

Karianne Lisonbee proposes the following substitute bill:

School Excused Absence Amendments

2026 GENERAL SESSION

STATE OF UTAH

Chief Sponsor: Carl R. Albrecht

Senate Sponsor: Michael K. McKell

LONG TITLE

General Description:

This bill amends a definition related to a student being excused from school.

Highlighted Provisions:

This bill:

- amends a definition related to a student being excused from school; and
- makes technical and conforming changes.

Money Appropriated in this Bill:

None

Other Special Clauses:

This bill provides a special effective date.

Utah Code Sections Affected:

AMENDS:

53G-6-201, as last amended by Laws of Utah 2025, Chapter 34

Be it enacted by the Legislature of the state of Utah:

Section 1. Section **53G-6-201** is amended to read:

53G-6-201 . Definitions.

As used in this part:

- (1)(a) "Absence" or "absent" means the failure of a school-age child assigned to a class or class period to attend a class or class period.
- (b) "Absence" or "absent" does not mean multiple tardies used to calculate an absence for the sake of a truancy.
- (2) "Educational neglect" means the same as that term is defined in Section 80-1-102.
- (3)(a) "Home-based microschool" means an individual or association of individuals that:
 - (i) registers as a business entity in accordance with state and local laws; and
 - (ii) for compensation, provides kindergarten through grade 12 education services to

- 30 16 or fewer students from an individual's residential dwelling, accessory dwelling
31 unit, or residential property.
- 32 (b) "Home-based microschool" does not include a daycare.
- 33 (4) "Instructor" means an individual who teaches a student as part of a home-based
34 microschool or micro-education entity.
- 35 (5)(a) "Micro-education entity" means a person or association of persons that:
- 36 (i) registers as a business entity in accordance with state and local laws; and
37 (ii) for compensation, provides kindergarten through grade 12 education services to
38 100 students or fewer.
- 39 (b) "Micro-education entity" does not include:
- 40 (i) a daycare;
41 (ii) a home-based microschool;
42 (iii) a private school; or
43 (iv) a school within the public education system.
- 44 (6) "Minor" means an individual who is under 18 years old.
- 45 (7) "Parent" includes:
- 46 (a) a custodial parent of the minor;
47 (b) a legally appointed guardian of a minor; or
48 (c) any other person purporting to exercise any authority over the minor which could be
49 exercised by a person described in Subsection (7)(a) or (b).
- 50 (8) "School day" means the portion of a day that school is in session in which a school-age
51 child is required to be in school for purposes of receiving instruction.
- 52 (9) "School year" means the period of time designated by a local school board or charter
53 school governing board as the school year for the school where the school-age child:
54 (a) is enrolled; or
55 (b) should be enrolled, if the school-age child is not enrolled in school.
- 56 (10) "School-age child" means a minor who:
- 57 (a) is at least six years old but younger than 18 years old; and
58 (b) is not emancipated.
- 59 (11)(a) "Truant" means a condition in which a school-age child, without a valid excuse,
60 and subject to Subsection (11)(b), is absent for at least:
- 61 (i) half of the school day; or
62 (ii) if the school-age child is enrolled in a learner verified program, as that term is
63 defined by the state board, the relevant amount of time under the LEA's policy

- 64 regarding the LEA's continuing enrollment measure as it relates to truancy.
- 65 (b) A school-age child may not be considered truant under this part more than one time
66 during one day.
- 67 (12) "Truant minor" means a school-age child who:
- 68 (a) is subject to the requirements of Section 53G-6-202 or 53G-6-203; and
69 (b) is truant.
- 70 (13)(a) "Valid excuse" means:
- 71 (i) an illness, which may be either mental or physical, regardless of whether the
72 school-age child or parent provides documentation from a medical professional;
73 (ii) mental or behavioral health of the school-age child;
74 (iii) a family death;
75 (iv) an approved school activity;
76 (v) an absence permitted by a school-age child's:
77 (A) individualized education program; or
78 (B) Section 504 accommodation plan;
79 (vi) competition in a rodeo sanctioned by an international, non-profit organization
80 dedicated to the development of sportsmanship, horsemanship, and character in
81 youth through the sport of rodeo;
82 (vii) any reason a parent provides to justify a student's absence if the student
83 maintains a cumulative grade point average of at least 2.0, including an event
84 related to participation in the following clubs:
85 (A) mountain biking;
86 (B) shooting sports; or
87 (C) a youth development program Utah State University administers, which
88 provides educational experiences in areas including agriculture, science,
89 technology, engineering, mathematics, civic engagement, leadership, and
90 healthy living through hands-on learning, mentoring, and community-based
91 clubs or activities;
- 92 [~~vii~~] (viii) an absence permitted in accordance with Subsection 53G-6-803(5); or
93 [~~viii~~] (ix) any other excuse established as valid by a local school board, charter
94 school governing board, or school district.
- 95 (b) "Valid excuse" does not mean a parent acknowledgment of an absence for a reason
96 other than a reason described in [~~Subsections (13)(a)(i) through (vii)~~] Subsections
97 (13)(a)(i) through (viii), unless specifically permitted by the local school board,

98 charter school governing board, or school district under [~~Subsection (13)(a)(viii)~~]

99 Subsection (13)(a)(ix).

100 Section 2. **Effective Date.**

101 This bill takes effect on July 1, 2026.