

POLICY: JE-R
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GUIDELINES FOR STUDENT ATTENDANCE

In accordance with State law, all children between six and eighteen years of age must attend school unless they have a legal excuse.

Each student's parent/guardian is to call the school or give written notice as soon as possible and no later than 8:30 a.m. on any day when the student will be absent with the parent's knowledge and consent. The parent or guardian will be expected to give an explanation of the student's absence at the time of notification. Failure to contact the principal's office may result in a telephone call or a personal visit. The building principal, or the principal's designee, at each of the District's schools shall serve as that school's attendance officer.

The attendance officer shall determine daily which pupils enrolled in the school are absent and designate each absence as excused or truant or habitually truant.

A. A student may be excused from school attendance as follows:

1. Illness or injury of the student, including hospitalization for mental health or AODA issues (a note from a doctor, school nurse, or treatment director may be required after (5) consecutive absences or (10) accumulated absences per semester verifying the absences as health related.)
2. Serious illness or death in the family
3. Family/home emergencies
4. Religious observances
5. Impassable roads or extreme weather conditions
6. Court appearances or other legal proceedings or related matters
7. Health appointments (e.g., medical, dental, chiropractic, optometrical)
8. School-sponsored activities
9. A quarantine as imposed by a public health officer
10. Family Educational Trips – whenever possible parents are encouraged to avoid taking their children on family trips which would cause the student to be absent from school;. However, when it is necessary for a child to be absent for a family trip, student absence request should be submitted to the school principal or teacher at least one week in advance of the proposed absence.

Arrangements to make-up classwork following an absence shall be at the initiative of the student and/or parent. Make-up provisions may differ among teachers, depending upon the nature of the class and the type of work missed. Alternative assignments may be a viable option in some situations. It is the student's responsibility to check with each teacher prior to the absence to determine the make-up assignments.

Note: The parent should realize that in many classes, due to their nature, very little work can be done outside of the classroom. Parents must realize that time out of the classroom will mean that some valuable academic experiences will be missed.

- B. Truancy – Defined as any absence of any portion of a school day or absence for one or more days from school during which the principal has not been notified in writing or by phone of the reason for the acceptable absence by the parent/guardian of the pupil who is absent. Truancy also means intermittent attendance requirement (s. 118.16(1)(b), Stats.). In the case of truancy, strict procedural steps will be followed where the parents, the student and school staff will be involved. Tardiness that is not excused shall be considered truancy. Normally no make-up privileges for trancies are allowed and the student will be subject to disciplinary procedures. Students with trancies that are approved for make-up work are responsible for arranging with each teacher the make-up of any assignment or test which has been missed.

Note: Students suspended shall be allowed to take any examinations missed during the period of suspension. Students may not be denied credit due only to truancy.

The attendance office may allow a student make-up privileges for truancy depending on the nature, duration and cause of the truancy.

The school attendance officer must notify the parent or guardian of a truant child by the end of the second day after receiving a report of an unexcused absence. The notice must be given by personal service, mail or a telephone call of which a written record is kept (s. 118.16(2)(c), Stats.).

Act 285 modifies current procedures for notifying parents of truant children. Under the Act, except as described below for habitual truants, notice may be given by mail only after personal contact or a telephone call has been attempted.

- C. Habitual Truant – A pupil who is absent from school without an acceptable excuse for part or all of five or more days on which school is held during a school semester.

Under the statutes, a juvenile court may exercise jurisdiction over a child alleged to be in need of protection or services because the child is “habitually truant” from school. However, before filing information on the child, evidence must be provided to the court by the school attendance officer that the activities described under Required School Procedures for Habitual Truants, below, have been completed.

REQUIRED SCHOOL PROCEDURES FOR HABITUAL TRUANTS

The statutes provide that, before a juvenile court proceeding may be brought against a child for habitual truancy or against the child's parent or guardian for failing to cause a child to attend school regularly, the school attendance officer must provide evidence to the court that appropriate school personnel have, within the school year during which a truancy occurred:

1. Met with, or attempted to meet with, the child's parent or guardian to discuss the child's truancy or attempted to meet and received no response or were refused. This does not apply if a meeting is not held within ten days after a habitual truancy notice is sent.
2. Provided an opportunity for educational counseling to the child to determine whether a change in the child's curriculum would resolve the child's truancy and considered curriculum modifications.
3. Evaluated the child to determine whether learning problems may be a cause of the child's truancy and, if so, taken steps to overcome the learning problems except the child need not be evaluated if tests administered to the child within the previous year indicate the child is performing at his/her grade level.
4. Conducted an evaluation to determine whether social problems may be a cause of the child's truancy and, if so, taken appropriate action or made appropriate referrals (ss. 48.13(6) and 118.16(5), Stats.).

Paragraphs 2-4 above do not apply if the school attendance officer provides evidence that the appropriate school personnel were unable to carry out the activity due to the child's absences from school.

The requirement that the school attendance officer notify the parent or guardian of a child's truancy, for each day the child is truant, by the end of the second day after receiving a report of an unexcused absence, and the requirements of that notice be given by personal contact, mail or telephone call, do not apply to habitual truants. Instead, when a child first becomes a "habitual truant" as defined under State law, notice must be given by certified or registered mail and shall include the following information:

1. A statement of the parent's or guardian's responsibility to cause the child to attend school regularly.
2. A statement that the parent, guardian or child may request program or curriculum modifications for the child and that the child may be eligible for enrollment in a program for children at risk.
3. A request that the parent meet with appropriate school personnel to discuss the child's truancy.
4. A statement of penalties that may be imposed on the parent or guardian for failure to cause the child to attend school regularly.

The method and frequency of subsequent notices to parents or guardians of habitual truants shall be specified in the School District's truancy procedure.

PUBLICITY AND RECOGNITION FOR POSITIVE SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

A. Recognition for good attendance

Schools are to recognize top attendees utilizing various recognition programs, including but not limited to announcements, student awards and newsletters.

B. Notification to Parents of Attendance Policies/Guidelines

Administration will periodically inform the parents through District publications of the policy and guidelines for student attendance. At the beginning of each school year and as often as may be needed, principals should provide appropriate summaries of attendance policies relating to their students.