

## Mountain Crest Full Attendance Policy

Mountain Crest High School embraces the philosophy that regular attendance in class greatly enhances the learning opportunities of the individual student as well as the class as a whole. The dynamics of interactive instruction and the interaction of students and teachers in a class, once lost, cannot be regained. Frequent absences from the classroom disrupts the learning process for the student, the class, and the teacher. Learning at a high level requires consistency and continuity of instruction. This includes class participation, authentic study, and attendance. Utah State law allows parents of students enrolled in public schools to excuse their students from school, but only for legitimate reasons such as illness, doctor/dentist appointments, family death, or a **prior approved** absence for a family activity. All absences must be verified by parent/guardian within 5 school days of the absence, otherwise it is considered a truancy. Once marked as a truancy, the absence may not be excused by a parent.

Mountain Crest makes every effort to inform parents of their students' attendance using daily telephone notification. In addition, parents are strongly encouraged to track their students' attendance and grades on PowerSchool. Parents may also set up their PowerSchool account to send them email alerts for attendance. Please call the help desk at the Cache School District office (435-752-3925) to set up a PowerSchool account or if you are not receiving phone call attendance notifications.

Students are expected to be in all classes every day. Students found in the halls or off campus during school without a legitimate excuse are considered truant. A Parent may not call and excuse a student after the fact if their student is deemed by school officials as being truant.

Teachers are allowed to use attendance as participation points and have it tie into their grades. Unverified absences and tardies may adversely affect grades and credit. See individual teacher disclosure statements for exact details.

### Truancy Letters

Truancy letters are generated by PowerSchool for students who have accumulated truantries. Letters are sent after 5, 10, 15, and 20 days for which the student is truant one or more class periods, including FLEX. Students are pulled in by administration and may be put on attendance contracts, assigned time in the CUBE, and/or put on check-in/check-out. Students who do violate the contract will have their grades withheld and a "NG" will appear on their transcript for the classes in which they were truant. They may get their grade back by having good attendance and no truantries for a specific period of time determined by administration. **Students who are habitually truant (15+ days of truancy) will be enrolled in a mandatory JJS (Juvenile Justice System) class.** Continued truantries and/or failure to complete the JJS course will result in a referral to juvenile court and may result in long term suspension and/or expulsion from Mountain Crest. State law and educational policies require both parents and students comply with the Utah Compulsory Education Law and attend school.

**Students must check in at the attendance office when returning to campus or if arriving late. Students must also check out at the attendance office when leaving early. This must be done even if parents have already called to excuse the absence. This is a legal requirement. Failure to check in and check out at the attendance office will result in a truancy. Truantries may not be excused by parents.**

Any student involved in student government, cheer, or any activity governed by the UHSAA (Utah High School Activities Association) are required to maintain 90% attendance or they may be temporarily suspended from participation until attendance is brought up to 90%. This includes tardies. Attendance from a prior trimester can affect eligibility for the next trimester.

## Excessive Verified Absences

For a student to achieve and learn at the highest level, that student should be in class 90% of the time. This equates to no more than 6 absences per class per trimester. Excessive verified absences can impede learning and achievement. If performance is being seriously impacted by poor attendance, even though it is verified, school officials will contact the student and parent to help resolve the issue.

## Truancy

Truancy is any time a student is out of class (on or off campus) without proper permission of school officials or a parent/guardian. It is a violation of school and district policy and state law to be absent without being properly excused. **Failure to check in or check out of school properly will result in truancy.** Student who are on campus and not in their assigned class/area are considered truant.

Initially, most absences are marked “unverified (A)” until excused by parents. After five days the absence turns into a “Truancy (Z)”. Truancies can impact eligibility for extra-curricular activities such as athletics, cheer and drill team, drama and debate, band, and student government, as well as other activities.

## Habitual Truancy: Legal & School Consequences

If a student continues to miss school without a valid excuse, or has excessive excused absences that are adversely affecting their grades, they are considered “habitually truant”. In accordance with state law, Mountain Crest has established the following procedures for dealing with habitually truant behavior:

1. A student who has **5 days** of truancies in one or more class periods is placed on a “Truancy Watch List”. They will meet with administration and parents will be notified by phone and/or a letter. The student may be placed on a contract and may be assigned to the CUBE and referred to their counselor and other support staff.
2. If a student accumulates **10 days** of truancies in one or more class periods contact is again made with parents and a letter is sent home. Our school resource officer is notified and may be present during a meeting between the administration and the student and the attendance contract is reviewed in an effort to resolve the issue. A “**NG**” (No Grade) **may be** placed on the student’s transcript for the grading period and in the classes in which the truancies occurred. If this occurs, the student would be given a contract that will allow them to get their grade back if they fulfill the contract. If the student fails to meet the conditions of the contract, the class or classes in question may need to be repeated to receive credit.
3. If a student reaches a total of **15 days** of truancies in one or more classes, a “Notice of Truancy” letter is sent home and the student will be enrolled in a class with JJS (Juvenile Justice System). **Failure to attend class (90% attendance) or continued truancy will result in referral to court.** A “**NG**” (No Grade) **will be** placed on the student’s transcript for the grading period and in the classes in which the truancies occurred. The student will be given a contract that will allow them to get their grade back if they fulfill the contract. If the student fails to meet the conditions of the contract, the class or classes in question may need to be repeated to receive credit. A truancy citation may or may not be issued.
4. If the student accumulates **20+ days** of truancies, a “Habitual Truancy Notice” letter is sent home and the student is referred to juvenile court. A “**NG**” (No Grade) **will be** placed on the student’s transcript for the grading period and in the classes in which the truancies occurred. The student will be referred to Cache County School District officials as well as the school board for possible disciplinary action including, but not limited to, alternative placement, long-term suspension, or expulsion from Mountain Crest High School.

Parents and students who violate the Utah State Compulsory Education Law may both face legal consequences.

## Graduation Ceremony

Any student who is referred to juvenile court for attendance or is eighteen years old or older who has five or more days with truanancies in the last trimester of their senior year may forfeit their participation in the graduation ceremony. This also applies to students who fail FLEX more than three times.

## **Appeal**

Mountain Crest High School's attendance policy allows parents and students to appeal truanancies or credit loss due to extenuating circumstances. Any appeal should take place as close to the absence(s) in question as possible and no later than two weeks from the end of the trimester. Please call the attendance office and make an appointment.

## **Tardies**

### Tardy (T) & Excused Tardy (Y)

A tardy is defined as reporting late to class 10 minutes or less. A tardy may not be excused except in extenuating circumstances. School officials may mark a student "excused tardy" if they had to detain the student for school business. Tardies may impact the student's grade and eligibility for extra-curricular activities. Make sure you have read and understand each teachers' policies on tardies and absences and how it affects your grades in your classes. Excessive tardies will result in disciplinary action.

## **Good Attendance is a Shared Responsibility**

### **The Student Will:**

1. Check grades and attendance weekly for accuracy and immediately report discrepancies to the teacher and/or attendance office.
2. Ensure parents verify all absences within 5 school days of returning to school.
3. Obtain prior approval for family activities or trips of more than 3 days.
4. Obtain from the teacher any missed work because of absences.
5. Check in/out at the attendance office when returning or before leaving campus for any reason.
6. Be in class. Be on time to class. Be prepared for class. Do this every day.

### **The Parent/Guardian Will:**

1. Verify all absences within five school days upon the return of the student.
2. Monitor student's grades and attendance through PowerSchool, phone contacts, emailing teachers, and/or campus visits.
3. Remind your student to obtain prior permission for family activities or trips lasting three or more days.
4. Schedule medical/dental appointments, and family activities after school or during FLEX as much as possible.
5. Assist student in attaining and making up missed work.
6. Attend Parent-Teacher Conferences.

### **The Teacher Will:**

1. Provide a disclosure statement of classroom policies and procedures for grades and attendance, including policies on participation points.
2. Take accurate daily attendance (preferably at beginning of the hour) in each class period every day.
3. Begin class on time with a meaningful activity.
4. Provide advance work for prior approved absences.
5. Excuse tardies and absences that are for school excused activities.
6. Be available to help students during FLEX and before and/or after school.
7. Communicate immediately with parents for grade, attendance, or behavior issues.

### **The Administration and Counselors Will:**

1. Meet weekly with the SAT Team (Student Assistance Team) to discuss attendance problems.
2. Act on teacher referrals.
3. Provide notification by phone and through the mail of student absences.
4. Meet with students and parents to solve continued attendance problems.