

CHRONIC ABSENTEEISM AND TRUANCY-REGULATION

Daily, punctual attendance is an integral part of the learning experience. The education that goes on in the classroom builds from day to day and absences can cause disruption in the educational progress of the absent student. Irregular attendance or tardiness by students not only limits their own studies, but also interferes with the progress of those students who are regular and prompt in attendance. Attendance is a shared responsibility that requires cooperation and communication among students, parents; and the school.

This regulation is divided into two sections: Section I addresses legal requirements related to chronic absenteeism and truancy and Section II addresses additional academic, disciplinary; and extracurricular consequences students face due to chronic absenteeism and truancy. It is important for students to recognize that chronic absenteeism and truancy impacts all these facets of their educational experience.

SECTION I – Legal Requirements

Chronic Absenteeism

When a student meets the threshold to be considered chronically absent, (10% of school days in a semester), the school official will send notice by mail or e-mail to the county attorney where the district's central office is located. The school official will also notify the student, or if a minor, the student's parent, guardian, or legal or actual custodian via U.S. mail, electronic mail, electronic message or in person delivery that includes information related to the student's absences from school and the policies and disciplinary processes associated with additional absences.

School Engagement Meeting

If a student is absent from school for at least fifteen percent (15%) of the days in the grading period, the school official will attempt to find the cause of the absences. If the school official determines that the child's absences are negatively affecting the child's academic progress, the school official will 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.

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 the student's

parent/guardian at least once per week 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 the 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.

Truancy

SECTION II – Academic and Disciplinary Requirements A student who has been absent from school for at least twenty percent (20%) of the days in the semester is deemed truant. Truancy will not be tolerated by the board. Students are subject to disciplinary action for truancy including suspension, expulsion, and legal action from the county attorney.

It is within the discretion of the principal to determine, in light of the circumstances, whether a student may make up work missed because of truancy. Students receiving special education services will not be assigned to supervised study hall or in-school suspension unless the goals and objectives of the student's Individualized Education Program are capable of being met.

SECTION II – Academic and Disciplinary Requirements

Students are required to be in attendance, pursuant to board policy, for 90% of days per semester unless their absences are exempted by school administration in accordance with Iowa attendance law. Parents are expected to communicate to the school office to report a student's absence in a timely manner on the day of the absence.

The administration has the right to determine if any absence or tardy is exempt, excused, or unexcused in alignment with state law and district policy. Iowa law recognizes certain family, medical, court, and religious circumstances, as well as participation in school-sponsored activities, to be exempt from a student's chronic absenteeism count each semester. In order for a medical appointment or illness to be exempted, a note from the provider must be furnished in a timely manner to the school.

Other circumstances in which a student is not at school may be identified as excused but non-exempt by administration, including but not limited to family vacation, a student attending but not participating in a school activity like a state tournament, out of school suspension, and an illness for which no doctor's note is provided.

Absences that do not fall into the categories above, occur without reasonable excuse, or for which no parent/guardian communication is received will be considered unexcused unless approved by the principal.

Open Enrolled Families - Parents/guardians are responsible for the transportation to and from school. Any absence caused by the inability to bring your student to school will be considered an unexcused absence. Bringing students late will be considered an unexcused tardy.

High School and Junior High Unexcused Absences and Tardies

The administration and guidance staff will make reasonable efforts to advise and counsel and may impose discipline upon any student with unexcused absences. Such advice, discipline and counseling is in addition to the requirements listed in Section I of this regulation and includes, but is not limited to, oral or written notices to the student and his or her parents, conferences with the student and parents, detention, suspension, written contracts, or loss of non-academic privileges such as extracurricular activities, or open campus

Homework relating to unexcused absences must be completed and turned in upon the student's return to school.

High School Credits - A student may be recommended for loss of credit when their unexcused absences have excluded them from more than ten (10) days of their class(es).

Tardiness at both the high school and junior high is defined as being late to class and may be excused upon the same reasonable grounds as those considered for absences. Students who arrive after 10 minutes of class are considered absent, not tardy.

K-6 Unexcused Absences and Tardies

Students leaving school before Ten (10) a.m. and not returning to school for the remainder of the day will be counted absent the entire day, and students who leave after Ten (10) a.m. or before Two (2) p.m. will be considered one-half day absent.

Students arriving after eight twenty-five (8:25) a.m. are considered tardy.

The school district reserves the right to determine if excessive absence (even those considered excused) will lead to grade retention.

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