

G. Defining Excused Absences

G-1. Guideline

The Arizona Department of Education (ADE) defines excused absences in accordance with Arizona state law, outlining the criteria and circumstances under which a student's absence from school is considered excused or unexcused. [A.R.S. § 15-901](#)

G-2. Procedure

ADE defines excused absence as an absence due to illness, a doctor's appointment, mental or behavioral health matters, homelessness, bereavement, family emergencies, or the 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. ADE delegates the decision whether an absence due to family vacation is an excused absence to the individual school district or charter school. [A.R.S. § 15-901](#)

For any of the above absences to be excused, a child under 16 must be accompanied by a parent, guardian, or a person authorized by a parent. [A.R.S. § 15-803](#)

The governing board of each school district or charter school must adopt a policy regarding the excusal of absences of students for religious purposes. This policy may allow students to be excused from school attendance to participate in religious exercises or instruction. If the policy permits such excuses, it must clearly outline the conditions under which an excuse will be granted. These conditions must include written consent from the person with legal custody of the student and specify that religious instruction or exercises must occur at an appropriate location away from school property. [A.R.S. § 15-806](#)

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. The school will document the date, reason, and person reporting the absence. The documented record must be maintained for at least four years after the fiscal year it was created or received. [A.R.S. § 15-807\(B\)](#)

If an absence occurs due to any other term or condition not explicitly specified in this document, it must be considered unexcused. Students absent for ten consecutive unexcused school days; must be withdrawn from the school effective the last day the student attended or had a reported excused absence. [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](#).

G-3. Reporting to the Arizona Education Data Standards (AzEDS)

School districts or charter schools must report student absence data to AzEDS at least once every sixty days in session. Schools must report whether the student is excused or unexcused. If the school district or charter school adopted an Instructional Time Model (ITM), the student distance learning modality must also be reported to AzEDS. For additional information on ITMs, refer to ITM [guidance](#).

-3a. AzEDS Calendar

Absences resulting from widespread illness, adverse weather conditions, or situations that compromise the safety of persons or property do not need to be reported separately to ADE. Instead, the school district or charter school should update its posted AzEDS Instructional Calendar to report these instances. Refer to the posted guidance on [Defining the Instructional Calendar](#).

G-4. School Responsibilities

Schools must monitor attendance and work with parents or legal guardians to resolve student attendance issues. The governing board may take disciplinary action that may lead to expulsion. [A.R.S. §15-342](#). In addition to interventions, the school may collaborate with an attendance officer to issue a citation to the guardian or child violating [A.R.S. §15-805](#).

G-5. Excessive Absences

Absences may be considered excessive when they exceed 10% of the required attendance days and will result in non-fundable intervals. [A.R.S. § 15-803 \(B\)](#)

-5a. Non-Fundable Average Daily Membership (ADM)

[A.R.S. § 15-901\(A\)\(1\)](#) establishes the authority of the Arizona Department of Education to define excused absences. [A.R.S. § 15-803\(B\)](#) defines excessive absences as exceeding 10% of the required attendance days. ADE determined that when absences exceed 10% of the required attendance days (excessive absences), non-fundable intervals will be triggered if specific criteria are met.

Beginning FY2026, AzEDS will calculate non-fundable intervals. Students absent for 10% of the instructional calendar within the first 100 days will generate non-fundable ADM intervals for any absence block of ten (10) or more consecutive absences.

AzEDS will calculate a non-fundable interval with the following criteria:

1. *The absence threshold is met.*

- The absence threshold is based on 10% of instructional calendar days reported to AzEDS and the student memberships' full-time equivalency (FTE). **Example:** A 180-day reported calendar day is equal to an 18-day absence threshold for a 1.00 FTE student.
- The absence threshold is a cumulative amount that includes fractional absences. Partial-day absences do not count as a full-day absence.

2. *The student has an absence block of ten (10) or more consecutive days of absence.*

- The non-fundable interval will be generated for any absence blocks of ten (10) or more consecutive full days within the first 100 instructional days.
- Status unknown or attendance record showing 10 consecutive days of unexcused absence must be withdrawn with a [W4](#).

All excused and unexcused absences are used to calculate non-fundable intervals. If the student withdraws and reenrolls at the same school, the non-fundable criteria will apply to all absences over the course of all enrollments. Only the absence blocks will be identified as a non-fundable interval.

Students with a documented chronic health condition are exempt from the non-fundable intervals. School districts or charter schools must submit a Chronic Illness Need to AzEDS for the exemption to apply. [A.R.S. § 15-346](#)

-5b. Previous Fiscal Year Guidelines

In FY2024 and FY2025, the AzEDS ADM Calculation Engine (ACE) did not automatically calculate non-fundable intervals. After the 10% threshold is met, school districts or charter schools are expected to report non-fundable intervals by denoting the student membership with Tuition Payer Code 2 to AzEDS.

G-6. Contact

If you have any questions about this policy, please contact the School Finance Account Analyst via a [HelpDesk](#) ticket.