student remains in school for the duration of the school day to maximize on opportunities for learning and growth.

The following protocols exist for students who arrive late to school or leave early from school. Schools may determine their individual building response when students are tardy to school or leave school early. Examples of school response include: loss of privileges, attendance contracts, detention, etc.

Elementary Schools

- Students who arrive to school after the first bell of the day should check in with the office before going to class and will be considered absent for any time missed.
 - Schools will check students in using one of the following codes:
 - ULA 1 = student arrives in the first 10 minutes of class
 - ULA 2 = the student arrives between 11 and 30 minutes after class begins
 - ULA 3 = student arrives 31 minutes after class begins
- Students who leave school before the last bell of the day will be considered absent for any time in class missed.

Middle and High Schools

- Students who arrive to school after the first bell of the day should check in with the main office (middle school) or attendance office (high school) before going to class and will be considered absent for any time missed.
- Students who arrive to class before the end of the period will be considered tardy
 - Teachers will mark students tardy and in the comment section, enter the appropriate tardy code T1, T2 or T3.
 - T1 = student arrives in the first 10 minutes of class
 - T2 = the student arrives between 11 and 30 minutes after class begins
 - T3 = student arrives 31 minutes after class begins
- Students who miss an entire class period will be considered absent for that period.
- Students who leave school before the last bell of the day will be considered absent for any time missed.

School Response to Attendance

All teachers take attendance within the first 20 minutes of class. High school and middle school teachers update attendance at the end of each class. Schools are responsible for maintaining accurate attendance records, formally notifying parents of absences accumulated, and conducting appropriate interventions for each student.

School Response to Excessive and Consecutive Absences

Excessive absences A student is considered excessively absent if they miss fifteen days of school throughout the school year (known or unknown). School teams will review attendance data on all students who are excessively absent and provide appropriate intervention as needed. Parents/guardians will be formally notified of absences in the following manner:

Protocol for response to excessive absences	
Daily/unknown	Elementary schools- Office Manager/Attendance Clerk calls/emails
Daily/unknown	All schools- Automated Dialer calls
All schools 10 unknown days	All schools will review to determine if a referral to attendance mediation or truancy court will be made in addition to other interventions provided.
Elementary & middle schools 10 excessive days	Schools will send out a letter to indicate further action required by parent which may include a parent meeting with the school to discuss a plan to improve student attendance, a referral to attendance mediation, or truancy court.
High schools 15 excessive days	

Consecutive absences are full days in a row where a student’s absences are unknown. School teams will review student attendance data on all students who have consecutive absences and provide appropriate intervention as needed. Parents/guardians will be formally notified of absences in the following manner:

Protocol for response to consecutive unknown full day absences	
Daily	Automated Dialer AM or PM
5 days consecutive	Documented phone calls with individuals on student’s Infinite Campus record and outreach through SchoolCNXT
7 days consecutive	If no contact is made from attempted phone calls, required documented home visit to students last known address
8 & 9 consecutive	Documented phone calls and emails with individuals on student’s Infinite Campus record
No contact made and verified student has not moved from last known address	<i>Kindergarten through age 16:</i> Family will be referred to truancy court and student will remain enrolled in school
	<i>All other students:</i> Will be unenrolled from school once the student reaches 10 consecutive days with no contact
School staff verified family no longer lives at last known address	<i>Destination known:</i> Student will remain enrolled in school until a record request is received unless the student reaches 10 consecutive days with no contact
	<i>Destination unknown:</i> Student will be unenrolled from school once the student reaches 10 days with no contact



Support for Extended Leave from School

Des Moines Public Schools is committed to the protection of the educational rights of each student. The district will provide students and their parents/ guardians with educational options, resource information, and access to support and advocacy services to achieve educational success.

Reasonable Adjustments to Support Participation in School

Schools shall make reasonable adjustments to facilitate access and full participation of students who require extended leave from traditional school settings. These adjustments will be implemented on a case by case basis depending on the needs of the student and may include, but are not limited to: alternative credit accrual options such as home based/ independent study, supplemental instruction, or online learning.

Extended Leave for Expectant and Parenting Students

The district encourages expectant and parenting students to continue their education while receiving necessary health, daycare, and supportive services. Efforts to maximize their educational participation will be a cooperative undertaking between the school, student, family, and community agencies providing services to this population. No student shall be excluded from, denied the benefit of, or discriminated against under any educational program or activity because of pregnancy or parenting responsibilities.

- Expectant and parenting students are entitled to extended leave for reasons of pregnancy and related medical conditions including pregnancy-related illness or health conditions, childbirth, and recovery after childbirth. Extended leave may continue for the duration of time deemed medically necessary by the student's healthcare provider.
- Schools will support the continuation of learning during leave taken for pregnancy and related medical conditions as medically appropriate. Every reasonable effort should be made to provide school and home based/ independent study activities for students who are or will be absent for a significant period of time due to pregnancy related illnesses, childbirth, and recovery.
- School nurses, building administration, and other relevant support staff will develop and oversee a plan of support/ care related to extended leave in partnership with expectant and parenting students.

Accessing Extended Leave Supports

Students and parents/guardians should communicate with school staff as early as possible when it is anticipated they will need access to extended leave support. This communication will allow school staff time to assess the needs of the student and collaboratively (with students and families) develop a plan of support for the student's success in school. *Please note: determinations about extended leave options may be impacted by assessment and grading windows. These dates are included on each school's calendar and on the district website. Students are strongly encouraged to be present at school during these time frames.*