

## **G. Defining Excused Absences**

### **G-1. Guideline**

This revision will be effective 7/1/2021. If you have any questions or comments concerning the interpretation or clarification of these guidance statements, please contact School Finance: [SFAnalystTeam@azed.gov](mailto:SFAnalystTeam@azed.gov) or call 602-542-5695.

Pursuant to [A.R.S. § 15-901\(A\)\(1\)](#), excused absences are identified by the Department of Education. The Department of Education defines an excused absence as an absence due to illness, doctor appointment, mental or behavioral health, homelessness, bereavement, family emergencies, time necessary to process for the armed forces, and out-of-school suspensions. Excused absences due to out-of-school suspensions must not exceed 10% of the instructional days scheduled for the school year. The Department of Education delegates the decision whether an absence due to family vacation is an excused absence to individual school districts and charter districts.

Pursuant to [A.R.S. § 15-803\(A\)\(2\)](#), in order for any of the above absences to be excused, a child who is under 16 years of age must be accompanied by a parent, guardian, or a person authorized by a parent.

### **G-2. Procedure**

Pursuant to [A.R.S. § 15-806\(A\)](#), the governing board of each school district and each charter district shall adopt a policy governing the excuse of students for religious purposes. The policy may permit a student to be excused from school attendance for religious purposes, including participation in religious exercises or religious instruction. If the policy permits a student to be excused for religious purposes, the policy shall stipulate the conditions under which the excuse will be granted. Pursuant to [A.R.S. § 15-806\(A\)\(1\) and \(2\)](#) these conditions will include at least a written consent from the person who has legal custody of the student and any religious instruction or exercises must take place at a suitable place away from school property.

In order for absences relating to illness, doctor appointment, bereavement, family emergencies, or district approved family vacation to be counted as excused absences, the school must be notified in advance or at the time of any absence by the parent or other person who has custody of the student per [A.R.S. § 15-807\(B\)](#). The school will document the date, reason, and person reporting the absence. The documented record shall be maintained for not less than four years after the fiscal year it was created or received.

If an absence occurs relating to any other term or condition that is not specifically designated herein, the absence shall be counted as unexcused. Students absent for ten consecutive school days, except for excused absences identified herein, shall be withdrawn from the school effective the last day of attendance or reported excused absence, pursuant to [A.R.S. § 15-901\(A\)](#). The governing board may take disciplinary action that may lead to expulsion pursuant to [A.R.S. § 15-342](#).

Pursuant to [A.R.S. § 15-805\(B\)\(1\)](#) an attendance officer may issue a citation to the guardian or the child that is in violation of [A.R.S. § 15-803](#).

School districts and charter districts are no longer required to submit for absence adjustments for excessive absences that occur as a result of widespread illness, adverse weather, or situations that affect the safety of persons or property. The Department of Education is to be notified of instructional calendar changes resulting from the above conditions using the [Calendar Change Request form](#).

Even though school districts and charter districts no longer need to apply to the Department of Education for chronic health problem exceptions, documentation pertaining to chronic health problems should be retained.

### **G-3. Excessive Absences and Non-Fundable ADM**

Students who have reached the 10% threshold for cumulative absences (excused and unexcused) based on the number of instructional calendar days at their school, and continue to incur absences may generate non-fundable Average Daily Membership (ADM) intervals in AzEDS. Prolonged absence periods, with or without a gap in membership (enrollment) and/or across reporting periods, will be identified as non-fundable intervals for any period of 10 or more consecutive absences regardless of reported excused/unexcused status.

The following details affecting the ADM calculation will update with each ADM Calculation Engine (ACE) processing cycle in the event of a change:

- A. The actual calendar days for calculating the 10% threshold.
- B. The full-time equivalency value (FTE) value for the student's membership for calculating full absence days.

Students with a documented chronic health problem are not subject to the non-fundable ADM intervals. School districts and charter districts must submit a Chronic Illness support need to AzEDS to indicate a period of chronic health problem as defined in [A.R.S. § 15-346](#) in order for the exemption to apply.