

# SOTOMAYOR HIGH SCHOOL

## EVERYTHING RELATED TO ATTENDANCE

### **ATTENDANCE LAW**

Texas School Law states that students must be in attendance at least 90% of the time to receive credit for a course.

Texas Education Code (TEC 25.092) states students may not have more than eight (8) absences in the Fall and ten (10) absences in the Spring or eighteen (18) absences for a year-long course. This includes both Excused and Unexcused Absences. The only exceptions to this policy are Health (attendance to school partial day + documentation), School Business, College Visit (2 days per year – Juniors and Seniors only + documentation) absences.

A student will NOT receive credit for a course if he/she exceeds the number of allowable absences.

Please be advised that if a student is absent without an excuse for 3 or more days or parts of days in a four-week period, or 10 or more days within a six-month period, the student's parents and/or the student are subject to prosecution under the Texas Education Code after a Truancy Warning Notice is issued (TEC 25.093 & .095).

For further explanation of attendance, refer to your Student/Parent Handbook.

### **ATTENDANCE RECOVERY**

Attendance Recovery is a means for students to recover absences accrued during the school year who have surpassed the state allotted limit.

Attendance Recovery is designed for recovering absent hours for course credit for graduation purposes, not exam exemption purposes.

*Virtual AR will not be available for the 2022-2023 school year – AR is offered in-person on the Sotomayor HS campus through teacher tutoring and/or general AR sessions. Updates on AR are released on the SotoCats AR Schoology Group Page. Parents and Guardians are encouraged to view the page as well. All Sotomayor students are members.*

### **TARDY & ABSENT BY TARDY**

Punctuality to all classes is essential in maintaining an effective school environment as well as developing good work habits. Students are required by law to be in class at the designated times. Students who are late are not only violating the law but disrupting the learning environment for other students. Students who are

consistently late to class will be referred to the assistant principal's office for appropriate disciplinary action, including the loss of parking permits and off-campus lunch privileges. Students arriving to class over fifteen (15) minutes late will be considered absent by tardy (AT) and will be referred to the assistant principal's office for truancy.

## **Tardy Procedure**

1. After the Tardy Bell rings, students not in their classes will be issued a tardy.
2. For every 5th tardy accumulated per class during a nine-week period, the student will be issued consequences.
3. Consequences will be issued accordingly:

1-3	Student Warning / Teacher Conference
4-5	Parent Contact by Teacher
6 +	Consequences determined by Administration, up to and including Overnight

Suspension

\*\*\*\*All consequences are subject to administrative discretion

4. Tardy accumulation will start over every nine weeks.
5. Arrival to class over fifteen (15) minutes late will result in an absence by tardy (AT) and counts towards the state allotted attendance.

A student is considered Tardy if they arrive to class within the first fifteen (15) minutes after the bell to begin class. Tardy students must report straight to their assigned class and the teacher will code their attendance appropriately. They will receive an unexcused tardy (UT) on their attendance report.

A student is considered Absent by Tardy (AT) if they arrive after fifteen (15) minutes to class. Students who arrive to class after 15 minutes will report straight to their assigned class and the teacher will code their attendance appropriately. They will receive an absence by tardy on their attendance report. AT's count as an absence towards the 90% compulsory attendance law.

\*Students receive a six (6) minute passing period\*

While an occasional tardy is expected, persistent tardiness can result in disciplinary action.

## **EXCUSED ABSENCES**

Examples: Personal illness, family funerals, initial or renewing a driver's license, medical appointments (doctor's note preferred), court appointments with a subpoena, religious holidays (approved by NISD) with documentation, family emergencies (parent/guardian must contact their child's administrator to determine if a family emergency will be excused). Absences can only be excused with proper documentation; if documentation is not provided absences will remain unexcused. Excused absences do count as an absence towards the 90% compulsory attendance law.

## **UNEXCUSED ABSENCES**

Example: Car trouble/flat tire, missing the bus/ride, overslept, caring for a family member or taking them to a Dr. appointment, family or personal business, busy, traffic, court appointments for traffic violations. Unexcused absences do count as an absence towards the 90% compulsory attendance law.

## **ABSENT NOTES**

If a student is absent from school, even for just one class/period, he/she must bring a note to the Attendance Office within 3 days of returning to school. Notes received after the 3 days will be coded UAP (Unexcused Absence – Parent Contacted). The notes can be turned in before 8:45 a.m. or during lunches. Notes can also be faxed to the Attendance Office fax (210) 688-9705 or emailed to erika.castillo@nisd.net

## **HEALTH (H) EXCUSE**

A student who has a health care appointment during the school day will be coded 'Health' or (H) if all of 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 documentation to the Attendance Office upon returning). Documentation from the healthcare professional is required to confirm the appointment occurred during school hours. The Attendance Office will decide approval for the 'H' excuse (teachers CANNOT change an absence to an 'H' excuse). This can only be done by the Attendance office.

If a student is absent all day for a medical appointment, he/she will receive an excused absence with a doctor note (EADN), not an 'H', with the proper documentation. These notes must also be brought into the Attendance Office upon the student's return to school within 3 days; otherwise, the absence will remain unexcused (UA).

Health care notes can also be faxed from the doctor's office to the Attendance Office at (210) 688-9705.

Parents should monitor the 'Home Access Center' to ensure receipt of the health care note from the Doctor's office. Please allow 48 hours for the system to update.

## **ATTENDANCE WAIVERS**

If a student has an extraordinary circumstance (i.e. a hospital stay due to an emergency illness) and missed 4 or more consecutive days, the student may apply for an Attendance Waiver so that these absences are not counted against the student for credit (90% law). 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 (copies of excused medical notes) supporting reason(s) for the absences and return them to the Attendance Office within 5 days of returning to school. The Attendance Committee will determine if the Attendance Waiver can be granted. Notification of Attendance Committee's decision (grant/denial) of Attendance Waiver will be made to the parent/guardian.

## **CHECKING A STUDENT OUT OF SCHOOL**

If a student must be checked out of school for a Medical/Dental Appointment or other planned event, etc., - a parent/guardian can send a note with the student specifying the time the parent/guardian will be picking

up the student (the student will turn in this note prior to 8:45 a.m. to the Attendance Office), or the parent can check out the student in the Attendance Office at Sotomayor HS. The student will be given a pass to leave class at the specified time and will be waiting in the Attendance Office for pick up. The parent/guardian must sign out the student in the Attendance Office and show valid photo identification before leaving campus with the student. Students MUST wait to be called upon to be released from class.

Please allow time in your schedule for the Attendance Office to retrieve your student from their class. (Students could be testing, in Athletics, or in a Lab)

If a student becomes ill at school, he/she needs to report to the school nurse. The nurse will determine if he/she needs to be excused due to illness. The parent/guardian will be contacted, asked to come, and sign out the student in the Attendance Office. If the student is sent home by the nurse, this is considered an excused absence for the remainder of the day. Subsequent absences will need a parent note in order to be excused. Should the nurse choose not to send a student home due to illness and the parent chooses to sign out their student, this is an unexcused absence until a parent note is received.

## **COLLEGE VISIT**

Juniors and Seniors are allowed to go on college visits as long as these visits are given prior approval (forms are located in the Attendance Office), documented and do not exceed 2 school days per school year, college visits (CV) are considered excused absences and do not count as absences towards the 90% state law. Any days missed for college visits in excess of 2 days per school year will not be excused. For seniors, the 2 days of college visits will not count toward the maximum of 3 absences allowed to be eligible for exam exemptions as long as proper documentation is provided.

The student will need to pick up a college visit form in the Attendance Office, the form needs to be signed by their teachers, counselor and parent at least 3 days prior to the college visitation day. The student is responsible for making up missed work. The completed form is turned into the Attendance Office before the student leaves on the college visitation. Upon returning to Sotomayor High School, the student must submit to the Attendance Office a signed evidence letter of the college visit which includes the student's name and date of the visit on college letterhead.

## **HOMEWORK & HOMEWORK SUPPORT**

Obtaining missed assignments during an absence:

For absences less than 3 days, the student can email their teacher or obtain the assignments upon their return to school. For absences over 3 days, the parent/guardian can email the teachers or contact (210) 398-2700 to request homework to be available for pick-up by 4:30 p.m. in the Attendance Office the next day. Please allow 24 hours notice.

Homework support:

Online tutoring is available after school hours for Reading/ELA, Math, Science, Social Studies, & Spanish. Link is available for the online tutoring support in Schoology, HAC, and the students' ClassLink portal.

## **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 or work phone), the parent should visit 'Parent Connection' to update their student's phone numbers, view attendance, grades, set text or email alerts.

## **JUNIOR/SENIOR OFF CAMPUS LUNCH**

To qualify each cycle/grading period: The student must be in good standing with attendance, grades, and discipline.

OCL Policy:

Students must have a Jr/Sr Off-Campus Lunch Application signed by the parent/guardian on file. Students who have off-campus lunch must present his/her Sotomayor HS ID to school personnel in order to leave campus during their assigned lunch period (will only be allowed to leave campus during assigned lunch period). Students leaving campus for off-campus lunch must be back by the required time. Students who come back to campus late may lose off-campus lunch privileges. Students may not visit other campuses. Students with off-campus lunch privileges may not transport students who do not have off-campus lunch privileges. Drivers are responsible for knowing the status of any passengers in their car. It is the student's responsibility to ensure their OCL status is accurate: The following records will be reviewed at the end of each grading cycle/period to check for continued eligibility: attendance, grades, and discipline. This privilege can be withdrawn by an administrator for tardies, truancy, misbehavior (including reckless driving), or if the student is intentionally taking non-approved students off-campus.

## **VOE/TEA FORM**

### **Verification of Enrollment and Attendance Form**

If a student who is under 18 yr. 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/she must be in attendance for at least 90% of the days classes are offered and be in good standing with grades/credits, per NISD and TEA policy.

VOE forms can be requested in the Sotomayor HS Attendance Office. Please allow a minimum of 48 hours for processing. Upon administrative approval, the completed form may be available for pick up in the Attendance Office.

## **WITHDRAWING FROM SCHOOL**

Parent/legal guardian wishing to withdraw their student from Sotomayor High School must complete the appropriate paperwork in the Main Office. A Withdrawal Documentation Form will need to be completed and processed at that time.

Students need to have all textbooks, library books, all uniforms (JROTC, Band, Choir, Cheerleading, Dance, and Sports Team uniforms) and equipment turned in and be clear of all fines and fees.

If you have any questions or want to notify us of a withdrawal, please call 210-398-2700.

## **EXEMPTION FROM A FINAL EXAM**

Students in courses earning high school credit shall be required to take an exam at the end of each semester.

Exemptions: A student enrolled in courses earning high school credit (full-year or semester) may be exempt from the spring semester exam if the following criteria are met:

1. For the Spring semester, the student has three or fewer absences excluding school business absences;
2. The student's final average for the spring semester is 80 or higher;
3. The student's conduct grade in that class is satisfactory or better; and
4. The student is in attendance during the scheduled exam time.

A student who is eligible for exemption may take the exam if desired.

Exam Weight: The two graded quarters of each semester shall weigh 90 percent of the semester grade and the semester exam shall weigh 10 percent of the semester grade. If a student is exempt from the semester exam, the semester grade shall be calculated using only the two grade quarters of the semester.