

## **Absence and Truancy**

### **Attendance**

Regular school attendance is essential to student success. The attendance policy applies to individuals who have custody or control of a child: (a) between the ages of six (on or before September 1) and 17 years (unless the child has graduated from high school), or (b) who is enrolled in any of grades kindergarten through 8 in the public school regardless of age. Subject to specific requirements in State law, the following children are not required to attend public school: (1) any child attending a private school (including a home school) or parochial school, (2) any child who is physically or mentally unable to attend school (including a pregnant student suffering medical complications as certified by a physician), (3) any child lawfully and necessarily employed, (4) any child over 12 and under 14 years of age while in confirmation classes, and (5) any child absent because their religion forbids secular activity on a particular day.

### **School Day and Supervision**

In elementary schools, the entry bell will ring at 8:25 a.m. with students in their seats at 8:30 a.m. In middle schools, the first entry bell will ring at 8:10 a.m. with students in their seats at 8:15 a.m. Dismissal time for elementary schools is 3:00 p.m. and for middle schools is 3:17 p.m. Students in the elementary schools may not enter the building prior to 8:25 a.m. unless they are under supervision of a teacher. Please check with your school for early morning access times. Students in the middle school may enter at 7:50 a.m. After arriving at school, students must remain in school until the final dismissal bell. The elementary school staff is responsible for supervision of students on the playgrounds beginning at 8:20 a.m. before school begins and until 3:10 p.m. after school. For security reasons, only the main door of our schools will be open after the start of school. This door has a visual monitoring system.

### **Reporting an Absence**

The parent/guardian of a student who is enrolled must authorize all absences from school and notify the school by 8:30 a.m. to report an absence and the reason for the absence. Valid reasons for absences include (Illinois School Code 105 ILCS 5/26-2a):

- 1) Illness, including mental or behavioral health of the student;
- 2) Observance of a religious holiday;
- 3) Death in the immediate family or family emergency;
- 4) Other situations beyond the control of the student as determined by the Board of Education; or
- 5) Circumstances which cause reasonable concern to the parent for the mental, emotional, or physical health or safety of the student.

According to the Illinois School Code, schools must attempt to make contact with the Parents/Legal Guardians of all absent students that they have not heard from within two hours from the start of day. Schools will initiate calls to home, work, or emergency numbers. If possible, staff will do home visits if phone contact is not made. If no contact is made absence will be considered unexcused.

### **Tardiness**

Students are responsible, with the help of their parents/legal guardians, to come to school on time. All student tardies are recorded and generally unexcused. Students in PK-5 schools need to be signed in by their parents/legal guardians when they are late. Repeated tardiness will be addressed with individual students and families.

### **Chronic absenteeism**

Chronic absenteeism is defined as students who miss 10% (approximately 17 days) or more of the school days per year with or without a valid excuse. Per Section 26-18 of the School Code, every school district is required to collect and review chronic absenteeism data and determine what systems of support and resources are needed to engage with families of chronically absent students and to encourage the habit of daily attendance and student success. This includes an analysis of absence data from each school in District 100.

The school will contact the student and their parents/guardians if accumulated absences become excessive to identify the causes of unexcused absences. The district will track and provide early identification or potentially harmful attendance practices, and will work with students and parents to create a progressive, multi-level plan toward remediation of the problem as defined in the Illinois School Code, Section 26-2a. Student and parent meetings will be held with appropriate school and/or district staff and home visits will be made, if necessary. If absences continue to be excessive after supportive services have been provided, a medical note signed by a physician licensed to practice medicine in all its branches, may be required in order to have the absence excused. The note must state the dates that the student was unable to attend school and the date the doctor saw the student.

### **Truancy**

According to the Illinois School Code a student who is absent **without valid cause** from such attendance for a school day or a portion thereof is considered truant. Chronic truancy is defined as a student who is absent without a valid cause for 5% (approximately 8 days) or more days. In addition to the multi-level, individualized plan implemented for chronically absent students, truant or chronically truant students will receive interventions and supportive services including, but not limited to, parent conferences, student counseling, family counseling, and information relevant to their needs about existing community services that are available to truant and chronically truant students. Truant or chronically truant students will check-in directly with a staff member at their school and may be referred for additional support services through the West 40 Intermediate Service Center.

**Excused Absences:**

The importance of regular school attendance is vital to the learning continuity needed to promote maximum opportunities for achievement and success. State law lists valid causes for keeping your child home from school. Valid causes include: Illness, including mental or behavioral health of the student, observance of a religious holiday; death in the immediate family or family emergency; other situations beyond the control of the student as determined by the Board of Education; or circumstances which cause reasonable concern to the parent for the mental, emotional, or physical health or safety of the student. Additionally, a student will be excused for up to five days in cases where the student's parent/guardian is an active duty member of the uniformed services and has been called to duty for, is on leave from, or has immediately returned from, deployment to a combat zone or combat-support postings. The Board may excuse a student for additional days relative to such leave or deployment. A student and the student's parent/guardian are responsible for obtaining assignments from the student's teachers prior to any excused absences and for ensuring that such assignments are completed by the student prior to their return to school. The school may require documentation explaining the reason for the student's absence. In the event of any absence, the student's parent or guardian is required to call the school to explain the reason for the absence. If a call has not been made to the school by 10 a.m., a school official will call the home to inquire why the student is not at school.

**Medical Appointments:**

All medical appointments, if possible, need to be made during non-school hours. If a medical appointment occurs during school hours it will be considered unexcused unless a physician's note is provided. Students who are absent three (3) or more consecutive days for an illness will also need a physician's note to excuse the absences.

**Release During School Hours:**

Leaving during the school day can be disruptive to the learning environment and should only be for an illness, family emergency or a necessary physician's appointment (physician's note needed upon return). Students will be released only to a parent or an individual designated by the parent to pick up the child.

**When to Keep your Child Home:**

Children with symptoms of illness are not in the best frame of mind for learning. Remember your child's illness has an impact on all students' learning. Please do not send your child to school if any of the following are present:

- Constant coughing
- Vomiting
- Temperature of 100 or higher
- Diarrhea
- Rashes or any scratching for unknown reasons, with or without fever
- Red watery eyes that were crusted shut upon awakening

Continue to keep your child home after an elevated temperature until they have a normal temperature for 24 hours without the use of anti-fever medication. Upon returning to school, a physician's note is required in order to be excused from P.E./gym or recess.