

**Student Attendance Procedures**

It is recognized that attendance in the Tri- County Area School District is a condition of learning as well as training for job skills. As is essential with any job/career, regular attendance is essential if one is to be successful in school. By consistently making the choice to just be here, students greatly improve their chances at realizing success in school.

In general, excused absences include:

- Illness or injury.
- Medical or dental appointments.
- Family vacations.
- Religious holidays.
- Court appearances or other legal procedures.
- School-sponsored activities.
- Emergencies or extenuating circumstances as approved by administration.

State law allows a parent or guardian to excuse a child for all or part of 10 days in a school year for any reason. The law requires that the parent must excuse the child in writing before the absence.

When a parent has excused a student from school for all or part of 10 days during a given school year, the Principal or school resource officer will notify the parent/guardian of this, and may choose to require that any further absences be validated with a signed note from a physician or other medical professional, police officer, social worker, probation officer, lawyer, or judge in order to be considered excused.

Absences which are planned in advance (such as family vacation trips) should be excused by a written note from the parent/guardian at least one week prior to leaving. An excuse form must be filled out by the office. This form must be taken by the student to each of his/her teachers to give them notification of the absence and to make arrangements for getting class assignments in advance and for turning in make-up work after the absence. It is highly important that the student take the time to meet with each of his/her teachers to make these arrangements for the work that is to be missed during the period of absence. It is also expected that all work issued to the student prior to the vacation be completed when the student returns to school and that any additional work — including missing quizzes or tests — be completed within three days after the student's return to school (unless other arrangements are approved by his/her individual teacher). Vacations

which take place the last week of school may prohibit students from completing all work required for a satisfactory grade in a course.

When a student is absent from school, the parent/guardian or adult student should phone the office before 8 a.m. on the day of the absence. Families without phones should make arrangements with the office. If a parent/guardian or adult student does not call by 8:00 a.m. on the day of the absence, the building secretary will make a reasonable attempt to call the parent/guardian to follow-up with the pupil's absence. All absences will be considered unexcused unless they have been excused by a parent/guardian or adult student. If a written note or a phone call excusing the absence is not received by the day that the student returns to school, the building secretary will make one more attempt to call the parent/guardian to address the absence. If the absence is unable to be confirmed as excused at this point in time, it will be considered unexcused.

Students having doctor or dental appointments may be requested to present their appointment cards, receipts, or notes on the doctor's or dentist's letterhead. Every effort should be made to schedule appointments on vacation days or outside of the school day.

No student is to leave the building during school hours for any reason without first having received permission in the office. All students in a supervised work experience must be authorized to leave school each day. Unauthorized exits will be considered an unexcused absence.

A student leaving school for any reason during the day must sign out on the sign out sheet or complete the electronic sign out form in the office before leaving school. When a student returns to school after having signed out earlier that day or when a student arrives at school after classes have begun for the day, he/she must sign in on the sign in sheet in the office. Students who fail to sign in or sign out or who supply incomplete or false information on these sheets will be subject to disciplinary action.

Obtaining and completing make-up work is the student's responsibility. The faculty members have a responsibility to assign make-up work that corresponds directly to the work missed during a student's absence. Upon returning to school, students are to submit any work that they had been issued prior to their absence (assuming it was due during their absence) and are responsible for getting their missed work and determining a schedule for make-up assignments with each of their teachers. Work not turned in within the allotted time shall revert to "0." Teachers may require students to make up quizzes and examinations outside the normal school hours.

All school-sponsored activities (field trips, sports, etc.) shall not be considered an absence, but an extension of the classroom. While field trips can be very worthwhile experiences, it is highly important to remember that absences due to field trips can unintentionally have a negative impact on a student's progress in other classes. Prior to a field trip, it is the student's responsibility to meet with the teachers of his/her other classes to formulate a plan for completing any work that is missed due to the field trip. The expectation is that all work originally due on the date of the field trip be submitted to respective teachers upon returning to class. Additionally, due dates for work assigned on the day of the trip apply for all students.

To receive the recognition of having perfect attendance, a student may not have been absent (excused or unexcused) for more than three consecutive class periods per month except for participation in school-sponsored activities, per the given school year.

Students who are absent from school without an excuse or who are suspended from school shall not be permitted to take part in any extra-curricular or co-curricular activities that take place on those days, including participating in or attending sports events, dances, club activities, music concerts, drama productions, banquets, or other activities.

**Senior Attendance — During each semester of their senior year, students must not be absent (excused or unexcused) from school for more than 80 class periods (10 school days) in order to be eligible to participate in the graduation ceremony. The principal may waive this requirement in severe circumstances.**

### **Unexcused Absences**

A student will be considered unexcused if he/she is absent with or without the knowledge and permission of the parent or guardian for a reason other than described above.

Coursework missed by a student with an unexcused absence, including examinations, shall be made up at the time and place determined by the instructor. Reduction of grade will be at the instructor's discretion. Credit for a course, however, shall not be denied solely because of a student's unexcused absence from school.

### **Truancy**

A student will be considered truant if he/she is absent without the knowledge or permission of the parent/guardian for part of or all of one or more school days during

which the school attendance officer or designee has not been notified of the excused or unexcused reason by the parent/guardian. Truancy also means intermittent attendance carried on for the purpose of defeating the compulsory attendance law.

### **Habitual Truant**

Provided the District has taken the actions required by law, the school attendance officer, or designee, shall notify the parent/guardian of a child who has been habitually truant (See Exhibits 1 through 4).

The school attendance officer, or designee, shall send a letter to Social Services when the child becomes an habitual truant (see Exhibit 5) According to State Statutes, the definition of a habitual truant is a pupil who is absent without an acceptable excuse for part or all of five school days during a semester.

The letter shall include the following:

- A statement of the parent's/guardian's responsibility under state law to cause the child to attend school regularly;
- 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;
- A request that the parent/guardian meet with appropriate school personnel to discuss the child's truancy. This notice shall 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 time and place; and
- 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.

### **Exceptions to School Attendance for Students 16 Years of Age or Older**

A student who is 16 years of age or older and is a child at risk may attend a technical college in lieu of high school or on a part-time basis under the following conditions:

- The student has requested permission to do so from the Board and has the written approval of his/her parent or guardian; and
- The student and his/her parent or guardian agree, in writing that the student will participate in a program leading to the student's high school graduation.

A student who is 16 years of age or older may be excused from school attendance under the following conditions:

- The student has requested permission to be excused and has the written approval of his/her parent or guardian; and
- The student and his/her parent or guardian agrees, 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 may include, but are not limited to:
  - Modifications within the student's current academic program;
  - A school-to-work training or work study program
  - Home-bound study, including nonsectarian correspondence courses or other courses of study approved by the Board or nonsectarian tutoring provided by the district;
  - Enrollment in any nonsectarian private school or program located in the district which complies with federal nondiscrimination laws;
  - Enrollment in any alternative public school or program located in the district; or
  - Enrollment in any public educational program located outside the district.
- A student who is 17 years of age or over may be excused from school attendance under the following conditions:
  - The student has requested permission to be excused and has the written approval of his/her parent or guardian; and
  - 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 or leading to a high school equivalency diploma. Program or curriculum modifications include those identified above.
  - Prior to being excused from school under the above items, the high school principal or designee will discuss the program or curriculum modification options with the student and his/her parent or guardian. The high school principal or designee will inform the District Administrator, in writing, of the 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 or guardian.
  - A written agreement must be signed by the student, his/her parent or 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.

- At least once each semester, the high school principal or designee 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 or guardian and the guidance counselor shall meet to review the current academic status to see if the signed agreement requires modification so the student remains in compliance with the school attendance law.

### **School Attendance Officer Responsibility**

The Principals will serve as the school attendance officers for the District and deal with all matters relating to school attendance and truancy.

Annually, the school attendance officers shall determine how many students enrolled in the District were absent in the previous year and whether the absences were excused. This information will be made available to the District Administrator.

The school attendance officers shall furnish student attendance information to the county welfare agency as requested for implementation of state law regarding welfare and family service programs. Student attendance information shall only be released if appropriate "release of confidentiality" forms have been filed with the District in accordance with provisions of state law and the District's student records policy.

The school attendance officers shall inform students and their parents/guardians annually of their right to request program or curriculum modifications and of the types of program or curriculum modifications which can be made. When a request is made by a student or his/her parent/guardian, a decision regarding the request must be made within 90 days of the request except as otherwise specifically provided. If the request relates to a student who has been examined by a multidisciplinary team and has not been recommended for special education, the decision must be within 30 days of the request. If a request is denied, the reasons for the denial must be given.

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