

Students

Attendance and Truancy

Compulsory School Attendance

This 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 grades, kindergarten through 12, in 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 her physician), (3) any child lawfully and necessarily employed, (4) any child over 12 and under 14 years of age while in confirmation classes, (5) any child absent because of religious reasons, including to observe a religious holiday, for religious instruction, or because his or her religion forbids secular activity on a particular day(s) or time of day, and (6) any child 16 years of age or older who is employed and is enrolled in a graduation incentives program.

The parent/guardian of a student who is enrolled must authorize all absences from school and notify the school in advance or at the time of the student's absence. A valid cause for absence includes illness (including mental or behavioral health of the student), observance of a religious holiday, death in the immediate family, attendance at a civic event, family emergency, other situations beyond the control of the student as determined by the Board, voting pursuant to policy 7:90, *Release During School Hours* (10 ILCS 5/7-42 and 5/17-15), other circumstances that cause reasonable concern to the parent/guardian for the student's mental, emotional, or physical health or safety, or other reason as approved by the Superintendent or designee. Students absent for a valid cause may make up missed homework and classwork assignments in a reasonable timeframe.

Absenteeism and Truancy Program

The Superintendent or designee shall manage an absenteeism and truancy program in accordance with the School Code and School Board policy. The program shall include but not be limited to:

1. A protocol for excusing a student from attendance who is necessarily and lawfully employed. The Superintendent or designee is authorized to determine when the student's absence is justified.

A. *A definition of a valid cause for being absent:*

Section 26-2a of the Illinois School Code lists the following as a valid cause for absence:

1. Illness, including the 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;

5. Such other circumstances that cause reasonable concern to the parent for the mental, emotional, or physical health or safety of the student;
 6. A student in grades 6 through 12 to sound *Taps* at a military honors funeral held in Illinois for a deceased veteran; or
 7. A student when his/her 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-supporting postings.
2. A process to telephone, within two hours after the first class, the parents/guardians of students in grade 8 or below who are absent without prior parent/guardian notification.
 3. A process to identify, track and diagnose students who are truants, chronic or habitual truants, or truant minors.
 4. A description of diagnostic procedures for identifying the cause(s) of a student's unexcused absenteeism, including interviews with the student, his or her parent(s)/guardian(s), and any school officials or other people who may have information about the reasons for the student's attendance problem.
 5. The identification of interventions, strategies and supportive services that will be made available to truant, chronically truant, or chronically absent students to improve their attendance. These services shall include, but not limited to, parent-teacher conferences, student and/or family counseling, and/or information about existing community services that are available to truant and chronically truant students and relevant to their needs. See Board policy 6:110, *Programs for Students At Risk of Academic Failure and/or Dropping out of School and Graduation Incentives Program*.
 6. Per Section 26-18 of the Illinois School Code, a process for the collection and review of chronic absence data and to:
 - A. Determine what systems of support and resources are needed to engage chronically absent students and their families to encourage the habit of daily attendance and promote success; and
 - B. Analyze chronic absence data from each attendance center.
 7. Provide a system of support to students who are at risk of reaching or exceeding chronic absence levels with strategies such as those available through the Illinois Multi-tiered Systems of Support Network (MTSS).
 8. Reasonable efforts to provide ongoing professional development to teachers, administrators, Board members, school resource officers, and staff on the appropriate and available supportive services for the promotion of student attendance and engagement.
 9. A process to request the assistance and resources of outside agencies, such as, the juvenile officer of the local police department or the truant office of the appropriate Regional Office of Education, if truancy continues after supportive services have been offered.
 10. A protocol for cooperating with non-District agencies including County or municipal authorities, the Regional Superintendent, truant officers, the Community Truancy Review Board, and a comprehensive community based youth service agency. Any disclosure of school student records must be consistent with Board policy 7:340, *Student Records*, as well as State and federal law concerning school student records.
 11. An acknowledgement that no punitive action, including out-of-school suspensions, expulsions, or court action, shall be taken against a truant minor for his or her truancy unless available supportive services and other school resources have been provided to the student.

12. The criteria to determine whether a student's non-attendance is due to extraordinary circumstances shall include economic or medical necessity or family hardship and such other criteria that the Superintendent believes qualifies.

[For high school and unit districts only]

13. A process for a 17-year-old resident to participate in the District's various programs and resources for truants. The student must provide documentation of his/her dropout status for the previous six months. A request from an individual 19 years of age or older to re-enroll after having dropped out of school is handled according to provisions in 7:50, *Students School Admissions and Student Transfers To and From Non-District Schools*.

14. A process for the temporary exclusion of a student 17 years of age or older for failing to meet minimum attendance standards according to provisions in State law. A parent/guardian has the right to appeal a decision to exclude a student.

Monitoring

Pursuant to State law and policy 2:240, *Board Policy Development*, the Board updates this policy at least once every two years. The Superintendent or designee shall assist the Board with its update.

LEGAL REF.: 105 ILCS 5/22-92 and 5/26-1 through 5/26-3, 5/26-5 through 5/26-16, and 5/26-18.
705 ILCS 405/3-33.5, Juvenile Court Act of 1987
23 Ill. Admin. Code §§1.242 and Part 207.

CROSS REF.: 5.100 (Staff Development Program), 6:110 (Programs for Students At Risk of Academic Failure and/or Dropping Out of School and Graduation Incentives Program), 6:150 (Home and Hospital Instruction), 7:10 (Equal Educational Opportunities), 7:50 (School Admissions and Student Transfers To and From Non-District Schools), 7:60 (Residence), 7:80 (Release Time for Religious Instruction/Observance), 7:90 (Release During School Hours), 7:190 (Student Behavior), 7:340 (Student Records)

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