

Gallup McKinley County School District

Attendance Policy

2019-2020

Student Support Center

ATTENDANCE MATTERS every school day counts.

ATTENDANCE IS A HABIT TO GROW AS SOON AS CHILDREN START SCHOOL

Gallup McKinley County School District is partnering with parents to improve school attendance. Good school attendance increases academic achievement leading to improved graduation rates and does give young people the best chance at success in their adult life.

Good attendance improves when schools engage with students and parents to encourage school attendance.

The Attendance Handbook is for parents, administrators, teachers and counselors to guide them in the process to ensure that every student is in school to learn and to become active in their school community.

Attendance Policy

This policy is enacted to implement the requirements of New Mexico State Statutes 22-12-1 for **Compulsory School Attendance**.

Under New Mexico State Statute (22-12-1 – 22-12-0 NMSA 1978):

- Any qualified student and any person who because of age is eligible to become a qualified student as defined by the Public School Finance Act (22-8-1 NMSA 1978) until attaining the age of majority shall attend a public school, a private school, a home school or a state institution.
- Any parent of a person subject to the provisions of the Compulsory School Attendance Law is responsible for the school attendance of that person.
- Each local school board and each governing authority of a private school shall enforce the provisions of the Compulsory School Attendance Law for students enrolled in their respective schools.
- To initiate enforcement of the provisions of the Compulsory School Attendance Law against habitual truant, a local school board or governing body shall give written notice of the habitual truant by certified mail to or by personal service on the parent of the subject to and in noncompliance with the provisions of the Compulsory School Attendance Law.
- If unexcused absences continue after written notice of habitual truancy as provided, the student shall be reported to the probation services office of the judicial district where the student resides for an investigation as to whether the student shall be considered a neglected child or a child in a family in need of services because of habitual truancy and thus subject to the provisions of the Children's Code (32A-1-1 NMSA 1978). In addition to any other disposition, the children's court may order the habitual truant's driving privileges to be suspended for a specified time not to exceed ninety days on the first finding of habitual truancy and not to exceed one year for a subsequent finding on habitual truancy.
- If, after review by juvenile probation office where the student resides, a determination and finding is made that the habitual truancy by the student may have been caused by the parent of the student, then the matter will be referred by the juvenile probation office to the district attorney's office or any law enforcement agency having jurisdiction for appropriate investigation and filing of charges allowed under the Compulsory School Attendance Law. Charges against the parent may be filed in metropolitan court, magistrate court or district court.
- A parent of the student who, after receiving written notice as provided and after matter has been reviewed in accordance with the terms of the Compulsory Attendance Law, knowingly allows the student to continue to violate the Compulsory School Attendance Law shall be guilty of a petty misdemeanor. Upon first conviction, a fine of not less than twenty-five dollars (25.00) or more than one hundred dollars (100.00) may be imposed, or the parent of the student may be ordered to perform community service. If violations of the Compulsory School Attendance Law continue, upon the second and subsequent conviction, the parent of the student who knowingly allows the student to continue to violate the Compulsory School Attendance Law shall be guilty of a petty misdemeanor and shall be subject to a fine of not more than five hundred dollars (500.00) or imprisonment for a definite term not to exceed six months or both.

Each school district or charter school shall maintain an attendance policy that:

- Provides for the early identification of students with unexcused absences, truants, and habitual truants and provides intervention strategies that focus on keeping truants in an educational setting and prohibit out-of-school suspension and expulsion as the punishment for truancy (22-12-9 NMSA 2007);

GMCS Attendance Policy 2019-2020

- Uses withdrawal as provided in Section 22-8-2 NMSA 1978 only after exhausting efforts to keep students in educational settings; and
- Requires that class attendance be taken for every instructional day in every public school or school program in the district.

School District and charter schools shall report truancy and habitual truancy rates to the department in a form and at such times as the department determines and shall document efforts made to keep truants and habitual truants in educational settings. Locally chartered schools shall provide copies of their reports to the school district.

Resolution of the Navajo Nation Council

Section 1. Enactment of the Navajo Sovereignty in Education Act of 2005

118. School Attendance

- A. Every person who has a Navajo child or Navajo children under his or her care between the ages of five and eighteen years shall assure the attendance of the child or children in school.

Local school governing boards shall develop programs to improve regular school attendance in compliance with this policy.

- B. Any child residing in the Navajo Nation who violates the provisions of this section shall be subject to penalties prescribed in 17 N.N.C. 222 and 223 for petty misdemeanors. Any Navajo minor residing in the Navajo Nation who violates the provisions of this section shall be subject to the jurisdiction of the Family Courts of the Navajo Nation.

Definitions:

Habitual Truant

A student who has accumulated the equivalent of ten or more unexcused absences within a school year

Truant

A student who has accumulated five unexcused absences within any twenty day period

Verified Absence:

A verified absence indicates that parent/guardian has called in to inform school of student's absence. If parent/guardian called in, there will be no call placed notifying that student is absent from the school

Verified absence does not automatically mean that absence is excused. A note from parent/guardian, medical provider or medicine man is required for an excused absence.

Unexcused absence

An absence from school or a class for which the student does not have an allowable excuse pursuant to the Compulsory School Attendance Law (22-12-1 NMSA 1978) or rules of the local school board or governing authority of a charter school or private school

- Unexcused absences include, but not limited to
 - Vacations
 - Car trouble
 - Camping/hunting trips
 - Taking care of siblings

Excused absences

The following criteria are to be used for documenting an Excused absence:

- Illness
- Family Emergencies such as
 - Court Hearings
 - Funerals of Immediate Family Members
- Other emergencies as approved by the principal
- Cultural Ceremonies
 - Zuni Student involvement in Cultural Activities
 - These ceremonies will involve student help with certain chores
 - **Mudhead giveaway**—Month of October (no specific date) usually held on a weekend but requires and involves extended family members as well as whole community
 - **Sha'lak'o**—Late November through mid-part of December involves extended family members as well as whole community with Night Dances performed during Sha'lak'o and following weeks which start around 11:00 pm and last until 3:00 am/ Host families are required to feed all guests
 - **Night Dances**—February through May, usually held on weekends involving young men participating in religious dances. Extended family members and community involved in preparation of food.
 - These ceremonies will most likely involve student as participant
 - **Deshkwi** (Zuni Fasting)—Mid December to First part of January (ten days). Students are restricted in touching others, spending money, throwing trash, building fires and eating fatty (greasy) food. It involves the whole community, especially those involved in medicine fraternities and other religious organizations
 - Navajo Student Involvement in Cultural Activities
 - Here is a list of ceremonies that would require students to be out of school. Most ceremonies require 4 days of reverence and sacredness after the actual ceremony. At that time students cannot be cutting items or touching other people (students). Sometimes during these four days, it is easier for parent/guardian to keep the child at home.
 - The only way a student cannot go to school is if they are the immediate participant. They may be basked to help with the certain chores involving a ceremony.
 - These ceremonies will most likely involve student helping with certain chores
 - **Night Way**—Winter Beginning of October to end of March: 9 day/night ceremony involving extended family members and community people
 - **Wind Way**—All Seasons: a 5 day/night ceremony involving extended family members and community people
 - **Lightning Way**—All seasons: a 5 day/night ceremony involving extended family members and community people
 - These ceremonies will most likely involve student as participant.

GMCS Attendance Policy 2019-2020

- **Enemy Way** (Nida', Squaw Dance & Anasazi)—Beginning of May to end of September: a 5 day/night ceremony and once in a while a one night ceremony. Extended family members and community people are involved
- **Blackening Ceremony**—all seasons: a three day/night ceremony involving immediate family members
- **Blessing Way/Beauty Way**—All seasons: a 3 day/night ceremony involving immediate family members
- **Kinaalda**—All seasons: a 4 day/night ceremony involving extended family members and community people

****If there are questions regarding the determination of absences, the Principal will make the final determination.

District Specific Policy:

Gallup McKinley County School District has determined that parents/guardians must provide a note/documentation from an official agency in order to excuse any additional absences after the 11 absence.

- Documentation may include a doctor's note, hospital note, letter from Juvenile Probation Office, letter from Medicine Man, etc. in order to excuse the absence.
- A phone call/note from home will no longer be enough to excuse the absence.
- Exceptions to this policy are those students who have documented needs on an IEP, a 504 plan for chronic illness, health issues or other documents as determined by the school.

ACTIONS FOR DISPOSITION OF ATTENDANCE

3 unexcused absences within a school year	5 unexcused absences with a school year	7 unexcused absences within a school year	10 unexcused absences within a school year	Unexcused absences over the 10 within a school year
Call to parent/guardian	Power School Generated Letter is hand delivered by liaison	Power School Generated Letter is hand delivered by liaison	Power School Generated Letter is hand delivered by liaison and copy is sent to JPO	Power School Generated Letter is hand delivered by liaison
Parent/guardian to meet with the School Counselor	Parent/guardian meets with the principal/designee	Parent/guardian meets with principal/designee	Parent/guardian meets with principal/designee	Parent/guardian meet with the school principal/designee
School will share Attendance Handbook with parent/guardian. Have parent/guardian sign that they reviewed the Attendance Handbook.	Student is placed within the SAT Process for Attendance Issues to include a review of grades and behavior FAB and BIP takes place in a formal meeting	Families in Need of Service Report is sent to Juvenile Probation Office (JPO) after Review of the SAT/FAB/BIP	School further evaluates absences looking at grades, behavior, other concerns within the context of the FAB/BIP	JPO is contacted to inform them of the violation of contract and to let them know that truancies are continuing despite best efforts on the part of the school
		Student placed on a Attendance Contract at the School Site	Documents sent to JPO: Certified Attendance Letters SAT/FAB/ BIP Documents Attendance Contract FINS Report	JPO will make a determination of whether to submit to District Attorney or not.

CSAR CHECKLIST

The following is a checklist of all documents to submit for a CSAR (Compulsory School Attendance Referral) to Juvenile Probation Office (JPO)

- _____ 1. Copy of First Notification Letter to parents/guardians regarding 3 days unexcused absences
- _____ 2. Copy of Second Notification Letter to parents/guardians regarding 5 days unexcused absences and Notice of verification that student has been placed in SAT Process for a FAB/BIP. Must include documentation that Notification Letter and Notification of SAT Meeting has been hand delivered to parents/guardians.
- _____ 3. Copy of the Third Notification Letter sent home to parents/guardians regarding 7 days unexcused absences and notification that a Families in Need of Service Report (FINS) is being sent to Juvenile Protection Office (JPO). Must include documentation that a letter was hand delivered. Copy of the SAT Referral, SAT Documentation and FAB/BIP to be included in the FINS report to JPO.
- _____ 4. Copy of the Fourth Notification Letter to parents/guardians regarding the 10 days unexcused absences. Must include documentation that a letter was hand delivered.
- _____ 5. A complete Compulsory School Attendance Referral Form with the principal signature.

All CSAR reports must include all documents and submit to:

Rhonda Goodenough
Juvenile Probation Supervisor
1720 E. Aztec Ave. Suite B
Gallup, NM 87301
Phone: 505-722-7857 ext. 1203
FAX: 505-722-3167

Compulsory School Attendance Referral Form
Compulsory School Attendance Law (22-12-1-NMSA 1978)

Gallup McKinley County School District

Instructions: please respond to each item even if the reply is "unknown," "none" or "non-applicable."

Student First Name: _____ Middle: _____ Last: _____

Student ID _____ Date of Birth _____

Mailing Address:

Physical Home

Location: _____

(Provide map, if appropriate)

School: _____ Grade: _____

Name of Principal: _____ Phone Number: _____

Dates of Unexcused Absences: **Attach PowerSchool attendance report.**

Name of Parents/guardians:

Parent/Guardian Contact phone number:

Principal Name

Principal Signature

Date

