

Regular daily attendance is expected of all students. The Laws of Wisconsin relating to school attendance shall be enforced. Any legal proceedings brought against a child or against the child's parent or guardian shall be processed according to the Statutes.

I. STUDENT ABSENCES AND EXCUSES

- A. The responsibility for regular school attendance of a child rests upon the child's parent(s)/legal guardian.
- B. All excused absences require parent(s)/guardian/legal custodian verification which is to be submitted to the principal or attendance officer, in advance of absence or prior to re-admittance to school.
- C. All teachers shall be required to submit to the school attendance officer daily attendance reports on all students under their charge.
- D. Each absence shall be classified as excused or unexcused.

II. EXCUSED ABSENCES

- A. Absences authorized solely by parent guardian
 - 1. A student is excused from school attendance if his/her parent/guardian submits a written excuse to the school prior to the student's absence from school. A student may be excused under this provision for not more than 10 days in the school year.
- B. The principal or attendance officer is empowered to approve a legal excuse to any student for the following reasons:
 - 1. Personal illness - A note from a doctor, school nurse, or county nurse may be required following excessive and/or questionable absences based on the discretion of the attendance officer or principal.
 - 2. Death in the immediate family and/or a funeral for an immediate family member (other consideration may be made with prior approval).
 - 3. Special circumstances that show good cause as determined by the attendance officer or principal and are approved in advance.
 - 4. Other times, where in the judgement of the principal, it is in the best interest of the student to be absent from school. Such absences will be judged on the merit of each individual case.
 - 5. Suspensions.

III. UNEXCUSED ABSENCES

- A. Students who are absent from school for reasons other than those listed in A and B above are unexcused.
- B. The building principal or attendance officer will deal directly with the student absent for reasons classified as unexcused and will use judgment and discretion in dealing with each individual case. The principal may use any or all of the following methods in dealing with students or with their parents/guardians:
 - 1. Conference and counseling with student
 - 2. Make up of lost time
 - 3. Make up of lost work with or without credit being extended for the work done (it is the student's responsibility to contact the teacher and arrange for a mutually agreed upon time and place for make-up work and exams)
 - 4. Required parent conference
 - 5. Referral to the appropriate agency or to a court of law under state compulsory attendance/truancy laws

IV. EXCUSED ABSENCE PROCEDURE

A. Parent(s)/Legal Guardian Responsibility

If a student is absent from school, the parents will call school before 8:00 a.m. Voice mail is available from 4:30 p.m. until 7:30 a.m. Parents must indicate who is calling, name of student, length of absence, reason for absence, and number calling from. If a question arises regarding legitimacy of the call, the attendance officer or principal will return a call for verification. Failure to contact the school will result in a telephone call to the home or work place of the parent(s)/guardian. If contact is not made, individuals listed on the emergency card will be called. If no information is obtained, the building administrator or designee (police officer or Human Services personnel help may also be contacted) will drive to the residence. Failure to identify the location of the student will result in the notification of law enforcement officials. Students whose parents called will be admitted to class without a written excuse. Their name will be on the excused list. For an anticipated absence, the parent(s)/legal guardian shall provide the attendance officer with a written explanation of the absence prior to the absence.

B. Student Responsibility

Students without a parental call must report to the office on their return for a written excuse to allow them to return to class. If the parent did not call or send a note, the absence will be considered unexcused until proper documentation is received. Reasons for the absence must be documented with the office no later than the day following the first day of return to school. Anytime after this, the absence will automatically be recorded as unexcused. It will be up to the student to clear this unexcused absence with the attendance officer or principal.

V. MAKE-UP ASSIGNMENTS/EXAMINATIONS

All students with absences shall be given the opportunity to make up examinations and work missed in accordance with the guidelines outlined below.

A. Excused Absences

1. Students who are absent from school with the prior written permission of their parent(s)/guardian are required to make up work missed during the absence. The arrangements for making up course work and examinations shall be the same as for other excused absences.
2. Students who are absent from school for reasons that are determined to be excused by the school attendance officer or principal shall be given the opportunity to make up work missed when they return to school. It is the student's responsibility to contact the teacher(s) to make arrangements for making up work missed during an absence from school. The respective teacher shall identify make-up work. If any question arises as to the appropriateness and/or feasibility of making up a particular assignment, the teacher shall discuss the situation with the building principal as to the extent to which make-up work and/or substitute assignments are possible.
3. Examinations missed during an excused absence shall be permitted to be taken at a time mutually agreed upon by the student and the teacher, but within the number of days absent plus one day.

B. Unexcused Absences

Credit in a course or subject shall not be denied solely because of a student's unexcused absence from school. All students with unexcused absences shall be given the opportunity to make up work missed in accordance with the guidelines established in each school building's handbook.

VI. PERMITS TO LEAVE BUILDING

Permits to leave the building will be issued for abbreviated absences with parent permission. Requests for permits, bus passes, and other permission requests must be turned into the office prior to school. Any student entering or leaving school other than at the regular time must sign in or out in the office and are not to leave without permission. Leaving without permission may result in an unexcused absence.

VII. LATE ARRIVING STUDENTS

Students arriving late to school due to transportation reasons, or a lack thereof, will fall into one of the following categories and may expect to receive the respective consequences:

- A. Late Arrival Due to District Transportation System: This category includes late running buses, mechanical problems with the bus, bus drivers missing bus stops, etc. There will be no consequences for School District caused delay.
- B. Late Arrivals Due to Personal Reasons: This category includes problems with personal, family, or other chosen options of transportation outside of the school transportation offered that are the cause of arriving tardy to school. Examples include: dead batteries, going in the ditch, driving slow for icy conditions, etc. These types of cases will be officially listed as "Tardy Unexcused".
- C. Special circumstances that Show Exceptional Cause: This category is reserved for those exceptions to the rule decided at the discretion of the building principal. This is for those extraordinary situations that do not fit the usual policy.

Students and parents are reminded that if alternate transportation to school is chosen, it is their responsibility to be here on time. It is far too difficult and unfair for everybody to excuse some tardies and not others based on whether or not we feel the excuse is legitimate. This policy is intended to eliminate the misuse of the "car trouble" excuse.

VIII. TRUANCY

Truancy means any absence of part or all of one or more school days during which the school has not been notified of the legal cause of such absence by the parent/guardian of the absent student, and also means intermittent attendance carried on for the purpose of defeating the intent of the compulsory attendance law. Parent/guardian notification of legal cause of absence shall be submitted in writing prior to the absence or upon the day of return.

Parents/guardians shall be notified when a student has an unexcused absence(s). Notices shall be made by personal contact, mail or telephone call of which a written record is kept.

Consequences for truanancies (unexcused absences) shall be determined by the building principal.

IX. HABITUAL TRUANCY

Habitual truant means a student who is absent from school without an acceptable excuse for five or more days on which school is held during a semester.

A. Procedure - Legal Referral: The parent/guardian of a student who is a habitual truant shall be notified by certified or registered mail when the student initially becomes a habitual truant. The notice shall include the following:

1. a statement of the parent's/guardian's responsibilities under state law 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/guardian meet with appropriate personnel to discuss the child's truancy. The notice must include the name of the school personnel with whom the parent/guardian should meet, a date, time and place for the meeting and the name,

address and telephone number of a person to contact to arrange a different date, time or place. 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/guardian, however, the date for the meeting may be extended for an additional five school days.

4. A statement of the penalties under state law that may be imposed on the parent/guardian if he/she fails to cause the child to attend school regularly as required by state law.

B. Procedure Toward Legal Referral: A legal referral may be initiated if a poor attendance pattern has continued and if the school attendance officer or principal has completed the following procedures:

1. After the third unexcused absence within a school semester, a letter should be sent to the student's parent or guardian by certified mail, to meet with the student's parent/guardian

- to discuss the student's truancy.
- a. The school attendance officer or principal should be specific when scheduling a meeting with the student's parent/guardian; for example, a specific date, time and place should be identified in the letter.
 - b. Flexibility should be allowed in changing the meeting time if the student's parent/guardian is unable to attend at the specified time due to work or another commitment. This should be done early in the process so that another meeting time can be set without circumventing and lengthening the process.
 - c. The school attendance officer or principal should document attempts to schedule a meeting with the student's parent/guardian and their refusal to meet.
2. After the fourth unexcused absence during a school semester, a letter should be sent to the student's parent or guardian by certified mail. The school will complete the following before a legal referral is made on a fifth truancy within a semester.
- a. Provide an opportunity for educational counseling to the student to determine whether a change in the student's curriculum will resolve the student's truancy and consider curriculum modifications under ss 118.156(1)(d). Educational counseling may be done by regular counselors, principals, teachers, etc. Data previously acquired during the school year may be used to determine educational counseling in situations involving a Child With A Disability. An IEP review meeting must be held to determine if counseling is to become a related service.
 - b. Evaluate the student to determine whether learning problems may be a cause of the student's truancy and, if so, take appropriate action or make appropriate referrals.
 1. If there is a suspected Child With A Disability, a referral should be made to the Director of Pupil services or school psychologist.
 2. The evaluation must include a review of the records, communication with the student, the student's teacher(s) and the student's parent(s)/guardian and observation if appropriate.
 3. Learning problems should be looked at carefully for classic characteristics of a Child With A Disability, or lack thereof, as well as other types of contributing problems (e.g., physical).
 - c. Conduct an evaluation to determine whether social problems may be a cause of the student's truancy and, if so, take appropriate action or make appropriate referrals.

X. RETURN OF A TRUANT STUDENT TO SCHOOL

- A. When a truant student returns or is returned to school, school personnel should meet with the student. All truants, whether occasional or habitual, need attention. The degree of attention may vary, however, depending upon the age of the student and the pattern of truancy.
- B. Additional responses to be made by school personnel regarding truant students returning to school may include, but are not necessarily limited to, the following:
 - assessment of factors contributing to truancy;
 - discussion of alternative educational options and limitations;
 - referral considerations;
 - development of a plan for consequences to truancy;

- counseling guided re-entry to classes/programs;
- tailor-made options for programming students;
- structured work experience programs;
- discussion of student's commitment and responsibility to assist in returning to regular programming;
- follow-up on obligations of students and parents/guardians regarding attendance (commitment to joint cooperation);
- promotion of staff awareness of the problem(s) the student is encountering; and
- review of requirements necessary for students 17 years of age or older to earn a general equivalency diploma.

XI. STUDENT WITHDRAWAL FROM SCHOOL

- A. A student who has reached the age of 16 may be excused from school attendance under the following conditions:
1. the student has requested permission to withdraw and has the written approval of his/her parent/guardian; and
 2. the student and his/her parent or guardian agree, in writing, that the student will participate in a program or curriculum modification leading to the student's high school graduation. Program or curriculum modifications include the following:
 - a. Attendance at a vocational, technical and adult education school in lieu of high school;
 - b. Modifications within the student's current academic program;
 - c. A school work training or work-study program;
 - d. Enrollment in any alternative public school or program located in the School District;
 - e. Enrollment in any nonsectarian private school or program located in the School District which complies with federal non-discrimination requirements (Title VI of Civil Rights Act);
 - f. Home-bound study, including nonsectarian correspondence courses or other courses of study approved by the Board or nonsectarian tutoring provided by the School District; or
 - g. Enrollment in any public educational program outside the School District.
- B. A student who is 17 years of age or over may be excused from school attendance under the following conditions:
1. The student has requested permission to withdraw and has the written approval of his/her parent/guardian; and
 2. The student and his/her parent/guardian agree, in writing, that the student will participate in a program or curriculum modification leading to the student's high school graduation or leading to a high school equivalency diploma.
- Program or curriculum modifications include those identified above.
- C. Withdrawal Procedures
1. Prior to withdrawal from school, the student attendance officer will discuss the program or curriculum modification options with the student and his/her parent/guardian.
 2. The student attendance officer or principal will inform the superintendent, in writing, of the withdrawal request and of the program or curriculum modification(s) leading to high school graduation or a high school equivalency diploma tentatively agreed upon by the student and his/her parent/guardian.

3. The superintendent will present the request and high school equivalency or high school graduation program proposal to the Board for approval.
4. A written agreement must be signed by the student, his/her parent/guardian, the Board and a representative of the high school equivalency program or program leading to the student's high school graduation. This agreement must be signed prior to the student's admission to such program.
5. At least once each semester, the school attendance officer or principal will review compliance with each student's agreement. If it is determined that a student is not complying with the agreement, the student and his/her parent/guardian and the high school equivalency program or program leading to graduation will be notified that the agreement may be modified or suspended in thirty (30) days.
6. If the agreement is suspended, the student will be expected to attend school on a regular basis accordance with state law, Board policy and established procedures. Failure to attend school will result in forfeiture for truancy in accordance with established county ordinances.

LEGAL REF.: Section 118.15 Wisconsin Statutes
118.153
118.16
118.162
118.165

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