

Date: _____

Dear Principal:

I write to ask for a legally excused absence for my child(ren).

Please excuse _____ from school on _____ for participation in _____.

My children are American Indian. As such, we are participating in ceremonial/cultural activities that require my child's attendance. Maintaining a strong cultural foundation has been linked to better educational, social, and psychological outcomes for American Indian children. This is supported by current research:

<https://www.wested.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/1469664804resourcepromisingeducationinterventionsaimprovetheachievementofnativeamericanstudentsanannotatedbibliography-3.pdf>

The rights of our Native families are also affirmed by Congress. The American Indian Religious Freedom Act of 1978 "protects the rights of Native Americans to exercise their traditional religions by ensuring access to sites, use and possession of sacred objects, and the freedom to worship through ceremonials and traditional rites."

Specifically, I am asking for the excused absence based on **Section 48205** of the California Education Code:

"A student may be excused legally from school when the absence is for the following reasons:

Upon written request of the parent or guardian and prior approval of the Principal or his/her designee and pursuant to board policy, a student's absence may be excused 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 his or her religion, attendance at religious retreats or attendance at an employment conference, when the pupil's absence has been 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."

Our family can coordinate directly with the teacher to find out what our child(ren) need to do in terms of covering the missed material so our kids don't fall behind.

I really appreciate your consideration in this matter; I also thank you for your support of the well-being of our Native children in WJUSD.

Sincerely,

Parent