

Truancy-Verified and Unexcused Absences

I. **Philosophy**

Daily, punctual attendance is an integral part of the learning experience and is required of all students to receive the maximum benefit of the educational program. The habit of good attendance is established early is one which helps a person be successful throughout his or her lifetime. More and more, employers, colleges and vocational schools expect good attendance and are checking students attendance records. They are aware that good and prompt attendance indicates dependability in a student.

The education that goes on in the classroom builds from day to day and as a result, absences always cause some disruption in the educational progress of the absent student. Students who are absent may not understand what the teacher is currently presenting, and may also become discouraged with the double burden of keeping current and making up missed work. In order to maintain interest and understanding in the instructional program, students should not expect to be absent any more than is absolutely necessary. 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 school.

II. **General Attendance Policy**

A. **Absences**

1. Parents are expected to notify the school prior to 9:00 a.m. regarding a student's absence on the day of the absence. All absences must be reported within one day of the absence to be considered excused.

Students absent from school for any reason may be required by the school to submit a written explanation or specific reason for their absence, the specific days of time they were absent, verification by the doctor or dentist where appropriate, and a signature of the parent.

2. Acceptable reasons for a student's absence from school are limited to the following:
 - a. Religious observances;
 - b. Extended illness, hospitalization or doctor's care (medically documented appointments);
 - c. Death in the family or family emergency; and
 - d. Court appearance or other legal situation beyond the control of the family.
3. Classes missed because of the attendance at a school-sponsored trip or activity will not be considered an absence. However, the student will be required to make up work missed.
4. Suspensions from class, either in-school suspensions or out-of-school suspensions, will be treated as school-initiated student absences and will not count toward the days absent. However, the student will be required to make up work missed.

5. School work missed because of absences must be made up within two times the number of days absent, not to exceed 5 school days. The time allowed for make-up work may be extended at the discretion of the classroom teacher.

B. Tardiness

1. A student is tardy when the student initially appears in the assigned area any time after the designated starting time.

Bus students who are late because the bus was late need to report to the school office to get a pass and/or office personnel will inform the teachers of the late bus arrival.

2. K-5th Grade Tardiness will follow these levels:

Level 1- Parent/guardian and the student are notified after 3 tardies

Level 2- Parent/guardian and the student are notified after 6 tardies.

Level 3- Parent/guardian and the student are notified after 9 tardies. Parent/guardian will be required to conference with school personnel to discuss tardiness and ways the school can help. (Note: A family intervention plan would be important at this level including strategies for improvement attendance, possible community resources and monitoring for progress.)

Level 4- Parent/guardian and the student are notified after 12 tardies. (Note: Additional resources may be needed, such as a referral to the County Attorney.)

6th- 12th Grade Tardiness will follow these levels:

Level 1- Parent/guardian and the student are notified after 3 tardies.

Level 2- Parent/guardian and the student are notified after 6 tardies. The students will serve a 30 minute detention where he/she is required to write a corrective plan of action, including goals, timeframes and strategies. (Note: Positive reinforcement will be an important part of the plan.)

Level 3- Parent/guardian and the student are notified after 9 tardies. The students will serve a 60 minute detention. Parent/guardian and the student will be required to conference with school personnel to discuss tardiness and ways the school can help. (Note: A family intervention plan would be important at this level including strategies for improvement attendance, possible community resources and monitoring for progress.)

Level 4- Parent/guardian and the student are notified after 12 tardies. The students will serve a 90 minute detention. (Note: Additional resources may be needed, such as a referral to the County Attorney.)

C. Truancy

1. A student is truant when the student is absent from school or an assigned class or classes without school permission.
2. Work missed because of truancy must be made up the same as work for all other absences.
3. Incidents of truancy will be recorded as part of a student's attendance record and will count toward the absences per semester. The principal will also determine what, if any, disciplinary action is appropriate including, but not limited to, warning, detention, in-school suspension or administrative referral.

II. Excessive Absenteeism

When a student is excessively absent, the following levels will be followed as shown, or as modified to accommodate individual situations as determined by and/or at the discretion of the building principal.

Three (3) unexcused or a combination of six (6) unexcused and verified absences will start this process and a referral to the County Attorney can be made at any time.

Level 1

When the absences experienced by a student are determined to be excessive (3 unexcused or a combination of 6 unexcused and verified absences). Or of such frequency, that school staff is concerned that the success of the student is truly in jeopardy, a notice of "Excessive Absence" shall be sent to the parent/guardian.

Level 2

If the actions taken in level 1 do not resolve the student's excessive absences and the student has 3 unexcused or a combination of 9 unexcused and verified absences, an additional notice of "Excessive Absence: shall be sent to the parent/guardian. Students in grades 6-12 will write a corrective plan of action, including goals, timeframes and strategies.

Level 3

If the actions taken in level 2 do not resolve the student's excessive absences and the student has 6 unexcused or a combination of 12 unexcused and verified absences, the parent/guardian will be notified and a meeting will be scheduled with the parent/guardian and school personnel (principal, counselor, and/or teachers) to discuss absenteeism. The meeting will include the student's academic progress, attendance history and procedures (agreed to be the participants) to improve attendance.

Level 4

If the actions taken in level 3 do not resolve the student's excessive absences and the student has 9 unexcused or a combination of 15 unexcused and verified absences, the School will make a referral to the County Attorney for mediation.

IV. Appeals

1. Any time students or parents/guardians are concerned about the disposition of an attendance violation, they are encouraged to contact the teacher or building administration for clarification.

2. **Teacher's Decision**-Students and parents/guardians wishing to have a review of a teacher's decision regarding tardiness and make up work rendered under this absence rule may do so by filling a written request for review with the principal within five days after the teacher's decision was rendered. The principal will determine a mutually agreeable time, place, and a date for the review and notify the student, parent/guardian, and the teacher accordingly. At the appointed time, the parties attending the review will meet to discuss the matter informally. Following the review, the principal shall affirm, reverse or modify the teacher's decision.

3. **Principal's Decision**-Student's, parents/guardians and teachers may obtain a review of a principal's decision under this absence rule by filling a written request for review within five days with the superintendent. The superintendent will determine a mutually agreeable time, place, and a date for the review and notify the interested persons accordingly. At the conclusion of the review, the superintendent shall affirm, reverse or modify the principal's decision.

4. **Superintendent's Decision**- Student's, parents/guardians and teachers may appeal the superintendent's decision in a given case by filing a written request for review within five days with the Secretary of the Board of Education.. The Board of Education will determine a mutually agreeable time, place, and a date for the review and notify the interested persons accordingly. At the conclusion of the review, the Board of Education shall affirm, reverse or modify the superintendent's decision.

Approved: August 19, 2019 Reviewed: _____ Revised: _____