

## Attendance

Regular attendance is one of the most important factors determining success or failure in school and is the responsibility of the individual student and his/her parent or guardian. Poor attendance results in lower grades, disinterest in school, and ultimately in dropping out of school or failure. Teachers are willing to assist students who must miss school for a legitimate reason; however, teachers are not expected to devote extra time and effort to assist students who have missed school for some unnecessary reason.

### Illinois Attendance Law

1. Illinois Law requires that whoever has custody or control of any child between the ages of 6 (by September 1) and 17 years of age shall assure that the child attends school in the district in which he or she resides, during the entire time school is in session (unless the child has already graduated from high school).
2. Illinois law also requires that whoever has custody or control of a child who is enrolled in the school, regardless of the child's age, shall assure that the child attends school during the entire time school is in session.
3. The Secretary of the Board of Education shall furnish quarterly to the Regional Superintendent a list of pupils, excluding transfers, who have been expelled, withdrawn, or left school. The Regional Superintendent shall inform the county truant officer who shall investigate to see that such pupils are in compliance with state law.
4. There are certain exceptions to the attendance requirement for children who: attend private school; are physically or mentally unable to attend school (including a pregnant student suffering medical complications as certified by her physician); are lawfully and necessarily employed; are between the ages of 12 and 14 while in confirmation classes; have a religious reason requiring absence; or are 16 or older and employed and enrolled in a graduation incentive program.

### Absences with Advanced Notice/Pre-Arranged Absence Form

Parents/guardians of a student who know of an absence in advance, shall notify the principal of the absences stating the date and reason for the absences. Students shall notify teachers to receive any instructions for work that will be missed. A Pre-Arranged Absence Form may be found in the high school office and must be submitted the day before the student is absent. The Pre-Arranged Absence Form NEEDS TO BE COMPLETED for any non-school related absence such as: family trips/vacations, hunting days/trips, weddings, college graduations, family reunions, etc. The Pre-Arranged Absence Form DOES NOT NEED TO BE COMPLETED for any school related absence, BP3 day, college visit, doctor's appointment, court appearance, funeral, or illness/sickness the day of. Students will be allowed to use the Pre-Arranged Absence Form two (2) times during the school year. However, these days of excused absences will count towards the nine (9) absence limit for the school year. After a student has nine (9) excused absences for the school year, they need a doctor's note for any absence to be considered excused.

### Excused and Unexcused Absences

- If a student is going to be absent from school, a parent must call/email the high school office (217)-322-4311 ext. 603 before 9:00 a.m. Please leave a message if there is no answer. If the office does not receive a phone call or contact is not made, the absence will be unexcused. Phone calls/emails from parents/guardians will not be accepted the day after an unexcused absence to excuse the student the previous day.
- Excused absences include: mental health days (5), illness, observance of a religious holiday or

event, death in the immediate family, family emergency, situations beyond the control of the student, circumstances that cause reasonable concern to the parent/guardian for the student's mental, emotional, or physical health or safety, attending a military honors funeral to sound TAPS, or other reason as approved by the building principal. Students eligible and registered to vote in a local, state or federal election may be excused from between 8:00 a.m. and 10:00 a.m. to vote. Additionally, a student will be excused for up to 5 days in cases where the student's parent/guardian is an active-duty member of the uniformed services and has been called to duty for, is on leave from, or has immediately returned from deployment to a combat zone or combat-support postings. Students eligible and registered to vote in a local, state or federal election may be excused from between 8:00 a.m. and 10:00 a.m. to vote. The Board of Education, in its discretion, may excuse a student for additional days relative to such leave or deployment. A student and the student's parent/guardian are responsible for obtaining assignments from the student's teachers prior to any excused absences and for ensuring that such assignments are completed by the student prior to his or her return to school.

- Any absence after nine (9) absences for the year **MUST BE EXCUSED BY A DOCTOR; A PARENT CALL DOES NOT EXCUSE THE STUDENT.** Exceptions to this policy shall be at the discretion of the administration.
- Upon nine (9) unexcused absences, state law considers a student truant. If a student has nine (9) unexcused absences, a student will be referred to the Truancy officer at the Regional Office and disciplinary action will be assigned.
- Diagnostic procedures to be used for identifying the causes of unexcused student absenteeism will include interviews with the student, his or her parent or guardian, and any school officials who may have information about the reasons for the student's attendance problem.
- If a teacher dismisses a student from his/her classroom, this is considered an unexcused absence for that period and disciplinary action will be assigned. Due to this being an unexcused absence, the student will not be allowed to participate in any extracurricular activities that day/night.
- For students to receive an excused absence for "hunting" students must complete a pre-arranged absence form and bring in their hunting tag/permit for the office staff to copy one (1) day (24 hours) prior to the absence. Failure to meet the requirements will result in the date(s) being an unexcused absence(s).
- Students must be in attendance for the entire school day prior to participating in any practice or activity. **Students will be given 1 warning each semester. Exceptions to this policy shall be at the discretion of the administration and students will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis. A decision in one case does not set precedent for future cases.**
  - **Examples of Exceptions (exceptions include but are not limited to): medical appointment, dentist appointment, orthodontist appointment, dermatologist appointment, court, or funeral.**
  - If the student is absent due to medical appointment, the note received from the medical office must state that the student is released to play/practice.

All students who are absent all day or leave school ill may not attend extracurricular events or school functions that evening.

### **Homework Assignments/Make-Up Work**

When a parent or guardian notifies the office concerning an absence, they should also request assignments if desired. Parents and students are encouraged to email the teachers for homework as well as check the school website. All teachers will be posting their assignments on the school website. Students are responsible for arranging to have their assignments picked up in the office and to get books

or anything else they may need retrieved from their lockers. Students will have one day for each day of absence to make-up homework when they are gone for any reason.

### **Leaving School**

If a student becomes ill during the school day or must leave for other reasons, they must sign out in the office. A parent/guardian must be notified before they are allowed to leave. Students must use the phone in the office to contact parents if they are ill and need to go home. All students must check out in the office and a parent/guardian must be notified before that individual is allowed to leave. Notifications include written note, phone call, or e-mail. Failure to follow this procedure will result in an automatic unexcused absence for each class period, and discipline will be applied.

### **Tardies**

There are 3 minutes passing time between classes. A tardy is given to any student that is up to 3 minutes late to class without having a pass from a teacher stating a reason for being late. Tardy counts are cumulative for each quarter and start over at the beginning of a new quarter. If a student is absent from class more than 3 minutes, he/she will be considered absent for that class period. See the Discipline Code Guide for the consequences of tardiness.

### **Truancy**

Student attendance is critical to the learning process. Truancy is therefore a serious issue and will be dealt with in a serious manner by the school and district. Students who miss more than 1% but less than 5% of the prior 180 regular school days without valid cause (a recognized excuse) are truant. Students who miss 5% or more of the prior 180 regular school days without valid cause are chronic truants. The school will collect and regularly review its chronic absence data in order to identify the students who most need support and how best to support them. Students who are chronic truants will be offered support services and resources aimed at correcting the truancy issue. These services shall include, but need not be limited to, parent conferences, student counseling, family counseling, and information about existing community services that are available to truant and chronically truant students and relevant to their needs.

If chronic truancy persists after support services and other resources are made available, the school and district will take further action, including:

- Referral to the truancy officer
- Reporting to officials under the Juvenile Court Act
- Referral to the State's Attorney
- Appropriate school discipline

A student who misses 15 consecutive days of school without valid cause and who cannot be located or, after exhausting all available support services, cannot be compelled to return to school is subject to expulsion from school. A parent or guardian who knowingly and willfully permits a child to be truant is in violation of State law.