

STUDENT ABSENCES AND EXCUSES *(Grades 9-12)*

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, does not attend a class in which they are enrolled, or accumulates excessive unjustifiable absences, even with parental consent. Truancy is a type of unexcused absence.

Attendance Standards

When a student is absent from school with the parent's permission it will be necessary for the parent to call the school office in order for the absence not to be considered truancy. Calls will be accepted at any time the office is open. This is generally between 7:30 am and 3:30 pm. Parents are urged to call before 10:00 am. Parents are expected to call on the day of the absence or on the first day of an absence that will last more than one day. Parents not calling in by 3:00 pm on the day of the absence will be notified by a telephone call that day if possible. If parents are unable to call, students should bring a note from their parents to the principal's office on the day they return to school. Upon returning to school students who have not provided evidence that they had permission from their parents to be absent from school will be classified as truant. Students who falsify notes will be assigned to ISS.

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Consequences for Violations

Students will be expected to make up all assignments from missed classes regardless of whether an absence is excused or unexcused. Each teacher may set reasonable limits regarding the timeframe in which missed work may be completed.

Students will not be allowed more than nine absences in any class per semester and still receive credit for the class. The student's parents will be notified of any loss of credit in a class. The only exceptions by the administration will be for:

1. Illness in which a student is under a doctor's care and for which a doctor's note is presented. Exceptions for scheduled medical appointments will be made only for the period of time required to travel and keep the appointment. Complications arising from a medical appointment are to be documented with a note from the physician.
2. Extreme emergency situations.

Absences that do not count toward the nine-day limit include school activities and in-school detention as well as suspension from school, except when a suspension would put a student over the nine-day limit, in which case a student would have an additional one-day grace period. Students who have more than 10 absences in a period during a semester and are not eligible for homebound instruction may have their course load reduced. The principal shall determine the reduction in course load based on the practicality of a student completing a course successfully.

The district will contact the Children's Division (CD) of the Department of Social Services or the local prosecutor in cases where the district has a reasonable suspicion that a student's lack of attendance constitutes educational neglect on the part of the parents or that parents are in violation of the compulsory attendance law. No such action will be taken unless other strategies and interventions have been implemented and proven ineffective.

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. 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. Contact the family any time a student is absent.
2. Assign truant students to academic support, detention or in-school suspension rather than out-of-school suspension.
3. Assign students to tutoring outside of the regular academic day.
4. Provide access to behavioral counseling, including information about community resources.
5. Facilitate family counseling sessions focusing on the power of the family to provide solutions.
6. Conduct in-home visits.

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.

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5. Changes in attendance rates and academic achievement of students participating in the various strategies.
6. Changes in attendance rates and academic achievement of individual students receiving targeted intervention.
7. 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