

School Attendance Law and Definitions

Michigan Compulsory Attendance Law

The law in Michigan governing compulsory attendance requires a parent, legal guardian, or other person having control or charge of a child aged six to sixteen to send the child to school during the entire school year, except in the limited circumstances specified in subsection (3) of section 380.1561. A child who was age eleven on or after December 1, 2009, or who was age eleven before that date and entered grade 6 in 2009 or later, shall attend school from age six to eighteen. The exceptions include, but are limited to, sending the child to a state-approved, nonpublic school or educating the child at home in an organized educational program. Although the compulsory school attendance law does not apply to children under the age of six, a child who is at least five years of age by December 1 of the school year and is a resident of a school district that provides kindergarten work is entitled to enroll in the kindergarten [MCL 380.1147]

Youth Services Bureau

Ionia County, in partnership with the Youth Services Bureau, is committed to working collaboratively with IPS and families to ensure students are attending school on a regular basis.

Chronically Absent

Chronically absent means being absent for 10% or more of the enrolled school days in a school year, whether absenteeism is due to unexcused, excused, or disciplinary absences. For example, missing 5 days of school within the first month of the year, 10 days in the first half of the year, or 18 days in the entire school year.

Disciplinary Absence

A disciplinary absence means absences that result from school or district disciplinary action and are neither unexcused nor excused absences.

Truant

Truant means a child who has ten (10) or more unexcused absences per school year. A child should be counted as truant only once in a given school year. Once deemed truant, a child shall be monitored throughout the school year until improved attendance is consistent.

Excused Absences

IPS considers the following factors to be reasonable excuses for time missed at school:

- A. illness
- B. recovery from an accident
- C. required court attendance
- D. professional appointments
- E. death in the immediate family
- F. observation or celebration of a bona fide religious holiday
- G. such other good cause as may be acceptable to administration

Unexcused absence is any absence not accounted for above, examples of unexcused absences include, but not limited to:

- Staying home to baby-sit
- Overslept
- Travel that is not coordinated with attending school. (Not getting missing work to be turned in upon return)
- Needed at home
- Missed bus
- Child is not immunized (A waiver is needed)
- Sickness (not documented)
- Willful truancy (skipping)
- Parent called in, but the reason given is not excused according to the list of excused absences

Attendance Unexcused absence Notification Letters:

Letter 1: 5 Days of Unexcused Absences

The parent/guardian will be notified that the student has reached 5 days of unexcused absences. The parent will be asked to check to make sure that the days listed are accurate.

Letter 2: 10 Days of Unexcused Absences

The parent/guardian will be notified that the student has reached the threshold of 10 days of unexcused absences. They will be asked to review the dates and contact the administrator at the school the child attends. At this point, the school will contact the Youth Services Bureau, which will, in turn, contact the parent.

Letter 3: 15 Days of Unexcused Absences

The parent/guardian will be notified that the student has reached the threshold of 15 days of unexcused absences. They will be asked to review the dates and contact the IPS Truancy Officer to discuss the matter and create a plan of improvement.

Letter 4: 20 Days of Unexcused Absences

The parent/guardian will be notified that the student has reached the threshold of 20 unexcused absences. For students ages 6 through 11, the Truancy Officer will notify local law enforcement and ask them to petition the prosecutor's office for action to be taken against the parent or guardian. For students aged 12 through 18, the Truancy Officer will directly petition the Prosecuting Attorney's Office for truancy against the offending student.

Chronic Absenteeism Letters:

Letter 1: Five Days of Excused Absences

At the discretion of the Administrator, the school will notify the parent that the student has missed 5 days. The letter is to have them review the listed dates.

Letter 2: 10 Days of Excused Absences

At the discretion of the Administrator, the school will notify the parent that the student has missed 10 days. This letter is to have them review the listed dates.

Letter 3: 15 Days of Excused Absences

At the discretion of the Administrator, the school will notify the parent that the student has missed 15 days. This letter is to have them review the listed dates and share with them the effects of chronic absenteeism. Youth Services may be notified.

Letter 3: 20 Days of Excused Absences

At the discretion of the Administrator, the school will notify the parent that the student has missed 20 days. The letter asks them to review the listed dates and contact the IPS Truancy Officer.