

Title: Compulsory Attendance and Requirements

Persons responsible for a child who has reached the age of six and is under sixteen years of age by September 15 or is otherwise of compulsory age shall have the student attend school each day that school is in session. A child who has reached the age of five by September 15 and who is enrolled in a school district shall be considered to be of compulsory attendance age unless the parent or guardian of the child notifies the school district in writing of the parent's or guardian's intent to remove the child from enrollment in the school district. A child who has reached the age of four by September 15 and who is enrolled in the statewide preschool program under chapter 256C shall be considered to be of compulsory attendance age unless the parent or guardian of the child submits written notice to the school district implementing the program of the parent's or guardian's intent to remove the child from enrollment in the preschool program.

The Board of Directors shall designate the appropriate attendance center. Transfers to other attendance centers shall follow procedures explained in 501.1.

Exceptions to compulsory attendance may include any child who:

- Has completed the requirements for graduation in an accredited school or has obtained a high school equivalency diploma.
- Is excused for sufficient reason by any court of record or judge.
- Is attending religious services or receiving religious instruction, or has been exempted in accordance with the law regarding religious exemptions.
- Is unable to attend school due to legitimate medical reasons.
- Has a plan under Section 504 of the federal Rehabilitation Act, 29 U.S.C. §794, that affects the child's attendance.
- Is attending an accredited non public school, or an accredited or probationally accredited private college preparatory school.
- Is receiving competent private instruction or independent private instruction in accordance with the law.

It is the responsibility of the parent, guardian or custodian to notify the school of absences. It is the responsibility of the school administrator to determine the status of an absence and to determine whether or not a student is truant or excused. A school administrator may require verification or evidence by the parent or guardian of the reason for the student's absence. For the safety of the students, school officials will make reasonable efforts to contact parents/guardians regarding absences that have not been reported by the parent, guardian or custodian.

When a student meets the threshold to be considered chronically absent, a school official will send notice to the Pottawattamie County attorney. The school official will also notify the student, or if a minor, the student's parent, guardian or legal or actual custodian that includes information related to the student's absences from school and the policies and disciplinary processes associated with additional absences.

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Chronic absenteeism is defined as missing the equivalent of 10% of the days of instruction provided in each grading period. If a student is chronically absent, notice will be provided to the county attorney.

If a student is absent from school for at least 15% of the days in the grading period, the school official will attempt to find the cause of the absences and start and participate in a school engagement meeting. All of the following individuals must participate in the school engagement meeting:

- The student;
- The student's parent, guardian or legal or actual custodian if the student is an unemancipated minor; and
- A school official.

The purpose of the meeting is to understand the reasons for the student's absences and attempt to remove barriers to the student's ongoing absences; and to create and sign an absenteeism prevention plan.

The absenteeism prevention plan will identify the causes of the student's absences and the future responsibilities of each participant. The school official will contact the student and student's parent/guardian as defined in the plan for the remainder of the school year to monitor the performance of the student and the student's parent/guardian under the plan. If the student and student's parent/guardian do not attend the meeting, do not enter into a plan or violate the terms of the plan, the school official will notify the county attorney.

A student is considered truant if absent for at least 20% of the days in a grading period. The school official will refer all students considered truant to the county attorney.

Cross References:

512, 516, 561.1

Legal References:

Iowa Code Ch. 299, 299 IA SF2435

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