



In times of heightened immigration enforcement, students and families face unique circumstances that may impact regular attendance.<sup>1</sup> Prolonged absences limit student's access to critical opportunities that enhance their well-being and expand their educational experiences. It is the responsibility of adults within the system to adopt and follow existing policies and procedures related to attendance to protect students, leverage their strengths, and allow them to thrive. Oregon law<sup>2</sup> allows school leaders flexibility to provide supports needed for learning when students miss school for any reason. Schools should work creatively with families and students to reduce interruptions in learning and leverage remote and distance learning options when appropriate.<sup>3</sup> Schools should approach attendance through a trauma-informed lens and review attendance policies to ensure they do not have unintended consequences for families or interrupt a student's learning.

## **Purpose of this Guidance**

This guidance addresses five questions to provide school and district leaders with:

- Information and resources to protect students and families when supporting students with prolonged absences from school.
- Resources to provide students continued access to high quality instruction, track attendance, and maintain students' active enrollment in school.

## **Engaging Students and Families**

### **How should schools and districts engage with students and families when students are not attending school?**

Schools and districts should connect with families to ensure they feel seen, cared for, and part of the school community. Implementing two-way communication processes, such as a phone call or family home visits, helps identify any support needed (e.g., learning material, devices, connectivity) and ensures families have the necessary tools to support their student's learning during a prolonged absence. Access, communication, and engagement should be offered in the family's preferred language.

Consider providing options for virtual engagement in school activities that provide families options to meet their needs. Virtual engagement can include, but is not limited to distance

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<sup>1</sup>Oregon Department of Education. 2025. [Supporting All of Oregon's Students: Guidance for protecting and upholding the rights of immigrant students in Oregon's K-12 public schools](#)

<sup>2</sup> Oregon Revised Statutes. [ORS 339.065. Estimates of Attendance; Irregular Attendance; Excused Absences](#)

<sup>3</sup>Oregon Department of Education. 2023. [Online & Remote Learning Guidance: Critical Requirements and Design Indicators](#)

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learning, family nights, conferences, Individualized Education Program (IEP)/504 Plan meetings, and other activities where families/guardians are participants.

### **Protecting Student and Family Information**

#### **How can districts protect student and family information when they learn attendance has been impacted due to recent immigration practices?**

Protecting student and family privacy is the utmost priority. When communicating about attendance with staff, school board members, and other organizations, consider using statements to protect students' and families' identities by centering the school and district's values and commitment to support the impacted community rather than asserting knowledge of families' legal status or other identifying factors. Additionally, staff should refrain from entering notes into a system about a student that could signify a family's legal status. Federal law (e.g., Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA)) and Oregon state law and rule<sup>4</sup> protect the privacy of student education records and prohibit the disclosure of personally identifiable information without obtaining prior written parental consent.

School and district leaders should remind all staff with access to the student information system about district-level policies, state, and national laws related to student data privacy and security. Additionally, district level protocols should be reviewed to ensure any information captured and entered aligns with all relevant policies and laws and protects the family's privacy.

#### **How can schools and districts support students and families where local truancy policies are in place and what steps can they take to support families that fear law enforcement involvement?**

Involving the court system or implementing financial penalties can have unintended consequences for students with prolonged absences, particularly students and families facing the highest barriers to attendance. Schools and districts are encouraged to work with families to ensure students not attending school for safety concerns have access to remote learning to maintain attendance and active enrollment while working to re-engage families in school vs. involving the local court system. Schools should review local truancy policies for options to delay or prevent a student and family's involvement with the courts, such as considering where policy language includes "may" rather than "must or shall", providing more flexibility to work with students and families.

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<sup>4</sup> Oregon Administrative Rules. [OAR 581-021-0250 Educational Agency or Institution's Policy Regarding Student Education Records](#), [OAR 581-021-0330 Prior Consent to Disclose Information](#), [OAR 581-021-0371 Conditions for Disclosure of Information to Comply with Judicial Order or Subpoena](#), and [OAR 581-021-0220 Definitions As used in OAR 581-021-0220 through 581-021-0440](#).

## **Providing Access to Online or Remote Learning**

### **How can schools provide access to instruction to students experiencing prolonged absences?**

When students have prolonged absences, schools may offer the opportunity for online or remote instruction or provide copies of the instructional materials to the student for distance learning programs that align with the guidance in the Remote Learning Options guidance.<sup>5</sup> In planning and implementing remote learning opportunities, consider the ways instruction is inclusive of supports students need such as English language development (ELD) practices, IEP instruction and 504 Plan accommodations. Consider the ways curriculum and instruction can be amended, substituted, supplemented, or contextualized during a prolonged absence. Ensure instructional materials are inclusive and culturally responsive and leverage student assets in the home environment. As outlined in OARs, schools must work with the student to make reasonable accommodations to allow students to make up work.<sup>6</sup>

### **What student engagement can count toward attendance and active enrollment for the purpose of the 10-day rule<sup>7</sup>?**

Attendance for all instructional models, including remote, includes substantive interaction<sup>8</sup> which allows students to receive instruction. It is the responsibility of the school and district to support students in maintaining regular attendance and active enrollment. Substantive interaction supports meaningful learning and/or attends to student mental health<sup>9</sup> and wellbeing.<sup>10</sup> This interaction can be with a licensed or registered teacher during a school day or with educational assistants, paraprofessionals, and Tribal Attendance Promising Practices (TAPP) family advocates. Activities can include:

- Active participation in a video class;
- Meaningful two-way communications between students and teacher via chat, text message, communication app or email;
- A sustained phone call between the teacher or educational assistants/paraprofessionals and the student, or, for younger students, with the family or guardian of the student

There are various strategies to support effective implementation and ensure students receive the same level of instruction and regular feedback they would receive in the physical classroom while schools work with families to address a prolonged absence.<sup>11</sup> Keeping daily attendance logs and using formative assessment practices that sustain learning progress helps ensure a student's enrollment and education can continue during a prolonged absence.

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<sup>5</sup> Oregon Department of Education. [Remote Learning: Learning Options. Oregon Department of Education](#)

<sup>6</sup> Oregon Administrative Rules. [OAR 581-021-0081. Student Absences](#)

<sup>7</sup> Oregon Administration Rules. [581-023-0006\(4\)\(b\) Student Accounting Records and State Reporting](#)

<sup>8</sup> Oregon Department of Education. 2024. [Cumulative Average Daily Membership: Policy Manual 2024-25](#)

<sup>9</sup> Oregon Department of Education. [Strengthening Mental Health in Education](#)

<sup>10</sup> Oregon Department of Education. 2023. [Oregon's Transformative SEL Framework and Standards](#)

<sup>11</sup> Oregon Department of Education. 2024. [10 Day Withdrawal Resource](#)