values of self-reliance, initiative, kindness, spontaneity, resourcefulness, courage, creativity, responsibility, and joy. (b) Recognize that the best learning takes place when the student learns because of his/her desire to learn. (c) Maintain a learning situation maximizing student self-motivation and encouraging the student in his/her own time to follow his/her own interests. These interests may be conceived by him/her totally and independently or may result in whole or in part from a presentation by his/her teachers of choices of learning projects. (d) Maximize the opportunity for teachers, parents and students to cooperatively develop the learning process and its subject matter. This opportunity shall be a continuous, permanent process. (e) Maximize the opportunity for the students, teachers, and parents to continuously react to the changing world, including but not limited to the community in which the school is located.

In the event any parent, pupil, or teacher is interested in further information concerning alternative schools, the county superintendent of schools, the administrative office of this district, and the principal’s office in each attendance unit have copies of the law available for your information. This law particularly authorizes interested persons to request the governing board of the district to establish alternative school programs in each district. [EC 58501]

**Alternative Education Schools**

The Board of Trustees of the Pajaro Valley Unified School District knows that all students do not learn in the same ways. Some students need more assistance completing graduation requirements. Other students may have experienced behavior difficulties. The Pajaro Valley Unified School District currently offers three Alternative Education Schools:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SCHOOL</th>
<th>GRADES</th>
<th>DESCRIPTION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adult Education</td>
<td>9-12</td>
<td>Credit recovery for current high school students high school diploma classes, second opportunity for students (S.O.S.) program for youth ages 14-19 who have stopped attending school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(831) 786-2160</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Renaissance High School</td>
<td>10-12</td>
<td>Continuation High School: Serves credit deficient students in need of an alternative setting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(831) 728-6344</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**STUDENT ATTENDANCE EXPECTATIONS**

One of our priorities in the Pajaro Valley Unified School District is for all children in our community to be in school on time, all day, and every day that school is in session. The California Education Code Section 48200 also requires daily school attendance with compulsory attendance for students 6 to 18 years of age. Educators know that daily school attendance improves student achievement to which we are all dedicated for our students. Assist us by talking with your child and making daily, “on time” school attendance an important family value for your child.

You, as the parent/guardian of your child, must send a note and/or phone the school to clear any excusable absences within 72 hours. Failure to excuse the absence results in a recorded truancy on your child’s record. It is also important that you know that the state only awards funding to school districts for actual attendance – the student must actually be in school. This means the state no longer funds districts for the excused absences listed below. Another way to ensure your child’s daily attendance is by reviewing the school district’s calendar and planning family vacations to occur on school holidays. Even parent notification to the school of a student’s absence for a family vacation results in lost instructional time for the student and is not an excusable absence.

School staff may request your attendance at a conference when your child is absent for unexcusable reasons.

High school students who maintain daily attendance may enjoy certain privileges:

1. The privilege of “walking” in the graduation ceremony;
2. The opportunity to receive a work permit for employment (obtained from the school’s career counselor); and
3. The opportunity to receive a driver’s license;

Students who fail to attend school, risk the loss of these privileges according to Education Code 48200, Vehicle Code 13202.7 and district policy. A student’s driver’s license or the opportunity to obtain a license can be suspended to age 18.
There are legal consequences if your child misses too much school. You must send a note and/or phone the school within 72 hours to clear any excusable absences. Parents/Guardians have the right to be notified on a timely basis if their child is absent from school without permission. Unexcused absences result in a recorded truancy.

A. Notwithstanding Section 48200, a pupil shall be excused from school when the absence is:
   1. Due to the pupil’s illness.
   2. Due to quarantine under the direction of a county or city health officer.
   3. For the purpose of having medical, dental, optometrical, or chiropractic services rendered.
   4. For the purpose of attending the funeral services of a member of the pupil’s immediate family, so long as the absence is not more than one day if the service is conducted in California and not more than three days if the service is conducted outside California.
   5. For the purpose of jury duty in the manner provided for by law.
   6. Due to the illness or medical appointment during school hours of a child of whom the pupil is the custodial parent, including absences to care for a sick child for which the school shall not require a note from a doctor.
   7. For justifiable personal reasons, including, but not limited to, an appearance in court, attendance at a funeral service, observance of a holiday or ceremony of the pupil’s religion, attendance at religious retreats, attendance at an employment conference, or attendance at an educational conference on the legislative or judicial process offered by a nonprofit organization when the pupil’s absence is requested in writing by the parent or guardian and approved by the principal or a designated representative pursuant to uniform standards established by the governing board.
   8. For the purpose of serving as a member of a precinct board for an election pursuant to Section 12302 of the Elections Code.
   9. For the purpose of spending time with a member of the pupil’s immediate family who is an active duty member of the uniformed services, as defined in Section 49701, and has been called to duty for, is on leave from, or has immediately returned from, deployment to a combat zone or combat support position. Absences granted pursuant to this paragraph shall be granted for a period of time to be determined at the discretion of the superintendent of the school district.
   10. For the purpose of attending the pupil’s naturalization ceremony to become a United States citizen.
   11. Authorized at the discretion of a school administrator, as described in subdivision (c) of Section 48260.

B. A pupil absent from school under this section shall be allowed to complete all assignments and tests missed during the absence that can be reasonably provided and, upon satisfactory completion within a reasonable period of time, shall be given full credit therefor. The teacher of the class from which a pupil is absent shall determine which tests and assignments shall be reasonably equivalent to, but not necessarily identical to, the tests and assignments that the pupil missed during the absence.

C. For purposes of this section, attendance at religious retreats shall not exceed four hours per semester.

D. Absences pursuant to this section are deemed to be absences in computing average daily attendance and shall not generate state apportionment payments.

E. “Immediate family,” as used in this section, means the parent or guardian, brother or sister, grandparent, or any other relative living in the household of the pupil. [EC 48205, 48205.5, 48260]

Districts may allow students, with parental or guardian consent, to be excused to participate in moral or religious exercises or instruction. [EC 46014]

### Chronic Absenteeism

The state of CA defines chronic absenteeism as missing 10% or more of the school year, whether excused or unexcused. Frequent absences due to chronic or recurrent illness can interfere with your child’s educational progress. Make-up work is not the same as classroom learning and participation. If your child has a situational or health problem that causes frequent absences, please inform your child’s teacher, principal, and/or school nurse.

You may receive a letter from Student Services if your child is chronically absent. Medical verification will be required if your child misses 10% or more of school days due to illness. The school nurse can help
request information from your child’s medical provider about treatments and/or supports needed to improve school attendance. If medication or precautions are required for attendance, the school nurse will help with necessary medical orders and training.

**Truancy**

The state defines three levels of truancy, each carrying more severe penalties for both the student and the parents or guardians. The three are truant, habitual truant, and chronic truant.

**Truant**: A student is truant after missing three days of school or three 30-minute periods without a valid excuse.

**Habitual Truant**: If a student is truant three or more times in a school year and an effort is made to meet with parents, then the student is a habitual truant.

**Chronic Truant**: A chronically truant student has missed 10 percent or more school days in a school year.

**Interventions**: Students who are habitually truant, miss a lot of school or disorderly can be referred to a student attendance review board (SARB), a district attorney mediation program, or the county probation department. Through these programs the student can be given guidance to meet special needs for improving attendance or improving school behavior. The goal is to intervene before a student enters the juvenile justice system or drops out.

**Student Penalties**: First truancy may result in a one-day weekend class. Second truancy may be a written warning from a peace officer that remains in the student’s records. Third truancy may result in assignment to an after-school or weekend program, a SARB, a probation officer, or district attorney program. A fourth truancy may result in a chance to improve attendance, but may also result in the student being placed within the jurisdiction of, and as a ward of the juvenile court. Other actions may include required community service, payment of a fine of $100, attend a truancy mediation program, and loss of driving privileges. A finding of truancy may be handled through available community services.

**Parent Penalties**: In Education Code; first conviction – up to $100 fine; second conviction – up to $200 fine; third – up to $500 fine. In Penal Code; parents of elementary students who are chronic truants face a fine up to $2,000; imprisonment up to one year; or both. They may also be scheduled to meet regularly with district staff and/or referred for help. It is recommended that the parent or guardian attend classes at school with the student for one day.

[EC 48260, 48260.5, 48261, 48262, 48263, 48263.5, 48263.6, 48264.5, 48291, 48293, 48320; PC 270.1, 830.1; WIC 256, 258, 601, 601.3; VC 13202.7]

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**INSTRUCTION AND CURRICULUM**

**District Courses**

Annually the District prepares curriculum, course titles, aims, and descriptions in a prospectus. The prospectus is available at each school site and may be reproduced at cost. Parents/Guradians have the right to review all course material. [EC 49091.14, 51101; PPRA]

**School Counselors**

School counselors are trained educators possessing a valid teacher credential with a specialization in pupil personnel services. As specialists in child and adolescent development, school counselors coordinate the objectives, strategies, and activities of a comprehensive counseling program, and they serve as representatives on district and/or school guidance teams such as school attendance review boards. Counselors help students in grades 7-12 prepare for college or career planning. They guide students through all the steps including information about financial aid, academic requirements, and careers. Most counselors are available by appointment and will meet with students and their families. [EC 48980, 49600, 51229]

**Academic and non-academic courses, classes, electives, activities, sports, and related facilities**

State and federal law require academic and nonacademic courses, classes, electives, school-related activities, team sports, athletic competitions, and school facilities be available to all students without regard to their gender or gender identity, and irrespective of the gender listed in their records. Beginning in seventh grade counselors will meet with each student regarding course selection. Staff will not counsel students into programs, courses, or careers based on their gender or gender identity. The District Uniform Complaint Procedure may be used to file a complaint. [EC 221.5, 221.8, 49600, 48900; GC 11135, 11138; Title VI, Title IX; § 504; California Interscholastic Federation (CIF) 300D]

**Student Immigrant and Religious Rights**

All school age children must be admitted to California Public Schools and be offered all programs accessible to other students. School districts cannot ask about a student’s immigrant or religious status. The state Attorney General has information about “know your rights”: https://oag.ca.gov/immigrant/rights. Immigrant students are still considered residents