

Students

Attendance and Truancy

Attendance

The School Board believes attendance is a key factor in student achievement and success in education. The responsibility for regular student attendance is the responsibility of the parents/guardians and the student.

Student absenteeism should be kept to the minimum; however, the School Board recognizes that some absences are unavoidable and classified “excused absences”.

District students shall be given the opportunity to make up school work missed due to absences that are considered unavoidable.

Student’s absenteeism considered avoidable is classified truancy. The student may be given the opportunity to make up work missed due to an unexcused absence.

The District may request written verification of a student’s absence due to illness from a physician licensed to practice medicine in the State of Illinois after a three day absence.

A student must be in attendance for one-half school day in order to participate in a District extracurricular activity. Emergency situations shall be given due consideration.

ATTENDANCE – Absences and Excused/Unexcused

Student attendance at school is the responsibility of the parents/guardians and the student.

Regular attendance in all classes shall be expected of students. Students shall be made aware that attendance is part of the evaluation in each class and that excessive absences may drastically affect their educational program. The School Board recognizes two kinds of absences – excused and unexcused absence.

Each Building Principal, with the Superintendent’s approval, shall establish rules and guidelines for excused, unexcused and pre-arranged absences. The rules and guidelines shall be included in the Parent/Student Handbook and shall be distributed to all students and their parents or guardians.

The School Board believes that an educational system is organized on the basic premise that all students shall regularly attend school. When a student is absent, the absence shall be treated as excused or unexcused.

Absences shall be excused only for the following reasons:

1. personal illness
2. bereavement
3. quarantine
4. family emergencies
5. medical appointments
6. pre-approved vacations with parents
7. college/university appointments
8. job interviews
9. court appearances
10. observance of religious holidays
11. written requests approved in advance by the administrator

All other absences shall be considered unexcused.

ATTENDANCE – Parental Notification of Unauthorized Absences

In grades kindergarten through eight prior to enrollment of a student, the District shall notify the parent, legal guardian or person having legal custody of the child of his responsibility to authorize any absence and to notify the school in advance or at the time of any absence of the child. At the time of enrollment, the parent, legal guardian or person having legal custody of the child shall provide at least one and not more than two telephone numbers to be used for the purpose of notification of the child's unauthorized absence. The numbers may be changed upon notification to the school.

If any student enrolled in grades kindergarten through eight is absent from school, and there is no record that the absence is for a valid cause, nor notification that the absence has been authorized by the parent, legal guardian, or other person having legal custody of the child, a District employee or other District designated agent shall make a reasonable effort to notify the parent, legal guardian, or person having legal custody of the child's absence from school within two hours after the first class in which the child is enrolled by telephoning the one or two numbers given the school.

The requirements of the Policy shall have been met if notification of an absence has been attempted by telephoning the one or two numbers given the school by the parent, legal guardian or other person having legal custody of a child, whether or not there is any

answer at such telephone number or numbers. Further, the requirements of this Policy shall have been met if the said notification is given to a member of the household of the child's parent, legal guardian or other person having legal custody of the child, provided the member of the household is 10 years of age or older.

Definitions

Tuant - A "truant" is a child subject to compulsory school attendance and who is absent without valid cause from such attendance for a school day or portion thereof.

Valid cause for absence - A child may be absent from school because of illness, observance of a religious holiday, death in the immediate family, family emergency, situations beyond the student's control as determined by the School Board or such other circumstances which cause reasonable concern to the parent for the safety or health of the student.

Chronic or habitual truant - A "chronic or habitual truant" is a child who is subject to compulsory school attendance and who is absent without valid cause from such attendance for 10 percent or more of the previous 180 regular attendance days.

Tuant minor - A child to whom supportive services, including prevention, diagnostic, intervention and remedial services, alternative programs, and other school and community resources have been provided and have failed to result in the cessation of chronic truancy or have been offered and refused.

Truancy

The School District will determine if the student is a truant, chronic or habitual truant, or a truant minor and will maintain a process to identify and track such students as defined in The School Code, Section 26-2a. The Superintendent shall direct the appropriate School District staff to develop diagnostic procedures to be used for identifying the cause(s) of unexcused student absenteeism. The diagnostic procedures shall include, but not be limited to, interviews with the student, his or her parent(s)/guardian(s), and any school official(s) or other people who may have information.

The following supportive services may be offered to truant or chronically truant students:

- parent-teacher conferences
- student and/or family counseling
- information about community agency services

Any 16 or 17 year old resident may, upon providing documentation of dropout status for the previous 6 months, participate in the District's various programs and resources for truants.

If truancy continues after supportive services have been offered, the Building Principal shall refer the matter to the Superintendent. The Superintendent may call upon the resources of outside agencies, such as the juvenile officer of the local police department or the truant office of the Regional Office of Education of Tazewell County. The School Board, Superintendent, School District administrators, and teachers shall assist and furnish such information as they have to aid truant officers.

No punitive action, including out-of-school suspensions, expulsions, or court action shall be taken against a chronic truant for his or her truancy unless available supportive services and other school resources have been provided to the student.

Absence Notification

A student's parent(s)/guardian(s) must: (1) upon the child's enrollment, provide telephone numbers to the Building Principal and update them as necessary, and (2) authorize all absences and notify the school in advance or at the time of the child's absence.

If a student is absent without prior authorization by the parent(s)/guardian(s), the Building Principal or designee shall make a reasonable effort to notify the parent(s)/guardian(s) of the child's absence within 2 hours after the first class by telephoning the numbers given.

Student Employment

The School Board recognizes the appropriateness of a work/study program in the case of specific students. Students who need or desire to work while attending school may do so provided their work commitments do not interfere with their school attendance.

As a general rule, students shall not be employed during the school day unless special permission has been granted by the Superintendent.

Junior and senior students qualified under the Cooperative Work Program in the area of office occupations, JTPA, or others approved by the School Board may be considered for employment by the District if such employment is approved by the Superintendent. Any position for which a qualified student may be employed must be approved by the School Board.

Withdrawal or Exclusion From School

The Superintendent shall establish procedures for student withdrawal from school. However, every attempt shall be made by the entire District staff to encourage and influence all students to remain in school through high school graduation.

The Superintendent or designee shall maintain a protocol for making the notifications required by The School Code, Section 26-3a, concerning students who were removed

from the regular attendance roll, exclusive of transferees, because they were expelled; have withdrawn; left school; withdrew due to extraordinary circumstances; have re-enrolled in school since their names were removed from the attendance rolls; were certified to be chronic or habitual truants; or were previously certified as chronic or habitual truants who have resumed regular school attendance. The status of a driver's license or instructional permit will be jeopardized for a student who is the subject of this notification because of non-attendance unless the non-attendance is due to extraordinary circumstances as determined by the criteria established below.

The criteria to determine whether a student's non-attendance is due to extraordinary circumstances shall include economic or medical necessity or family hardship and such other criteria that the Superintendent believes qualifies.

A process shall also be maintained for the temporary exclusion of a student 17 years of age or older for failing to meet minimum academic or attendance standards according to provisions in The School Code, Section 26(c). A parent/guardian has the right to appeal a decision to exclude a student; the Illinois State Board of Education's rule will control the appeal process, 23 Ill. Admin. Code §1.242.

LEGAL REF.: 105 ILCS 5/26-1, 5/26-2a, 5/26-3b, 5/26-9, 5/26-12, 5/26-13, and 5/26-15.
Hamer v. Board of Education, 383 N.E.2d 231 (2nd Dist. 1978).
Ill. Rev. Stat., ch. 122, para. 26-2b, P.A. 84-212
Ill. Rev. Stat., ch. 122, para. 26-2a, 26-9, 26-12
Hamer v. Board of Education, 582 M/E/ 2d 231 (1978)
Campbell v. Board of Education of New Milford, 475 A. 2d, 289 Conn. (1984)
P.A. 84-1420
Ill. Rev. Stat., ch. 122, para. 26-1
P.A. 84-1338 (1986)
Ill. Rev. Stat., ch. 122, para 26-3b
Hamer v. Board of Education 383 N.E. 2d 231 (1978)

CROSS REF.: 6:110, 7:80, 7:190, 7:50

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