

# SANDRA DAY O'CONNOR HIGH SCHOOL ATTENDANCE PROCEDURES 2007 – 2008



The goal of O'Connor High School is to ensure that all students:

Have access to a *quality education* that enables them to *achieve their potential*.

*Fully participate* now and in the future in the social, economic, and educational opportunities of our state and nation.

*Acquire a general diffusion of knowledge* that is essential for the welfare of this state and for the preservation of the liberties and rights of citizens.

**This can only be accomplished by a student being in class!**

**What does the law say about attendance?** Texas School Law states that students must be in attendance at least 90% of the time to receive credit for a course. **If the student is in attendance less than 90%, the highest grade he or she may receive is a 69.** The limit for first semester courses is eight (8) absences, the second semester limit is ten (10) and two semester courses the limit for the year is eighteen (18). Any days over the limit is considered excessive. **For further explanation of attendance, refer to section A and D of your Student/Parent Handbook.**

**What is a student's responsibility when he or she is absent?**

If a student does miss school, even for just one class, he or she must bring a note with the following information: date of the note, name of the student, date(s) of the absence, the specific reason for the absence, the doctor or parent/guardian's signature, and a phone number where they can be reached. All of the student's teachers must sign the note! When they have each signed it, the student will turn the note in to their last period teacher.

All absences must be cleared with a note upon return to class or each teacher will record those absences as unexcused. Even if you call the school, a note must still be provided when the student returns to classes!

**Remember: An excused absence note is the student's responsibility!** The student should turn the note in to their last period teacher of the day.

**Which absences are excused and which are unexcused?**

**Excused absences:** personal illness, family funerals, medical appointments, court appointments with a subpoena, church/religious trips with documentation, and family emergencies with explanation.

**Unexcused absences:** car trouble/flat tire, missing the bus/ride, oversleeping, renewing a driver's license, caring for a sibling, busy traffic, court appointments for traffic violations, notes without all pertinent information, and of course, a confirmed truancy. **How does a parent/guardian check a student out of school?**

If a student must be checked out of school for a medical appointment, family emergency, etc., a

parent/guardian needs to contact the attendance secretary, Ms. Kariger either by phone at 397-4808, provide a detailed note or come into the attendance office. **The student must sign out before leaving campus.**

If a student becomes ill at school, he or she needs to report to the school nurse. She will then determine if he or she needs to be excused due to illness. The parent/guardian will be contacted, asked to come, and then check the student out of the nurse's office.

Unless a student is 18, a parent/guardian must sign him or her out of school, otherwise he or she will be considered truant.

### **What is a "Health" excuse?**

A student who has a health care appointment will not be marked as absent and will receive a "Health" or "H" excuse, if all the following criteria are met:

The student is present for at least part of the day (comes to school and checks out early OR comes to school after a medical appointment and reports to the attendance office upon returning)

Documentation is provided from the health care professional confirming the appointment.

The attendance secretary gives approval for the "H" excuse.

"Health" or "H" excuses can only be approved by the attendance secretary.

*If a student is gone all day for a medical appointment, he or she will receive an **excused absence** (not a health absence) with the proper documentation.*

### **What is Attendance Recovery and how does it work?**

Attendance Recovery is a means for students to accommodate absences accrued during the school year. O'Connor offers an Attendance Recovery session almost every week during the school year. Each session is 3 hours and is usually held in the school cafeteria. The successful completion of one session will "make up" three class periods missed. **Students must sign up in the VPO office during the week prior to attending.** A schedule of sessions will be posted on our web site. Students must 1) be on time, 2) sign in with their student I.D. card, 3) be in NISD dress code, and 4) bring work to do for the three hour period. Be sure to use this time to make up work you may have missed due to absences. **Students may also count verified tutoring time with any of their teachers.**

### **What is the School Messenger?**

School Messenger is an automated phone call generated when a student is absent from at least one class. It calls the number determined by the parent/guardian to communicate with them if their child misses a class. **If a parent/guardian feels the need to have this number changed for more accurate communication (i.e.: cell phone or work phone), he or she should contact our State Attendance Secretary (in vice – principal's office) at 397-4848.**

### **What are attendance waivers?**

If a student has an extenuating circumstance (i.e. a hospital stay due to an emergency illness) where Attendance Recovery sessions do not permit the student to make up absences, he or she may apply for an attendance waiver. In order to apply for an attendance waiver, a student must:

Pick up an attendance waiver application from the Attendance Office.

Complete the form and provide copies of all documentation supporting reason(s) for the absences and turn it all in to Ms. Bridges. Once all information is submitted, an Attendance Committee will meet to determine acceptance or denial of the waiver.

### **What are attendance letters?**

Any student who has accrued enough absences to possibly be denied credit will receive an informative attendance letter from O'Connor. The purpose of this letter is to reiterate the compulsory attendance law, Attendance Recovery, attendance waivers, and provide details of the student's attendance.

### **What does school attendance have to do with a driver's license?**

If a student who is under 18 wishes to obtain the TEA Verification of Enrollment and Attendance form in order to earn a Texas instructional driver's permit, receive a Texas driver's license, or renew a Texas driver's license, he or she must be in attendance for at least 90% of the days classes are offered.

If a parent/guardian has questions or concerns about his or her O'Connor student's attendance, he or she should contact:

**Linda Kariger – Attendance secretary 397-4808 Bonnie Bridges – Assistant principal 397-4817**