

STUDENT ATTENDANCE

INTRODUCTION

It is the philosophy of the Indian River School District that students need to attend school if they are to succeed within the educational process. Parents/guardians can assist in this by doing the following to minimize absences from school:

- Schedule medical and dental appointments after regular school hours.
- Schedule family vacations at times that do not interfere with school.

Distribution of Attendance Policy:

- This attendance policy shall be posted on the district website.
- The school principal or designee shall distribute the school's attendance policy to their educators and support staff at the beginning of each school year.
- The school principal or designee will notify a parent/guardian, or relative caregiver of each student in writing where this policy can be accessed, and will provide a hard copy of this policy to a parent, guardian, or relative caregiver upon request or when absences have exceeded ten (10) unexcused absences. This hard copy will include phone numbers to area supports and a school contact number.
- The school principal or designee shall distribute and explain these policies to every student at the beginning of each school year, and to each student enrolling or re-enrolling during the school year.

School-sponsored activities are exempt and will not count toward the student's absentee record. However, students who approach the maximum number of allowable absences may be prohibited from participating in school-sponsored activities. The final decision will be made by the building principal.

Letters to the parent/guardian (address on file) and phone calls will be utilized throughout the school year to inform parents and students of accumulation of absences. If for any reason, a period of absence extends beyond three (3) consecutive days, the parent/guardian should contact the guidance department to determine if supportive instruction is warranted.

DEFINITION OF EXCUSED ABSENCE

1. An absence followed by a note from the parent/guardian within 2 days of the students return to school (**not to exceed 10 days per school year**). *In the event absenteeism exceeds (10) ten days within the given school year, any subsequent parent notes received will be considered Unexcused Absences.*
2. An absence followed by a documented note from a member of the medical or professional community for services such as: medical, dental, mental health, court system, attorney, or death within the student's immediate family, etc...

Examples of Documented Notes from the Medical/Professional Community:

- Hospitalization, as noted by the hospital or medical profession
- Written physician's excuse
- Known chronic illnesses or contagious diseases, as noted by a medical professional.
- Nurse's Office excuse in the event a student is sent home for medical reasons
- In the care of any approved social agency, whether public or private, as noted by that agency.
- Death in the child's own home or in the home of the grandparents, time not to exceed one (1) week. Funerals of other relatives or close friends, not to exceed one (1) day if in the locality; or three (3) days, if at some distance or outside of the state, as noted by a Funeral Home or other official means.
- Legal business; legal professional or court.
- **Religious Holidays:** A student shall be excused for religious holidays when the school receives a student's parent, guardian, or relative caregiver's signed, written excuse, including, but not limited to the religious holidays listed in 14 Delaware Administrative Code Section 615, School Attendance.
 - Rosh Hashanah (Jewish)
 - Yom Kippur (Jewish)
 - Dussehra (Hindu)
 - Sukkot (Jewish)
 - Diwali (Hindu)
 - Birth of Bahá'u'lláh (Baha'i)
 - Sangha Day (Buddhist)
 - Maha Shivaratri (Hindu)
 - Naw- Rúz (Baha'i)
 - Holi (Hindu)
 - Ram Navami (Hindu)
 - Beginning of Ramadan (Islamic)
 - Theravada (Buddhist)
 - Laitlat Ul Qadr (Islamic)
 - Eid al-Fitr (end of Ramadan) (Islamic)
 - Vesak (Buddhist)
 - Shavuot (Jewish)
- Suspension from school.
- Family trip/event which was previously submitted to the building principal for review/approval within 5 days of the trip or event. These requests may be granted on a case by case basis with consideration of the student's existing attendance record, grades, number of days requested, justifiable cause/purpose for request. Call the school office for request form.
- **Civic Engagements:** Each grade 6-12 student shall be permitted one excused absence per school year to attend civic engagements, such as visits to the United States Capitol, Delaware Legislative Hall, political or cultural significance sites,

to advocate or testify on behalf of legislation, or to participate in a rally, march, or protest. The student's parent, guardian, or relative caregiver must submit a signed, written excuse which is received by the school at least three (3) days before the student's absence.

Students, who are also parents, may provide any of the documentation stated above when caring for their own children.

IRSD recognizes the importance of student's mental and physical health. At times, students may miss school for reasons related to their mental well-being. When students miss school for mental health reasons, it is essential to connect them to resources based on their needs, similarly to going to a doctor for a physical illness.

This policy defines mental and behavioral health and provides resources to support students' absences due to social, emotional and behavioral wellness.

Definitions:

Mental health is the emotional, psychological, and social well-being of a person. Mental health issues may include, but are not limited to, mood, anxiety, and post-traumatic stress.

Behavioral health encompasses mental health and relates to habits that have an impact on the overall mental and physical health. Behavioral health issues may include, but are not limited to, examples such as substance abuse, eating disorders, self-harm and addiction.

CONNECTING WITH SUPPORTS & RESOURCES WITHIN THE SCHOOL

It is important to establish and maintain communication with your student's school counselor when absences are related to social, emotional or behavioral wellness. The school counselor can assist with supporting the student in school, as well as connect them to additional supports outside the school. School counselors can also help students communicate with teachers and return to school successfully. The school counselor can be reached by calling the school directly. Additional outside resources can be found at the end of this policy.

DEFINITION OF UNEXCUSED ABSENCE

1. An absence which does not include a parent/guardian note within the two (2) day time frame of the student's return to school.
2. Any absence in excess of (10) days without a documented note for a medical/professional reason.

SCHOOL ASSIGNMENTS AND ASSESSMENTS DURING ABSENCES

It is the responsibility of the student and the parent/guardian to request class work, homework, assignments, and tests missed when not in attendance. A student or the parent/guardian must request to make up the schoolwork within two (2) days after returning to school. A student who is absent due to a religious holiday observance shall not be deprived of any award or eligibility to compete for any award. Teachers are discouraged from scheduling major grading events, such as tests, examinations, presentations, or project due dates on religious holidays. A student who

misses a grading event due to an excused absence for observance of a religious holiday must be allowed the opportunity to take the test on an alternate day or take an alternate test or be given some other means to recover credit.

UNEXCUSED TARDIES AND EARLY DISMISSALS

Definition of Excused Tardy/Early Dismissal- A documented note for a medical/professional reason.

Definition of Unexcused Tardy/Early Dismissal- A tardy without a documented note for a medical/professional reason. *Written explanations from home with reasons such as, car trouble, personal business, traffic, and other obligations are not excused.*

Each building will monitor students who arrive late to school or leave school early. Students are limited to no more than four (4) tardies and/or early dismissals within a single calendar month. Students accumulating tardies/dismissals in excess of this limitation shall be subject to disciplinary consequences according to the district code of conduct.

RETENTION/LOSS OF CREDITS FOR DAYS ABSENT

Once a student has exhausted the maximum number of ten (10) days absenteeism with the use of parent notes and continues to be absent without a medical/professional documented note, he/she may be considered for retention/denial of any or all credit(s) by the Building Attendance Review Committee for that particular school year.

BUILDING ATTENDANCE REVIEW COMMITTEE

1. Each school building in the Indian River School District shall establish a Building Attendance Review Committee which may be comprised of the following personnel:

Principal and/or Assistant Principal
 Guidance Counselor
 Classroom Teacher
 Nurse
 Visiting Teacher
 Special Education Coordinator
 School Climate Personnel
 Other staff members as may be needed

2. The responsibility of the Building Attendance Review Committee is to review the record of any student who has exceeded the provisions of the attendance policy. Any student with a history of poor attendance as substantiated by either a "Notice of Prosecution" for a violation of Delaware school attendance law or a parent meeting with the Building Attendance Review Committee may be subject to more restrictive attendance criteria as established by the Building Attendance Review Committee per IRSD regulation.
3. If the Review Committee determines that the student has violated the Indian River School

District Policy, then the committee shall follow the due process procedure as outlined in this policy.

DISTRICT ATTENDANCE REVIEW COMMITTEE

1. The Indian River School District shall establish a District Attendance Review Committee which may be comprised of the following personnel:
 - District-level administrator designated by the superintendent
 - High school administrator
 - Middle school administrator
 - Elementary school administrator
 - Elementary counselor
 - Secondary counselor
 - Nurse
 - Other staff members as needed
2. The responsibility of the District Attendance Review Committee is to review the decisions of each school's Building Attendance Review Committee to determine that decisions are in accordance with the district's student attendance policy.
3. The District Attendance Review Committee shall hear student appeals.
4. In those cases where appeals are upheld, the committee shall follow the due process procedures as outlined in this policy.

DUE PROCESS

1. The Building Attendance Review Committee shall meet once a student has exceeded the provisions of the attendance policy.
2. If the Building Attendance Review Committee determines that a student in grade K-12 has violated the Indian River School District student attendance policy and determines the student is being retained/denied credit, the committee shall notify the parent/guardian by certified mail.
3. The student or parent/guardian must notify the building principal, in writing, within five (5) school days from the delivery of the certified mailing to appeal the decision of the Building Attendance Review Committee.
4. Once the appeal is requested, the District Attendance Review Committee shall meet within five (5) school days of the hearing request for the purpose of hearing the student's appeal. The District Attendance Review Committee shall have the right to affirm, reverse, or modify the decision of the building Attendance Review Committee.
5. The District Attendance Review Committee shall inform the parent/guardian of its decision by a certified mail within three (3) school days of the hearing.
6. If the District Attendance Review Committee affirms the decision of the building

Attendance Review Committee, the student may appeal to the Office of the Superintendent.

7. If all appeals are denied, the student may appeal to the Board of Education. The Board of Education shall have the right to affirm, reverse, or modify the decision of the Office of the Superintendent.

Students who follow the due process procedures of this policy as a result of receiving notification that they are in violation of the Indian River School District Student Attendance policy shall continue to attend school under the guidelines of this policy.

RESOURCES OUTSIDE OF SCHOOL

EMERGENCY (LOCAL)

Police/Fire/Ambulance	911
Child Mental Health Crisis Line	1-800-969-HELP (4357)
Crisis Text Line	Text DE to 741741
Sexual Assault Crisis Services (Contact Lifeline)	1-800-262-9800

NATIONAL HOTLINES & RESOURCES

<u>LGBT National Help Center</u>	1-800-246-7743 <i>call/online chat</i>
<u>LGBTQ Youth Crisis Line</u>	1-866-488-7386 <i>call/text START to 678-678/online chat</i>
<u>National Eating Disorders Association</u>	1-800-931-2237 <i>call/text/online chat</i>
<u>National Domestic Violence Hotline</u>	1-800-799-SAFE (7233) <i>call/online chat</i>
<u>National Human Trafficking Resource Center</u>	1-888-373-7888 <i>call/text/online chat</i>
<u>National Sexual Assault Hotline</u>	1-800-656-HOPE (4673) <i>call/online chat</i>
<u>National Teen Dating Abuse Hotline</u>	1-866-331-9474 <i>call/text LOVEIS to 678-678/online chat</i>
<u>S.A.F.E. Alternatives (cutting/self-injury)</u>	1-800-DONTCUT (366-8288)
<u>SAMHSA National Helpline (substance abuse)</u>	1-800-662-HELP (4357)
<u>Suicide Prevention Lifeline</u>	1-800-273-TALK (8255)

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