

# Chronic Absenteeism | Medical Exemption Toolkit

## CHRONIC ABSENTEEISM

To benefit from instruction, students must have regular access to learning; therefore, attendance is a leading indicator in assessing student competency, as chronic absences negatively affect student achievement and the likelihood of graduating on time or not at all ([Attendance Works, 2016](#)).



The Chronic Absenteeism Medical Exemption Window allows school leaders to submit exemptions for specific students who meet specific rules. Any day that a student was absent due to a significant medical condition may be exempted from SY 2021-2022 Chronic Absenteeism reporting. These exemptions, if in alignment with conditions specified in [OAC § 210:10-13-25](#), local policy, and are approved by the local exemption committee, will be excluded from reporting. Among other scenarios, this exemption applies to students who are receiving treatment for a chronic or terminal disease or students who have lost an immediate family member.

This guidance document was designed to provide specific guidance on this for school and district leaders. Please note that this window—in conjunction with ensuring data accuracy within the certified Annual Statistical Report (ASR)—serves as the **only data verification process** for student-level Chronic Absenteeism data prior to SY 2021-2022 reporting. This is the only opportunity to submit such requests, the ASR is replacing the previous Chronic Absenteeism Medical Exemption Data Verification Request process.

## Getting Started

Before submitting exemptions within the Accountability Reporting application, please review the following process:

1. If you have not yet done so, adopt a Board Policy for Medical Exemptions (click here for a [Sample Board Policy](#))
  - Review [SY 2022 Enrollment and Attendance Guidance](#) and [Student with Disabilities and Chronic Absenteeism Guidance](#)

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- Identify student absences that may qualify and need to be brought to your local attendance committee.
  - Assemble documentation for absences determined to be medically exempt by your local attendance committee so that they are ready for the site user to submit during the reporting window. Open now until June 30, 2022.
- 2. Attendance exemptions committee convenes to review student documentation.
  - If you have not, assemble an Exemption Review Committee (click here for [Sample Committee Exemption Documentation](#))
- 3. Approved exemptions are sent to the site; Each site submits approved student absences with committee documentation in SSO;
- 4. District's Admin User reviews to grant or deny;
  - District- approved medically exempt absences are removed from the Chronic Absenteeism Indicator calculation.
- 5. Identify District/Site and Admin Users for your site using the form linked below
  - [Medical Exemption User Form](#)

Local Exemption Committee

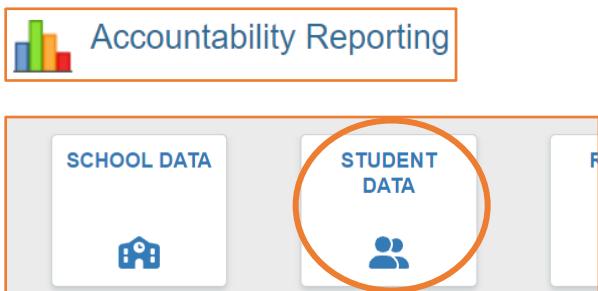
District/Site User

Admin User

## Reporting Absences Determined Medically Exempt to the OSDE

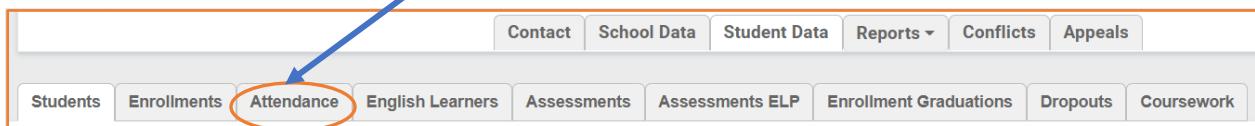
To submit a medical exemption approved by the local exemption committee, sign into your Single Sign-On account and choose Accountability Reporting.

From the Accountability Reporting application, choose the STUDENT DATA icon.

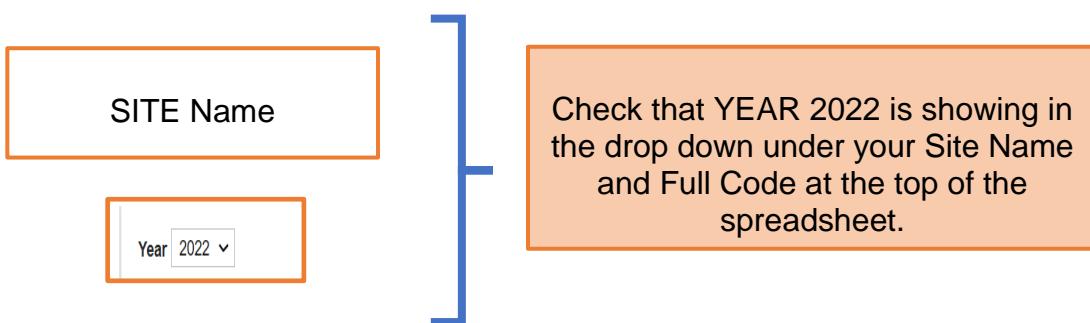


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From this view click the ATTENDANCE tab.



This will open a spreadsheet that shows attendance data for all students enrolled at your site.



Filter the data so that it shows Full Academic Year (FAY) students that missed 10% or more of the instructional days offered through the school calendar following the steps outlined below.

## Displaying Chronically Absent and FAY

Step 1: Click the Absence Rate column and then click the down arrow to filter Absence Rate column from highest to lowest.

Step 2: Type a 0 in the NFAY column and press enter.

Records 1 to 100 of 841											
STN	First Name	Middle Name	Last Name	Grade Level	Process Include	NFAY	Calendar	Absence Rate	Days Enrolled	Days Absent	Request Count
					Y	0	View	20.24%	168	34.0	0
					Y	0	View	19.62%	158	31.0	0
					Y	0	View	16.96%	168	28.5	0
					Y	0	View	16.96%	168	28.5	0
					Y	0	View	15.18%	168	25.5	0
					Y	0	View	15.06%	166	25.0	0

Students who have absence rates at or above 10% are identified by a red box in the Absence Rate column. Clicking on View in the Calendar column opens a window that displays a visual enabling you to look for patterns in the student's absences as shown in the following pictorial.



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## Creating Chronic Absenteeism Medical Exemption Requests

### STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE FOR EXEMPTION REQUESTS

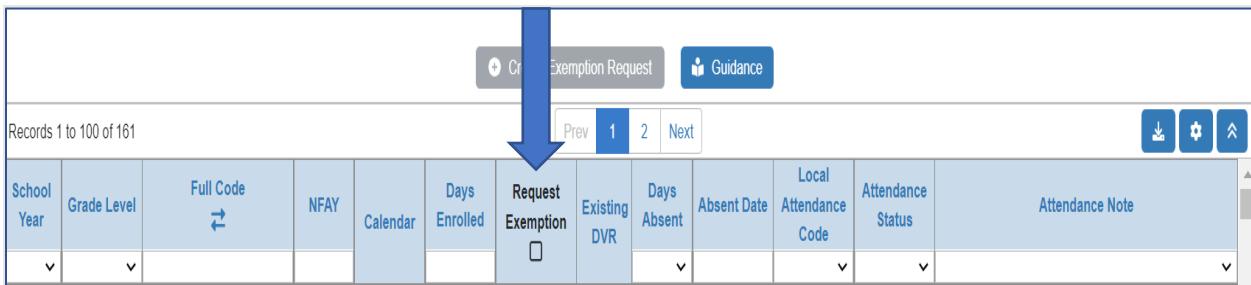
In accordance with the [OAC 210:10-13-25:](#)

- Chronic Absenteeism means students are absent from school at least ten percent (10%) of the time that school is in session. For example, a student who is absent for 19 instructional days at a school with a 180-day instructional calendar would be considered chronically absent.
- Medically exempt absences must constitute a "**significant medical condition**" meaning they are a severe, chronic, or life-threatening physical or mental illness, infection, injury, disease, or emotional trauma.
- Absences classified as "excused" related to military deployment activities or homelessness under the McKinney-Vento-Act do not qualify for medical exemption unless they are determined to meet the criteria of a "significant medical condition".

To report chronic absenteeism medical exemptions that have been approved by your local exemption review committee in for a particular student, [click on the student's STN](#).

This will open a window that displays the student's attendance history, as shown in the example below. A student's attendance history helps you know how much instructional time may have been lost over the course of enrollment at your site.

Request Exemption boxes will only show for SY 2022. To request an exemption, click on the box or boxes that correspond to the approved absence date/s.



School Year	Grade Level	Full Code	NFAY	Calendar	Days Enrolled	Request Exemption	Existing DVR	Days Absent	Absent Date	Local Attendance Code	Attendance Status	Attendance Note
v	v					<input type="checkbox"/>		v		v	v	v

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When requesting an exemption, you will notice that the *Create Exemption Request* button turns blue and an orange circle corresponding to the number of exemption requests appears.

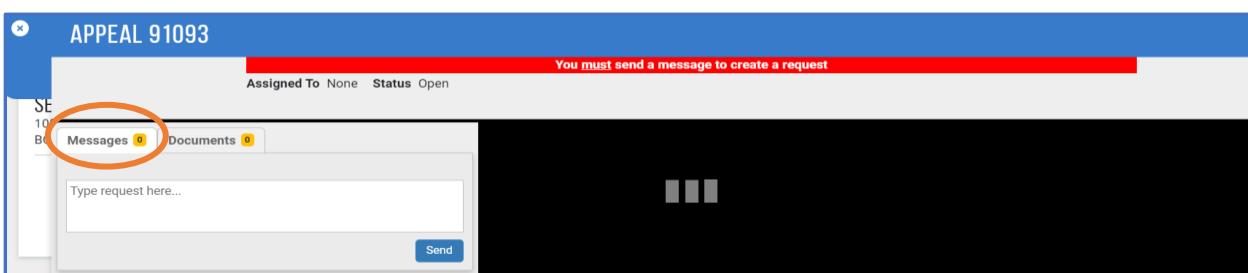


Click on the Create Exemption Request blue button at the top-right of the spreadsheet. This will open a new window. Click on the messages tab and type a summary to explain the reason for the request/s, the date/s of the Medical Exemption/s, upload supporting documentation, and click send.



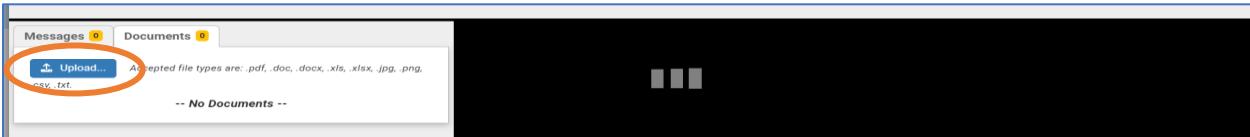
All documentation considered during the local review committee's consideration of potentially eligible absences shall be maintained by the district or charter school and shall be available to regional accreditation officers for auditing purposes. Click the documents tab to upload documentation.

Exemption/s, upload supporting documentation, and click send.



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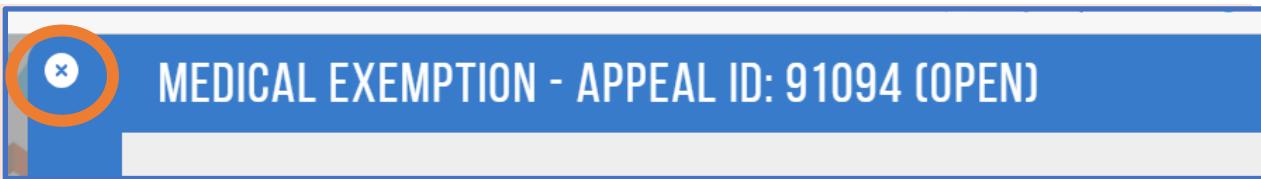
Then click the upload button and select your documents. Upload your district's Chronic Absenteeism Medical Exemption policy ([Sample Committee Exemption Documentation](#)) and documentation of the review committee's approval for the exempted absences.



You will then see the documents you have uploaded. The gray arrow on the right which will allow you to scroll through all the uploaded documentation for that request record.

A screenshot of the software interface showing a list of uploaded documents. One document is previewed: 'Document 1 of 2' titled 'Sample Committee Exemption Documentation\_FDC-P.pdf'. The preview shows 'OSSBA POLICY SERVICES' and 'FDC-P' at the top, followed by 'MEDICAL EXEMPTION REVIEW COMMITTEE PROCESS FOR ELIGIBLE EXEMPTIONS AND DOCUMENTATION FOR DECISION'. To the right of the preview, a vertical scroll bar has a gray arrow pointing right, which is circled in orange.

Click the X in the upper left-hand corner to return to the original display and make a request for another student. Please note that you only need to upload your Board-approved medical exemption policy once. Then, you can reference the request ID number in the Messages text box for additional approved Medical Exemptions.



Once created, **requests must be approved by a district user before students' absence records can be amended**. Use the steps outlined on the next page. It is recommended that someone other than the user creating the request approve the request to allow for cross checking.

**Guidance for District Admin Level Users Begins on Page 7.**

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## DISTRICT ADMIN USERS:

### Approving Attendance Medical Exemption Requests

District users can access and approve, deny, or request additional information for submitted requests by choosing a School, clicking on the APPEALS tab, and then choosing ATTENDANCE MEDICAL EXEMPTION REQUESTS, as shown in the example.



This will open a spreadsheet displaying requests ready for review, as shown below. Click on *Attendance Medical Exemption Requests* or the number.

Appeal Type	Open	Info Required	Closed Pending	Closed	Total
Attendance Medical Exemption Request	5	0	0	0	5
Student Enrollment Graduation	9	0	7	116	132
Student School Conflict	1	0	0	0	1

To view a *Medical Exemption Request*, click on an ID number.

ID	Submitted By	Submitted Date	District	School	School Year	Status	STN	Record Count	File Count	Last State Update	Last Dist / School Update	Verified	Request
1	John Doe	2022-01-01	OKCPS	Elementary School	2022-2023	Open	1234567890	0	1	2022-01-01	2022-01-01	Yes	Request details...

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The following screen will open, allowing the Chronic Absenteeism Medical Exemption Review committee to review the Medical Exemption requests' documentation and messages and to grant or deny the request/s. All the messages and documentation on the appeal can be viewed on this screen.

MEDICAL EXEMPTION - APPEAL ID: 91094 (OPEN)

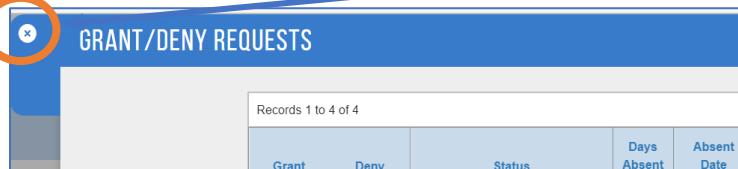
Appeal Search  
Assigned To [REDACTED] Status Open  
Student ↗ Open Requests Granted Requests Denied Requests Full Code Calendar Grade Level NFAY Days Absent Days Enrolled Absence Rate  
4 0 0 View 12 63.5 81 78.40%  
Next Appeal >  
Messages 5 Documents 2 Document 1 of 2 Sample Committee Exemption Documentation\_FDC-P.pdf Friday, March 4, 2022 1 of 1

The next step is to write the resolution in the message box (If you plan to upload the district's policy only once, BE SURE TO INCLUDE THE REQUEST ID# THE POLICY WAS UPLOADED TO IN THE RESOLUTION MESSAGE and send. Please include absence date/s approved, the date/s local Medical Exemption Committee approved exemption/s and reason/s for medical exemption based on your Board Policy and OAC 210:10-13-25 guidance.

Then click on the *Open Requests* number to grant or deny each absence in the request record and the screen below will open. Once granted or denied it will show in the status column.

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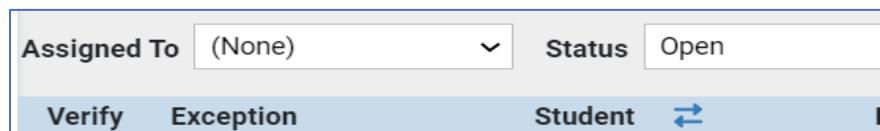
Once you have granted or denied each absence record in the request, click here to return to the appeal page.



The screenshot shows a table titled "GRANT/DENY REQUESTS" with a header row containing "Grant", "Deny", "Status", "Days Absent", and "Absent Date". Below the header, there is a message "Records 1 to 4 of 4". The "Status" column contains the value "Open" for all four records.

**Lastly, follow steps 1-3.**

**1** Change the STATUS to Closed-Pending Update.



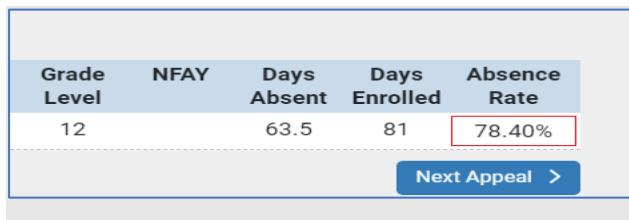
The screenshot shows a dropdown menu for "Status" with the option "Open" selected. Below the dropdown, there are tabs for "Verify", "Exception", "Student", and "F".

**2** Add your name beside ASSIGNED TO using the drop-down menu.



The screenshot shows a search bar for "Appeal" and a dropdown menu for "Assigned To" set to "Alyssa Griggs State". The "Status" dropdown is set to "Closed - Pending Update".

**3** Go to next appeal.



The screenshot shows a table with columns: Grade Level, NFAY, Days Absent, Days Enrolled, and Absence Rate. The data is as follows:

Grade Level	NFAY	Days Absent	Days Enrolled	Absence Rate
12	63.5	81	78.40%	

Below the table is a blue button labeled "Next Appeal >".

**NOTE:** If a Medical Exemption is accidentally closed, you will be unable to delete it. Please notify the Office of Accountability at [accountability@sde.ok.gov](mailto:accountability@sde.ok.gov), with the appeal number.

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## Frequently Asked Questions

### How does the state determine who is chronically absent?

- Chronic absenteeism means a student is absent from school at least ten percent (10%) of the time that school is in session. Additional guidance is provided [here](#).

### What changes have been made since SY 2018-2019?

- In school years 2017-2018 and 2018-2019, administrative rules directed the State Board of Education to oversee a process for exempting specific medical absences from the Chronic Absenteeism indicator.
- Pursuant to House Bill 1988 (2019), the rule mandate placing medical exemption authority at the state level was revoked. This new rule authorizes school districts to develop chronic absenteeism medical exemption policies at the local level, which are to be developed in accordance with the guidelines laid out in the rule. The local committees will approve or deny based on the districts' Medical Exemption policies.

### What is the difference between Medical Exemptions and Emergency Exemption?

- MEDICAL EXEMPTION: The absence(s) of a student who has been granted a medical exemption of one or more absences from school in accordance with the provisions shall not be included in the calculation of the Chronic Absenteeism indicator on the Oklahoma School Report Cards.
- EMERGENCY EXEMPTION: A student who has been granted an emergency exemption from taking state summative assessments in accordance with federal requirements. Any student who has received an exemption from one or more examinations in accordance with the provisions of this Section shall not be included in the calculation of the participation rate of the school and/or school district in the assessments mandated by federal and state law.
- For more information on the difference between Medical and Emergency Exemptions, click [here](#).

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## How is Chronic Absenteeism different from a school's attendance policy?

- Local district attendance policies vary in how they code absences (excused or unexcused, school activity, medical, etc.).
- Excused absences are included in Chronic Absenteeism indicator calculations. This is because absences, whether excused or unexcused, result in lost instructional time, which places students at academic risk.

## How is Chronic Absenteeism different from Average Daily Attendance (ADA) and truancy?

- ADA can mask absenteeism. ADA is a snapshot by day of total attendance but it does not track or identify individual students who are regularly absent. Schools can have a 90 percent ADA with 30 percent of students chronically absent. In contrast, truancy is a measure of only unexcused absences. By including all absences, chronic absenteeism measures all lost instructional time.

## Are all students included in Chronic Absenteeism calculations?

- Only students who meet Full Academic Year (FAY) criteria are included in Chronic Absenteeism indicator calculations. For more information click [here](#).
- Students who have experienced significant trauma or medical conditions may have individual absences exempted.

## How can schools reduce chronic absenteeism?

- When the underlying reasons for student absences are unmasked, it is possible to implement strategies to improve attendance and thus academic achievement.
- Working together, all members of the community – schools, families, and community partners – positively impact chronic absenteeism. For additional resources and strategies to reduce chronic absenteeism, resources available on the [Attendance Works](#) website.

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**Do absences for therapy or other services for disabilities for students on an IEP/504 count as absences in the Chronic Absenteeism indicator?**

- No. A student with disabilities who is on an Individualized Education Program (IEP), or a student with a physical or mental impairment who is on a Section 504 Plan, is considered in attendance and does not accrue absences while receiving offsite services. The student should be marked present. Additional information can be found at this link: [FAQs- Chronic Absenteeism and Students with Disabilities](#)

**Are absences due to suspension counted in the calculation of the Chronic Absenteeism indicator?**

- Yes. Please, see 70 O.S. 24-101.3(D) for more guidance on continuing services for suspended students in a manner deemed appropriate by the district.
- Additionally, this document issued by the Office of Data Information Systems provides specific attendance coding guidance for suspended students: [Guidance for Attendance and Suspensions](#).

**Do students who are coded as a DVA or DVAP count in the calculation of the Chronic Absenteeism indicator?**

- DVAP (Distance Learning Present) - If the student is coded as DVAP, the absence value is expected to be 0. If this is not the case, please contact your local SIS vendor.
- DVA (Distance Learning Absent) - The student is coded as DVA if the student is absent from a traditional learning environment and a distance learning environment. These absences are included in determining if a student is chronically absent.

**Do activity absences count as present?**

- Yes. The student will be allowed to be absent from the classroom for a maximum of ten days per school year to participate in activities sponsored by the school [OSSAA Rules](#). These students may have a locally defined attendance/absence code but are reported present in the state student information system.

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**Do students identified as homeless as outlined in McKinney-Vento Act qualify for medical exemption?**

- The McKinney-Vento Act does not qualify for a medical exemption. To receive a medical exemption, a student would need to qualify with the guidelines outlined in [OAC 210:10-13-25](#) and set in district policy.

**How does the medical exemption affect my ADA in Annual Statistical Report (ASR)?**

- It does not affect the ADA in the ASR.

## **Additional Resources:**

- [Chronic Absenteeism Reporting Resources](#)
- [Enrollment and Attendance Guidance SY 2021-2022](#)

If you have any questions, please reach out to the Office of Accountability at [accountability@sde.ok.gov](mailto:accountability@sde.ok.gov) or call 405-522- 5169 and visit the [OSDE Accountability Home Page](#) for more resources.