

First Day Absences

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In past years, the enrollment effective date was the day the student first received instruction. *ADE has changed the policy so that as long as the enrollment date is the first day of school, a student may be counted absent for the first 9 days.* (Note, if the E code is a carry-over from a previous school year - that counts as being on the first day).

If the enrollment date is anything but the first day of school, the student must be present on the first day of enrollment.

The intent of the changed policy is to give the schools the ADM for kids who are expected to return and that you are holding a place or schedule for, but who don't show up on the first day. Students who qualify are those who are in-district transfers, returning students from last school year, or students who pre-registered during the summer. Basically, have paperwork that shows the student was coming before the first day of school. If a student shows up to register on the 4th day of school, don't back date the enrollment to the first day because the paperwork won't back you up if an auditor questions the enrollment date.

Why not?

Some schools have elected not to use the new rule. One reason is when there is a strict attendance policy. If a student shows up 3 days late and will get a nasty letter on the 10th day of absence, the parents are going to argue with those first 3 absences, so maybe it is better to miss out on the ADM than deal with the problems and confusion of the attendance policy. If there is no such policy, the district might see a good boost in ADM by taking advantage of the rule change. Some charter schools are not using it because they are filling the spots with kids from their waiting lists who actually came to school.

You might also be concerned about the increased absence rate - don't be. Any increases in absences are offset by the increased ADM so what you will see is that ADM goes up while ADA stays the same. Here's an easy example that illustrates this:

Student comes in on the 3rd day:

Old rule: $97 \text{ days membership} / 100 \text{ days} = .97 \text{ ADM}$ ($97 \text{ days memb} - 0 \text{ absences} / 100 \text{ days} = .97 \text{ ADA}$)

New rule: $100 \text{ days membership} / 100 \text{ days} = 1 \text{ ADM}$ ($100 \text{ days memb} - 3 \text{ days absence} / 100 \text{ days} = .97 \text{ ADA}$)

So, it is ok to mark the kids absent for up to 9 days. It doesn't matter if the absences are excused or unexcused. Any E Code is acceptable as well. On the 10th day of absence the student is an S code.

If you are not going to use the first day absence option, please let us know so we don't tell anyone who calls for support something different!

How to use the First Day Absences Rule in SIRS

Again, the intent of the changed policy is to give the schools the ADM for kids who are expected to return and that you are holding a place or schedule for, but who don't show up on the first day.

Mark the students absent rather than S coding these students, but only for the first 9 days. If the student does not attend on the 10th day, remove the absences, and S code the student in the normal way (Friday before school started). If the E is on the first day, it must be moved back to summer (Thursday before school started) before withdrawing the student, then remove the E code from SIRS and CSR after the withdrawal is complete. If the E is from a prior school year, simply withdraw the student with an S code.