



REPORTED ABSENCE CALL COLLECTION LOG--OFFICIAL RECORD OF CHICAGO PUBLIC SCHOOLS

- **Calls to report absences can only be accepted by a parent/guardian.**
- In the case that the caller does not leave enough information, the school must call back and collect the missing information.

TYPE AND REASON FOR ABSENCE--Calls must be determined as ONE of the following:

EXCUSED	Student illness	EXCUSED	A student's parent or legal guardian is an active duty member of the uniformed services and has been called to duty for, is on leave from, or has immediately returned from deployment to a combat zone or combat-support postings.
EXCUSED	Observance of a religious holiday		
EXCUSED	Death in the immediate family		
EXCUSED	Family Emergency (Explain)	EXCUSED	Other situations beyond the control of the student
EXCUSED	Circumstances which cause reasonable concern for your child's safety or health	UNEXCUSED	No reason provided
EXCUSED	Sounding "Taps" at a military honors funeral held in this State for a deceased veteran	UNEXCUSED	State criteria not met (See Excused Absences)

STUDENT ABSENCE CALL LOG

1	Date & Time	Student's Name	Name of Parent/Guardian Caller	Recorded in Aspen
	Date of Absence	Type and Reason for Absence	Details from Caller	
2	Date & Time	Student's Name	Name of Parent/Guardian Caller	Recorded in Aspen
	Date of Absence	Type and Reason for Absence	Details from Caller	
3	Date & Time	Student's Name	Name of Parent/Guardian Caller	Recorded in Aspen
	Date of Absence	Type and Reason for Absence	Details from Caller	
4	Date & Time	Student's Name	Name of Parent/Guardian Caller	Recorded in Aspen
	Date of Absence	Type and Reason for Absence	Details from Caller	
5	Date & Time	Student's Name	Name of Parent/Guardian Caller	Recorded in Aspen
	Date of Absence	Type and Reason for Absence	Details from Caller	
6	Date & Time	Student's Name	Name of Parent/Guardian Caller	Recorded in Aspen
	Date of Absence	Type and Reason for Absence	Details from Caller	
7	Date & Time	Student's Name	Name of Parent/Guardian Caller	Recorded in Aspen
	Date of Absence	Type and Reason for Absence	Details from Caller	
8	Date & Time	Student's Name	Name of Parent/Guardian Caller	Recorded in Aspen
	Date of Absence	Type and Reason for Absence	Details from Caller	
9	Date & Time	Student's Name	Name of Parent/Guardian Caller	Recorded in Aspen
	Date of Absence	Type and Reason for Absence	Details from Caller	



PROCEDURAL GUIDE ON ABSENCE CALL COLLECTION

LAW AND POLICY:

- **The ABSENCE CALL COLLECTION LOG is a legal document**
- **The school is required to maintain a designated Absence Call Collection Log and document calls regarding absences. The Absence Call Collection Log is a school business record that must be retained in accordance with the Board's daily attendance retention requirements.**
- All absences must be recorded accurately for the safety of the child and the purpose of legal preservation.
- Any tampering or misrepresentation on the Absence Call Collection Log is a violation of CPS Policy.
- It is critical that only parents and guardians are allowed to report excused or unexcused absences.

SCHOOL RESPONSIBILITIES:

- Schools are to use their Attendance Office number as the schools "Absence Reporting Phonenumber". This line should have a voicemail message that reflects the purpose of the line. A message should be recorded so families that use the line know they have reached the right number. The voice message may *sound like*: *"Thank you for calling _____ school's absence notification line. We are sorry that your child will not be joining us today. Please leave your child's name, the date of your child's absence, the reason for the absence, your name, and a contact number in case there are follow up questions."*
- Any marketing for the absence notification line must indicate that "CPS reserves the right to request paper documentation".
- ABSENCE CALL COLLECTION LOGS must be managed by designated personnel. For collection of attendance data done electronically or remotely, attendance clerks are required to maintain the attendance logs on a designated network drive or Google Drive secured with limited sharing and ownership permissions. Only limited school staff that requires access to this information should be provided access. When sharing the information with your administrator on Google Drive, you can add the note, "I am sharing the e-version of the call collection log."
- Attendance clerks are required to enter all information into the log. Please ensure that at a minimum, the log is printed at the end of each semester, quarter, or school year. Once printed, the log must be stored with other attendance-related logs in a designated, secure location.
- Please do not save these logs on any laptop, thumb drive or other removable media, or in an electronic location that is only accessible to one school employee (such as a local hard drive). Please do not save any attendance information or other CPS-related work to any personal device.
- ABSENCE CALL COLLECTION LOGS must have a designated area of use; the location should always be in sight of school personnel since it contains student information.
- All required fields of information must be completed on the ABSENCE CALL COLLECTION LOG.
- For elementary school, the absence is properly recorded in the student's attendance record in Aspen in a timely manner (same day, within the first two hours of the school day).
- **Excused vs Unexcused: Per Illinois State Law**, if the caller provided enough information to determine if the reason for absence falls into one of the valid reasons for absence categories, the absences may be deemed "Excused", and should be marked as such in the student's record. Similarly, per Illinois State law, if the reason for absence does not meet one of the State allowed valid reasons, the absence is "Unexcused", and should be marked as such in the student record.
- Schools must call the homes of students who are absent.
 - For elementary school students who are absent, calls home are to be made within two hours of the opening bell.
 - For high school students, calls home should be made as well.
- A school may use the information received on the call to fill the ABSENCE CALL COLLECTION LOG, and may mark the student "Excused" or "Unexcused" accordingly.

BEST PRACTICES:

- ABSENCE CALL COLLECTION LOG managers should monitor the log and inform the proper team or administrator if there is a pattern developing of unexcused and excused absences for a student.
- Outgoing calls should be made with the goal of maintaining and/or strengthening the school-to-home connection. Calls should not be made with any tone of accusation, blame, or skepticism.

- The purpose of a call to the school or from the school should be to best enable a student to be present and engaged. If calls present a barrier or underlying cause for absence/disengagement, the school should follow up with the appropriate school-based specialist, and/or engage the parent/guardian further to determine how to remove the barrier.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS:

- **Does the school still have to call home if a parent/guardian has not reported the absence?**
Yes, the same rules apply as when paper notes were the only acceptable form of communication.
- **Is anything impacted if my attendance is not entered into Aspen in a timely fashion?**
Students who do not have attendance taken default to “Present.” If a child is absent and that absence has not been entered into Aspen, no robocall alerting the parent/guardian that the child is absent will go out. This is a safety issue.
- **Do I need to wait for the child to return before I mark the student’s absence as EXCUSED?**
No, with the new procedural allowance by ISBE, the student can have his/her record updated as EXCUSED if the necessary criteria have been met.
- **If the voicemail message excludes one component, will it still qualify as a call towards an excused absence?**
The child's name, the reason for absence, and name of the caller must all be identified. The timestamp on the voicemail can be recorded as when the call/voice message came in. In the case that the caller does not leave enough information, the school must call back via Google Meet and collect the missing information.
- **Can a text message to a staff member explaining the reason for absence qualify if the reason is valid?**
No, personal phones should not be used for communication with families; therefore, text messages would not be admissible.
- **Can a sibling at the school the absent child attends tell the school why her brother is absent to excuse the absence if the reason is valid?**
No, the person communicating the absence must be the parent/guardian of the absent child.
- **Is there a time limit as to when a reason for absence can be called into the school?**
Currently the only time limit is that the communication must be received by the end of the student’s school year. There is no time limit on when paper notes can be turned in, so the same applies in the case of expanded options for communicating absences.
- **If I am skeptical of the reason for absence, can I request more information?**
You can do so, but a parent/guardian does not have to comply. There is no policy that requires more information to be provided, so it is up to the family to determine if they want to share further.
- **What if I do not know if the caller is a parent/guardian?**
If you do not know if the caller is a parent/guardian, then you should check the contact records in ASPEN to verify the parent/guardian status and/or the phone number. You may also call the phone number in ASPEN back to confirm the parent/guardian status.
- **Can I receive absence communication from a parent/guardian via email?**
Emails are not a valid form of communication. If a school receives an email from a parent/guardian providing a reason for absence, then the school must still call the family.

PROPER STORAGE:

- An ABSENCE CALL COLLECTION LOG is an official school record which has a legal retention requirement of 5 years.
- Maintain these logs in a designated, secure location, ideally in the same location as the Daily Attendance Notes folders, Tardy Logs, Early Dismissal Log, and Absence Email Collection Logs.
- If you have been entering information electronically in the ABSENCE CALL COLLECTION LOG, you must print this record at the end of each quarter, semester, or school year. Do not retain these logs only in electronic format.
- Please do not save these logs on any laptop, thumb drive or other removable media, or in an electronic location that is only accessible to one school employee (such as a local hard drive). Please do not save any attendance information or other CPS-related work to any personal device.
- For collection of attendance data done electronically or remotely, attendance clerks are required to maintain the attendance logs on a designated network drive or Google Drive secured with limited sharing and ownership permissions. Only limited school staff that requires access to this information should be provided access. When sharing the information with your administrator on Google Drive, you can add the note, “I am sharing the e-version of the call collection log.”