

**RICHFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
ATTENDANCE EXPECTATIONS AND INTERVENTIONS**

**I. PURPOSE**

Absences and tardiness interfere with a student's ability to learn. Because regular attendance is so important to student success, Richfield Public Schools has established expectations regarding attendance for all students. The District has also identified interventions to support students in meeting attendance expectations and to improve academic achievement.

**II. EXPECTATIONS**

- A. Because daily attendance is critical to academic achievement, the District expects every student to attend school and be to class on time every day. Ninety-five (95) percent attendance is set as the minimum standard.
- B. Each school will establish tardy rules that emphasize positivity and are consistent with the District's attendance policy. Ninety-five (95) percent on time is set as the minimum standard. Suspension or removal from instruction must not be used as a consequence for tardiness.
- C. Missing partial days of school also counts toward total absences. Missing 1-3 hours of a school day equals a partial day absence. Missing more than 3 hours of a school day equals a full day absence. Four partial day absences equal one full day absence.
- D. When students are not able to be present or on time to school, parents/guardians are expected to communicate with the school.
  - a. To report an absence, parents should call or email the school office or attendance line. Reporting an absence does not automatically ensure that the absence will be excused. Only absences reported with the excused reasons outlined in Section IV will be recorded as excused.
  - b. Parents/guardians can use the District online parent portal (ParentVue) to view their student's current attendance record. Any inaccuracies in the attendance data should be communicated to the school office or attendance line.

**III. STUDENTS WITH INDIVIDUALIZED PROGRAMS**

Students who have an Individual Education Program (IEP) or Section 504 Plan may have modified attendance expectations, incentives, recognitions and interventions. Such modifications must be part of the written plan or program in order to supersede the general attendance expectations for students of a similar age and grade.

#### **IV. EXCUSED REASONS FOR ABSENCES OR TARDINESS**

The following reasons shall be considered sufficient to excuse a student for being absent or tardy to school:

***Medical or Mental Health Needs.*** An absence due to illness or a medical or mental health need may be excused by the following means:

- written verification from a health care professional;
- documentation of a positive test result for a potentially contagious illness;
- verification from the school nurse; or
- a communication from the student's parent/ guardian, or the student (if eighteen or more years of age and the parent/ guardian gives permission); however, if the length of the illness is greater than three days, or if the student has accumulated more than eight days of absence during the school year, the parent/guardian should contact the school nurse, or provide a health care professional's written verification.

#### ***Religious and cultural observances***

***Funeral attendance*** for up to four (4) days; however, the principal or site administrator, or designee, may grant a longer period.

***Family emergency*** for up to three (3) days within one school year; however, a principal or site administrator, or designee, may grant a longer period.

***Family activity (communicated in advance)*** for up to ten (10) days within one school year, when

- The parent/ guardian requests permission for the absence ten (10) regularly scheduled school days in advance of the first absence; and
- The absences are approved in writing by the principal or site administrator in advance of the first absence, and
- Missed schoolwork is assigned by the student's teacher or teachers, and the parent/ guardian agrees that schoolwork will be completed; and
- Where the student has shown adequate progress and attendance prior to

the request.

**Extreme weather conditions** considered by the parent to be too dangerous for the student to attend school.

***School transportation delays***

**Student appointments** with health care providers or other professionals when unable to schedule outside school hours and when the appointment is confirmed in writing by the health care provider or other professional.

**Student appearances** in a judicial or quasi-judicial meeting ordered by a court when unable to schedule outside school hours and when school is notified in advance by the parent/ guardian, the court or the adult student.

**Suspensions** are to be handled as excused absences, and students will be permitted to complete make-up work.

**College visits** for up to two (2) days within one school year, when the request is made in writing prior to the first absence.

**V. UNEXCUSED REASONS FOR ABSENCES OR TARDINESS**

The following reasons shall NOT be considered sufficient to excuse a student for being absent or tardy to school, unless specifically outlined as an excused reason in the 504 plan or individualized education plan for a student with a disability:

**Personal transportation issues** (such as missing the bus, personal vehicle malfunctioning, etc.)

**Oversleeping**

**Staying home to babysit**

**Refusing to come to school**

**VI. OPPORTUNITY TO MAKE UP MISSED WORK DUE TO ABSENCES**

- A. Teachers will provide an opportunity for students to make up work, provide an alternative assignment, or excuse missed assignments due to absences.
- B. Once the teacher has provided a clear opportunity for students to make up missed assignments, the student will take responsibility to complete the

assignments within the time allowed.

- C. School handbooks will publish the process for making up assignments to families so they may assist their student.
- D. It is possible that failure to complete the assignments may affect a secondary student's grade and assessment of progress toward achievement of graduation standards.

## **VII. INTERVENTIONS TO HELP STUDENTS AND FAMILIES WITH ATTENDANCE**

Schools will intervene with the student and the family to improve attendance. These interventions will be collaborative and seek partnership with the student and parent/guardian. Interventions will include but are not limited to:

- A. Schools will periodically recognize good attendance, provide good attendance tips to parents and families, and take other positive steps to encourage good attendance as deemed advisable by school administrators, school social workers, and other school professionals.
- B. After any unexcused absence, the school will notify the parent of the absence;
- C. After repeated tardiness to school and/or class, staff will discuss the issue with the parent;
- D. The following actions will be taken as a result of ongoing absences:

**After Three (3) Unexcused Absences:** Parents/guardians will receive communication from the school informing them of the three unexcused absences and the attendance laws. This information can be viewed as a reminder to communicate reasons for the prior absences and possibly provide documentation, as well as to communicate with staff when future barriers arise that may keep the student from attending school.

**After Seven (7) Unexcused Absences:** School social workers must send an educational neglect report to the Be@school program with Hennepin County, which is a Truancy and Educational Neglect Prevention Program. Be@school will send an informational letter along with resources to families.

**After Eight (8) Excused Absences:** After eight excused absences for illness, absences will be considered unexcused unless further medical documentation is provided. If there is a chronic medical issue, including

mental health reasons, parents/guardians should discuss the issue with the school social worker or school nurse.

**After 12 Unexcused Absences:** A second educational neglect report will be filed. Be@school may invite the student and their parent/guardian to a meeting to discuss attendance barriers. In addition, students and their family may be referred to a community agency. Both resources are voluntary.

**After 17 Unexcused Absences:** A third educational neglect report will be filed. If families have not responded to outreach from the Be@school program or voluntary services, a referral will be made to child protection intake for educational neglect.

### **VIII. EXTRACURRICULAR ABSENCE EXPECTATIONS**

- A. Students who wish to participate in extracurricular activities after school must be in attendance for at least half of the school day (4 of the 7 class periods) and have an accepted excused absence reason for the missed class periods. Academic support activities are exempt from this rule.
- B. The activities director has authority to make exceptions to the 4 class period rule if a parent request is received by the activities director in advance.
- C. A student will maintain adequate progress towards graduation to participate in extracurricular activities.
- D. The activities department will communicate in advance to the attendance office regarding students who will miss class periods due to extracurricular activities.

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