

Attendance Procedures for the Distance Learning Delivery Model

Scenario: Distance Learning/ Hybrid Distance Learning Days

Distance learning instruction can be provided in a manner where students receive daily, interactive instruction remotely while off-site. The manner in which instruction is provided can be flexible among schools and grades, but daily instruction must be scheduled for all students irrespective of the model used for delivering that instruction. Teachers are expected to provide daily interactive instruction to their students. Students are expected to have interaction with their teacher(s) to be considered in attendance on a given day. Students must have actual documented student-teacher or parent-teacher contact on a given day to be reported as in attendance on that day, i.e., schools must take positive rather than passive attendance.

Attendance must be taken and recorded at least once per day based on a teacher's direct interaction with the student. This interaction could be participation in a video class or chat; a phone call with the student, or for younger students, with the parent; posting completed coursework to the learning management system; and turning in completed coursework on a given day along with a record of teacher contact, e.g., phone call, text message exchange, etc. Students for whom no teacher has direct interaction on a given day are reported as absent for that day.

The school's distance learning plan must include a process to identify and follow-up with students experiencing frequent absences to assure that issues of equitable access or barriers to participating in instruction can be identified and resolved.

Each student and teacher has a daily schedule that supports the length of the school day reported, the dates of instruction, the classes in which the student is enrolled and the student's Percent Enrolled as reported on MARSS. Students participating for less than the full scheduled school day are reported as part time. For example, for a high school with a 6-period day that is scheduled to be six hours long, a single class generates an hour of membership for each day that it is scheduled for the students enrolled.

The core school day can vary among schools within a district/charter school and among grades within a school. Districts and charter schools' school calendars are expected to provide the minimum number of annual instructional hours:

- 425 for half-day, daily or full-day alternate day kindergarten
- 850 for full-day, daily kindergarten
- 935 for grades 1-6
- 1,020 for grades 7-12

School districts' calendars must also provide a minimum of 165 instructional days for grades 1-11. Schools have the option of extending the school year over more days but for shorter instructional days.

Unable to Attend at School Site

Students who, although not medically confined to their home, would have been unable to attend on-site would be expected to participate in the same instructional activities and with the same attendance expectations as other students.

Homebound

Students who are medically confined to their home for COVID-19 or any other illness or condition and as documented by a medical authority are eligible for homebound instruction provided directly by an appropriately licensed teacher. An average of one-hour of direct instruction generates one membership day for homebound students. Under the distance learning model, homebound instruction would be provided by remote synchronous instruction via any internet platform available to the teacher and student, including a phone call.

Students who meet the homebound definition (refer to the criteria in the MARSS Manual) have an enrollment record that spans the first and last day of homebound instruction and are flagged as homebound. The attendance is reported as zero and the membership days is the number of hours of homebound instruction that was provided between the student's Status Start and End Dates. Two 30-minute phone calls or other synchronous teacher instruction constitutes one day of membership.

15-Consecutive Days' Absence

Daily attendance must be taken for all students at least once per day. A student can be considered in attendance:

- By participation in a video chat or class session with a teacher
- By a phone call with the student, or for younger students, the parents
- By submitting completed coursework on a given day

Students who are absent 15 consecutive days must be withdrawn until they return to attend classes at the school site or participate in daily, interactive instruction, depending on the method that is in place for the 2020-21 school year.