

STUDENT ABSENCES AND EXCUSES *(Grades 6-8)*

As directed by the Board, the following procedures will be used to implement the district's attendance policy.

Definitions

Attendance: A student is considered to be in attendance if the student is physically present in a class; participating in a district-sponsored or district-approved activity; participating in a class through alternative methods or media as allowed by Board policy; receiving homebound services; or receiving services at another location pursuant to law or by arrangement of the district.

Parent: A parent, guardian or person acting as a parent in the absence of the parent or guardian if the student is under 18. If the student is 18 or otherwise emancipated, the student will serve as the parent for purposes of this procedure.

Tardy: A student is tardy if the student arrives after the expected time. Tardiness will be counted as an absence in situations where the student arrives too late to have meaningful participation in the class, lesson or activity.

Truancy: A student is truant if the student is absent from school without the knowledge and consent of the parents and the administration. A student is also considered truant if the student leaves school without the consent of the principal or accumulates excessive unjustifiable absences, even with parental consent. Truancy is a type of unexcused absence.

Attendance Standards

The following absences will be excused. Documentation must be provided as indicated.

1. Illness or injury of the student, with written excuse from parent.
2. Illness or injury of a member of the student's family when the student's presence is necessary or expected, with written excuse from parent.
3. Medical appointments, with written appointment confirmation by medical provider.
4. Funeral, with written excuse from parent. The principal may require a program or other evidence from services as well.
5. Religious observances, with written excuse from parent.

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6. Other appointments that cannot be scheduled outside attendance hours, such as court appearances, with written excuse from parent.
7. Out-of-School suspension.
8. Visits with a parent or legal guardian who is an active duty member of the military who has been called to duty for, is on leave from, or is immediately returned from deployment to a combat zone or combat support posting, with permission of the superintendent or designee.

All other absences and any absence for which required documentation is not provided are unexcused.

Consequences for Violations

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Attendance in early grades is crucial to later academic development. In addition, attendance habits are formed in early grades, and many later attendance problems can be averted with intensive family and student interventions in early grades. For this reason principals, with the assistance of building staff, will closely monitor student attendance and implement intervention strategies and other actions as follows:

1. Any time a student is absent and the parents have not contacted the school, the principal or designee will notify the parent.
2. When a student has accumulated five (5) (excused and/or unexcused absence) in any semester, the principal or designee will set up a conference with the parent at a time convenient for the parent to discuss the student's attendance and current level of academic performance. The purpose of the conference is to clarify the school's expectations regarding attendance and elicit suggestions from the parent on how to improve the student's attendance, including identifying reasons why the student is not attending school regularly.
3. When a student has accumulated eight (8) (excused and/or unexcused absence) in a semester, the principal will schedule a conference with the parents at a time convenient for the parents. The purpose of this conference is to determine why the student is not attending school regularly; to examine the student's academic performance; to communicate district attendance expectations; to provide information about compulsory attendance laws and educational neglect; to elicit suggestions from family members about increasing the student's engagement with school; and to create an attendance plan that includes specific intervention strategies designed to improve the student's attendance.
4. When a student has accumulated ten (10) (excused and/or unexcused absence) in a semester, the district will determine whether there is reason to suspect educational neglect or whether

the parent is violating the compulsory attendance laws. If so, the district will contact the Children's Division (CD) of the Department of Social Services or the local prosecutor.

5. Ten (10) or more than absences in a semester will be a factor in determining whether the student may be retained or required to attend summer school as a condition of promotion.

Students are expected to make up assignments from missed classes within the time period established by their teachers. Students who do not complete missed assignments in the required time may be required to attend academic support sessions outside of the regular school day.

Any conference may be waived by the principal if the absences were caused by a specific event or long-term illness. In cases where the district is aware that a student must be absent for an extended period of time, the district will arrange for the student to receive instruction by other appropriate means.

Notice and Due Process

A summary of the Board-adopted attendance policy and related procedures will be published in student and other handbooks and posted on the district's website. In addition, students and their parents will be notified prior to the imposition of any consequence and given the opportunity to appeal the imposition of the consequence to the superintendent. On appeal, the student and his or her parents may present evidence that the student has missed fewer days than the district's records show or that an absence recorded as unexcused should have been recorded as excused. An appeal will not be taken based on whether the reason for the absence justifies an exception to this rule.

Intervention and Engagement Strategies

The district will utilize the following intervention and engagement strategies as part of the district's overall approach to improve student attendance and achievement. The superintendent or designee will:

1. Conduct community-wide public relations efforts that stress the importance of school attendance.
2. Collaborate with community groups and other organizations that engage youth in activities to create a consistent message about the importance of education.

Building-level administrators and staff will:

1. Provide recognition in the form of ribbons, book certificates, special recognition or other non-food rewards to students with improved attendance.

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2. Assign truant students to academic support, detention or in-school suspension rather than out-of-school suspension.
3. Assign students who are frequently absent to a staff mentor or participation in a group advisory program.
4. Assign students to tutoring outside of the regular academic day.
5. Provide access to behavioral counseling, including information about community resources.

Evaluation

Principals, with the assistance of building staff, will conduct annual evaluations of all strategies used to improve student attendance. The evaluations will include:

1. A summary of which strategies are being implemented.
2. The number of participants.
3. Records of targeted interventions for particular students.
4. Changes in overall attendance rates.
5. Any other data that can be used to assess the effectiveness of strategies and interventions.

Strategies found to be ineffective will be modified or replaced. The principal will provide evaluation information to the superintendent.

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Note: The reader is encouraged to review policies and/or forms for related information in this administrative area.

Implemented: April 15, 2009

Revised:

MSIP Refs: 6.3, 6.5, 7.7, 8.6, 8.7, 9.6

Boonville R-I School District, Boonville, Missouri