

## STUDENT ATTENDANCE

The Board of Education encourages the staff to consider the effects of the school's total environment on attending students. The question of each student's attendance should, so far as the law permits, be viewed in light of what is best for him/her educationally. With this in mind, the staff is urged to make the school program so attractive to each student that he/she will not wish to be absent.

The Board of Education recognizes the need for uniform practices regarding attendance procedures within and among the schools of the District. Therefore, the administration is directed to establish, implement, and support such practices that are in accord with state laws, appropriate to the age of the students and promote fair and consistent interpretation by the students, teachers, administrators, and parent/guardians of the District.

The procedures should clearly differentiate between excused and unexcused absences with provisions for penalties, make-up work, etc., clearly defined. Copies of attendance policies and procedures are provided to students on an annual basis. The Board of Education requires that parents/guardians and staff also be notified of attendance policies and procedures on an annual basis, with copies made available to all members of the school community on request.

All children between the ages of 5 and 18 years, except as provided by law and the policies herein, shall attend school regularly during the full period and hours that school is in session until the end of the semester or term in which the student becomes 18 years of age.

## EXEMPTIONS

1. Any child who is judged to be physically or mentally incapable of attending school (certification by a licensed physician shall be sufficient proof) will not be required to attend.
2. Any child who has graduated from high school will not be required to attend.
3. Students may be excused in accordance with the Board of Education's written attendance policy and with the written approval of the parent or guardian.
4. Students under the age of 18 may be excused from regular school attendance or permitted to attend in lieu of regular school attendance, to participate in specific alternative programs, or in program or curricular modifications. The program or curriculum modifications authorized by state law include, but are not limited to, those outlined in law.

Attendance procedures should be reviewed regularly by the administrative staff.

## STUDENT ATTENDANCE PROCEDURES

## ATTENDANCE AND EXCUSES

It shall be the duty of each building principal to assure the keeping of adequate student personal attendance records and to make required reports to the central administrative office.

It shall also be the responsibility of each building principal to work with the District Administrator to implement and enforce the District's truancy regulations.

All children between the ages of 5 and 18 years, except as provided by law and the policies herein, shall attend school regularly during the full period and hours that school is in session until the end of the semester or term in which the student becomes 18 years of age.

Truancy is defined as any absence of part or all of one or more school days during which the school attendance officer has not been notified by a truant student's parent or guardian of a legal excuse for the student's absence and intermittent attendance carried on for the purpose of defeating the intent of the attendance law.

### EXCUSED ABSENCES

Written approval of a student's parent/guardian is required for an absence to be considered excused.

The building principal is empowered to excuse a student from school attendance for the following reasons:

1. Evidence the student is not physically or mentally capable of attending school or an educational program. The District may request the parent/guardian of the student to obtain a written statement from a licensed physician, dentist, chiropractor, optometrist, psychologist, or Christian Science practitioner living and residing in the state who is listed in the Christian Science Journal, as sufficient proof of the physical or mental condition of the student. An excuse under this paragraph shall be in writing and shall state the time period for which it is valid, not to exceed 30 days.
2. Emergency medical appointments with a licensed physician, dentist, chiropractor, optometrist, psychologist, or Christian Science practitioner.
3. An illness in the immediate family which requires the attendance of the student.
4. Emergencies which prevent attendance which are generally defined as an Act of God or other circumstances beyond the control of the student which, in the discretion of the District Administrator or his/her designee, prevents school attendance.
5. For the purpose of serving as an election official under conditions outlined in Sections 118.15(3)(d) and 7.30(2)(am) of the Wisconsin State Statutes.
6. If the student is in Grade 6-12— for the purpose of sounding “taps” during a military honors funeral for a deceased veteran.
7. Any other reasonable non-discretionary absence deemed appropriate by the school attendance officer.

### PRE-ARRANGED ABSENCES

The following absences will be excused only if prior written approval of a student's parent/guardian has been received:

1. Non-emergency medical or dental appointments with a licensed physician, dentist, chiropractor, optometrist, psychologist, or Christian Science practitioner. Parent/guardians may be requested

to schedule such appointments during the student's free time, before and after school and on non-school days.

2. Bona fide religious holiday.
3. A court appearance or other legal procedure which requires the attendance of the student.
4. Other absences approved by the parent provided written approval has been received by the school prior to the planned absence.

The accumulated absences under any combination of the provisions listed above for pre-arranged absences shall not exceed 10 school days.

#### OTHER ABSENCES

In the event that a request is made that would exceed the 10-day limit for pre-arranged absences from school a student's parent/guardian must submit the reason for the absence to the building principal for review in committee at least 1 week prior to the planned absence. This option is not available to students who are in danger of failing any course during the grading period in which the request is made.

All other absences will be considered unexcused.

#### MAKE-UP WORK

Students with excused absences are entitled to make up the work missed and are responsible for doing so.

A suspended student or a student with an unexcused absence shall not be denied the opportunity to take any quarterly, semester, or grading period examinations, or to complete course work missed during their absence.

When students have been given permission to participate in such activities as music programs, drama presentations, athletics, etc., or if they have a pre-arranged ~~an~~ absence, they should not be penalized for not being present to take tests and participate in the daily work. They will make up work that is missed.

#### PROCEDURES FOR IMPLEMENTING AND ENFORCING THE ATTENDANCE POLICY

The building principal shall enforce District attendance policies via the following means:

1. The parent or guardian of a student who has been truant will be notified of the truancy by personal service, first by phone then by written notice, of which a written record is kept, no later than the end of the next day school is in session. The parent or guardian of a student who is truant shall be told to return the student to school no later than the next day school is in session or to provide a legal excuse for the absence.

"Truancy" is defined as any absence of part or all of one or more school days during which the school attendance officer, has not been notified by a truant student's parent or guardian of a legal excuse for the student's absence and intermittent attendance carried on for the purpose of defeating the intent of the attendance law.

2. The school attendance officer shall notify the parent or guardian of a student who is habitually truant, by registered or certified mail, as soon as the student is identified as being habitually truant.

“Habitual truant” is defined as a student who is absent from school without an acceptable excuse for all or part of five or more school days during a semester.

The notice shall include all of the following:

- A. A statement of the parent’s or guardian’s responsibility under state law to cause the student to attend school regularly.
  - B. A statement that the parent or guardian or student may request program or curriculum modifications for the student and that the student may be eligible for enrollment in a program for children at risk under state law.
  - C. A request that the parent or guardian meet with appropriate school personnel to discuss the student’s truancy. The request shall include:
    1. the name of the school representative with whom the parent or guardian should meet;
    2. the date, time, and location of the meeting;
    3. the name, address, and telephone number of the person to contact to arrange a different date, time or place.
    4. the date for the meeting must be within five school days after the date that the habitual truancy notice has been sent to the student’s parent or guardian. With consent of the student’s parent or guardian, however, the date for the meeting may be extended for an additional five school days.
  - D. A statement of the penalties that may be imposed under state law on the parent or guardian if he or she fails to cause the student to attend school regularly.
3. Before any proceeding may be brought against a student for habitual truancy or against his or her parent for failure to cause the student to attend school regularly, the school attendance officer must provide evidence that appropriate school personnel has, within the school year during which the truancy occurred, done all of the following:
    - A. Met with the student’s parent or guardian to discuss the student’s truancy or attempted to meet with the student’s parent or guardian and received no response or were refused. This does not apply if the required parent meeting is not held within 10 school days after the date that the habitual truancy notice was sent.
    - B. Provided an opportunity for educational counseling to the student to determine whether a change in the student’s curriculum would resolve the student’s truancy, and has considered curriculum modifications possible within the current school program.
    - C. Evaluated the student to determine whether learning problems may be a cause of the student’s truancy and, if so, taken steps to overcome the learning problems. The student need not be evaluated if tests administered to the student within the previous year indicate that the student is performing at his or her grade level.

- D. Conducted an evaluation to determine whether social problems may be a cause of the student's truancy and, if so, taken appropriate action or made appropriate referrals to community agencies.

Items B, C, and D above do not apply if the school attendance officer provides evidence that appropriate school personnel were unable to carry out the activity due to the student's absences from school.

#### PENALTIES FOR TRUANCY

The District will not deny a student credit in a course or subject solely because of a given number of unexcused absences. However, the Board of Education authorizes the District Administrator, or his/her designee, to establish a policy to enhance the full attendance requirement and to determine appropriate action to serve as a deterrent to truancy.

A violation of the Wisconsin School Attendance Law may also result in fines, or imprisonment, or both, as consistent with state law. During a prosecution under this law, if the defendant proves that he/she is unable to comply with the law because of the disobedience of the student, the action shall be dismissed and the child may be proceeded against under state law.

Legal Ref: 118.15, 118.16, 118.162, 118.163 WSS  
Cross Ref: 420 School Admissions; 431 Compulsory School Attendance; District Truancy Plan  
Legal Ref: 115.28(51), 118.15, 118.15(3)(d), 118.16, 118.16(1)(c), 118.16(4)(b), 118.162, 118.163, Chapter 48, 938 WSS  
Cross Ref: 431 Rule Student Attendance Procedures; 344.3 Make-up Work

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