

Section 400: Students

Compulsory School Attendance

Code #431.00

The Tri-County Area School District Board of Education understands that regular, punctual attendance is one of the most critical habits students can develop, because success in school and in future employment is strongly related to punctuality and regular attendance. Absences of pupils from classroom learning experiences disrupt the instructional process and the benefit of classroom instruction cannot be entirely regained. Consequently, absent pupils frequently experience great difficulty in achieving the maximum benefits of school.

The process of education requires a continuity of instruction, classroom participation, learning experiences, and study to attain maximum educational benefits for each individual. Interaction of pupils with one another in the classroom and their participation in well-planned instructional activity under the direction of skilled teachers are vital to this purpose. Therefore, it is critical that absences and tardiness be kept to minimum, for schools cannot successfully teach pupils who are not present and employers are reluctant to hire or retain employees with poor attendance patterns.

STUDENT ATTENDANCE PROCEDURES

Key Terms

School Attendance Officer: The District Administrator or his/her designee shall serve as the school attendance officer for the District. The School Attendance Officer is responsible for dealing with all matters relating to school attendance and truancy. All teachers shall submit daily attendance reports on all students under their charge.

Excused Absences: Any pupil absences that have been approved by the School Attendance Officer in accordance with this policy.

Truancy: Any absence from school for all or part of one or more school days where the School Attendance Officer has not approved the absence or intermittent attendance carried on to defeat the intent of Wisconsin's Compulsory Attendance Law. For purposes of this definition, "part of one or more school days" shall include unexcused tardiness to class that exceeds 10 minutes.

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Excessive Absences: Accumulated excused or truant absences that are concerning or problematic to a student's education or overall performance. Generally, more than 10 combined absences in a school year are considered excessive.

Habitual Truancy: Truancy for all or part of five (5) school days in one school semester.

Student Absences and Excuses

- 1) The responsibility for regular school attendance by the student rests upon the student's parent or guardian
- 2) **Excused Absences**—All excused absences require that the parent/guardian notify the School Attendance Officer or his/her designee.
 - a) By a Parent/Guardian - A student may be excused by a parent or guardian for an activity that is important to the family if the parent or guardian submits a written excuse to the school prior to the student's absence. A student may be excused by a parent or guardian for up to 10 days in a school year.
 - b) By the District - The School Attendance Officer or his/her designee has the discretion to determine whether any absences, not covered above, will be considered excused. Generally, absences will be classified as excused if caused by:
 - i) Physical or Mental Illness;
 - ii) Medical, dental, or other appointments that cannot be scheduled outside the school day;
 - iii) An emergency in the family or other crisis that requires the absence of the student because of family responsibilities;
 - iv) A death in the immediate family or funerals for relatives or close friends;
 - v) Religious holidays;
 - vi) Inclement weather (when school is in session);

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- vii) Attendance at special events of educational value as approved by the School Attendance Officer or designee;
- viii) Approved school activities during class time; or
- ix) Court appearances or other legal proceedings or related matters.

Parents/Guardians must notify the School Attendance Officer or his/her designee of the need for an excused absence as soon as practical. The District may request that additional documentation be provided such as a doctor's note or written acknowledgement of the cause of the absence from the parent/guardian.

- 3) **Truancy**—Students whose absences are not otherwise excused under this policy are truant and subject to the penalties provided by school rules, local ordinance, and state law. The specific consequences for an instance of truancy shall be determined by the principal for the student's grade level or his/her designee.

Within 2 days of a report of truancy the School Attendance Officer shall contact the student's parent/guardian to notify him/her of the truancy, direct the parent/guardian to return the student to school no later than the next school day or provide a valid excuse under state law, and if applicable, notify him/her of the consequence of habitual truancy on open enrollment eligibility. Notice may be made by personal contact, mail, or telephone call. Notice by personal contact or telephone must be attempted before attempting notice by mail. In any case, a written record of record of notice must be kept regardless of how notice is given.

- 4) **Excessive Absences**— Parents/Guardians may be notified in writing where students have accumulated excessive absences. This shall be done whether the absences are excused or unexcused, except that when the student is under doctor's treatment and a written statement from a physician or licensed practitioner is on file. The intent of the letter is to provide parents/guardians with updated information related to the student's attendance record and to remind them of the impact attendance has on learning and overall school performance.

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- 5) **Habitual Truancy** - The parent/guardian of a student who is a habitual truant shall be notified by certified mail when the student initially becomes a habitual truant. The notice shall include the following:
- a) A statement of the parent's/guardian's responsibilities under state law to cause the child to attend school regularly.
 - b) 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 services for children at risk.
 - c) A request that the parent/guardian meet with appropriate personnel to discuss the child's truancy. The notice must include
 - i) the name of the school personnel with whom the parent/guardian should meet,
 - ii) a date, time, and place for the meeting within five school days after the day that the habitual truancy notice was sent or within ten school days with the consent of the student's parent/guardian, and
 - iii) the name, address and telephone number of a person to contact to arrange a different date, time or place.
 - d) 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.
 - e) A statement that habitual truancy may result in termination of open enrollment in the succeeding semester or school year.
- 6) **Truancy Plan** - The Board will issue a Truancy Plan based upon the recommendations of the County Truancy Committee convened under State law, the Board's policies and procedures, and applicable provisions of State law. The Board will review and, if appropriate, revise the Truancy Plan as needed. The Truancy Plan will include at a minimum, the following:
- a) procedures to be followed for notifying the parents or guardians of the unexcused absences of a student who is truant or a habitual truant and for meeting and conferring with such parents or guardians;

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- b) plans and procedures for identifying truant children of all ages and returning them to school, including the identity of school personnel to whom a truant child shall be returned;
- c) methods to increase and maintain public awareness of and involvement in responding to truancy within the District;
- d) a provision addressing the immediate response to be made by school personnel when a truant child is returned to school;
- e) the types of truancy cases to be referred to the District Attorney and the time periods within which the District Attorney will respond to and take action on the referrals;
- f) plans and procedures to coordinate the responses to the problems of habitual truants, as defined under Sec. 118.16(1)(a), Wis. Stats., with public and private social services agencies; and
- g) methods to involve the truant child's parent or guardian in dealing with and solving the child's truancy problem.

Make Up Assignments/Examinations

- 1) All students with absences shall be given the opportunity to make up examinations and work missed in accordance with the guidelines outlined below. Credits in a course or subject shall not be denied solely because of a student's unexcused absence from school.
- 2) **Excused Absences**
 - a) 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.
 - b) Students who are absent from school for reasons that are determined to be excused by the school attendance officer or designee 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 that absence from school. The respective teacher shall identify make-up work. If any

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- 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.
- c) 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.
- 3) **Unexcused Absences** - All students with unexcused absence shall be given the opportunity to make up work missed in accordance with the following guidelines:
- a) Credit in a course or subject shall not be denied solely because of a student's unexcused absence from school.
- b) Students with unexcused absences shall be permitted to make up major examinations (unit, quarter, semester or grading period) missed. Examination make-up date(s) shall be determined by administrator/teacher discretion. Students with an unexcused absence on the day of an examination shall make up the exam on the day of return.
- c) Credit may be given for the completion of make-up work assigned. The extent to which make-up work credit can be applied shall be judged on an individual basis. Credit for make-up work can only be given after the student has satisfied consequences imposed for unexcused absences. The building principal and respective teachers are to apply professional discretion as to make-up work assigned and the degree of credit and/or grades given.

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