

**STUDENT ATTENDANCE PROCEDURES**

A. School Attendance Officer

1. The principal/assistant principal or designee shall serve as the school attendance officer for each school in the District and deal with all matters relating to school attendance and truancy.
2. The school attendance officer shall be responsible for determining on a daily basis which students enrolled in each school are absent from school and whether the absence is excused or unexcused in accordance with District policy and these procedures.
3. The school attendance officer shall notify the parent/guardian of a student who is truant of the student's truancy and direct the parent/guardian to return the student to school no later than the next day on which school is in session or to provide an excuse. The notice under this paragraph must be given before the end of the second school day after receiving a report of an unexcused absence and may be made by personal contact, mail or telephone call on which a written record is kept. "Truancy" means any absence of part or all of one or more days from school during which the school attendance officer or teacher has not been notified of the legal cause of the student's absence by the parent/guardian. It also means intermittent attendance carried on for the purpose of defeating the intent of the compulsory attendance law.
4. The school attendance officer shall notify the parent/guardian of a student who initially meets the criteria of a habitual truant by registered or certified mail in accordance with state law and outlined procedures. "Habitual truant" means a student who is absent from school without an acceptable excuse for part or all of five days on which school is held during a school semester. The habitual truancy notice shall include the following:
  - a. A statement of the parent's/guardian's responsibility under state law to cause the student to attend school regularly.
  - b. A statement that the parent/guardian or student may request program or curriculum modifications for the student and that the student may be eligible for the District's student at risk programming.
  - c. A request that the parent/guardian meet with appropriate school personnel to discuss the student's truancy. The notice must include the name of the school person with whom the parent(s)/guardian should meet; a date, time and place for the meeting; and the name, address and phone number of a person to contact to arrange a different date, time or place if the original date is inconvenient. The date for the meeting must be within five school days after the date that the habitual truancy notice has been sent to the student's parent/guardian. With the consent of the student's parent/guardian, however, the date for the meeting may be extended for an additional five school days.
  - d. A statement of the penalties that may be imposed under state law on the parent/guardian if he/she fails to cause the student to attend school regularly.

5. The school attendance officer may visit any place of employment in the District to ascertain whether any minors are employed there contrary of law. All cases of illegal employment shall be reported to the Department of Workforce Development as required by law.
6. The school attendance officer shall have access to information regarding the attendance of any child between the ages of six and 18 who is a resident of the District or who claims or is claimed to be in attendance at a home-based private educational program or private school located in the school district. The school attendance officer may also contact home-based private educational programs to attempt to discover whether such programs meet the program criteria established by law. All such contacts should be documented.
7. The school attendance officer shall furnish student attendance information to appropriate agencies for purposes authorized by state law and the District's student records policy and implementing administrative guidelines.

B. Student Absences and Excuses

1. The responsibility for regular school attendance rests upon the student, and the student's parent(s)/guardian(s).
2. In order for an absence to be excused, written verification by the student's parent/guardian must be submitted to the school attendance officer or designee in advance of the absence or prior to readmittance to school. Students beyond the compulsory attendance age may provide this written verification themselves.
3. Excused Absences
  - a. Prior Parent-Excused Absences - A student who is excused in writing by his/her parent/guardian before an absence occurs will be excused from school. A student may be excused by the parent/guardian under this provision for not more than 10 days in a school year. An excused student must complete the course work missed during the absence. Examples of prior parent-excused absences are family trips/vacations, medical, dental or other professional appointments, and court appearances/legal proceedings known in advance.
  - b. Other District-Excused Absences
    - (1) Student is not in proper physical or mental condition to attend school or an educational program. In the case of long-term absences, the District may request the parent/guardian to obtain a written statement from a physician or licensed practitioner as proof of the physical or mental condition of the student. The excuse shall be in writing, state the period of time for which it is valid and shall not exceed 30 days. The school may verify any excuse of this nature.
    - (2) Illness in the immediate family or family emergencies which may require the student to assume family responsibilities for a short term.
    - (3) Death in the immediate family or funerals for close relatives or family friends.
    - (4) Religious holiday observances.
    - (5) A quarantine as imposed by a public health officer.

- (6) Serving as an Election Official – Students may be excused to serve as an election official provided they have at least a 3.0 grade point average or the equivalent and have the permission of their parents/guardians and the building principal.
- (7) Sounding Taps – A student in grades 6 to 12 may be excused for the purpose of sounding “Taps” during a military honors funeral for a deceased veteran.
- (8) Attendance at special events of educational value, school activities and for other special circumstances that show good cause approved by the school attendance officer.

Absence from school during a period of suspension or expulsion will also be treated as an excused absence for purposes of these procedures.

- c. All students with excused absences shall be given the opportunity to make up work missed in accordance with the following procedures:
  - (1) The student will be responsible to make up work missed by contacting his/her teachers of the classes missed.
  - (2) Teachers will be asked to grant to students the number of days missed plus one for make-up time. This provision applies to all work assigned during absences.
  - (3) Examinations missed during an excused absence shall be permitted to be taken at a time established by the teacher.
  - (4) Because of the individual nature of instruction at the elementary level, students are not always able to make up their work prior to an absence from school. Parents/guardians shall contact their child's teacher to discuss what options might be available.

#### 4. Unexcused Absences

Students with unexcused absences shall not be permitted to make up their classwork missed during such absences and, therefore, shall not receive credit for such work. However, students shall be expected to retain for future reference and use all materials presented during their unexcused absences. All students with unexcused absences shall be permitted to make up examinations missed during such absences as determined by the teacher. Students with unexcused absences shall be assigned detention in accordance with the number of class periods missed. Excessive unexcused absences may be dealt with on an individual basis with supervised study or some other form of disciplinary action.

#### 5. Tardiness

A pattern of excessive tardiness on the part of any student shall be brought to the attention of the student's parent(s)/guardian(s). If it appears that the student is negligent and no steps are taken to correct the situation, appropriate disciplinary action shall be taken. It shall be the responsibility of parents/guardians to insure students are at school on time, ready to perform.

### C. Direct Responsibilities for Attendance

#### 1. Parent(s)/Guardian(s) Responsibility

- a. When a student is absent from school, his/her parent/guardian shall contact the school by telephone prior to 10:00 a.m. Failure to contact the school will result in a telephone call to the home or work place of the student's parent/ guardian.

- b. Parents/guardians may be required to provide a written explanation of the reason or cause of the absence at the time the student returns to school or in the case of pre-arranged absence, prior to that absence.
  - c. Parents/guardians are to understand that the administration may not excuse absences that are not approved as excused in accordance with District policy and these procedures.
2. Student Responsibility
- a. Students are required to attend all of their scheduled classes and study halls on a daily basis unless they have obtained parental permission and a pass approved by the school attendance officer or designee to leave school for a valid reason.
  - b. A student who has been absent or is anticipating to be absent shall provide a written explanation of the absence signed by his/her parent(s)/guardian.
  - c. Students shall always check in to the school building office upon returning after an absence to obtain the proper excuse for classes missed.
  - d. Students who have permission to leave school during the course of the day shall report to the school office to properly sign out.
3. Teacher Responsibility
- a. Teachers are required to emphasize the importance and necessity of good attendance.
  - b. Teachers shall record student attendance throughout each school day as determined by the building principal.
4. Principal Responsibility
- a. Principals shall maintain office records documenting all excused and unexcused absences that occur in each school building on a daily basis.
  - b. The High School Principal shall be responsible for approving student requests to be excused from school attendance to participate in an alternative educational program leading to high school graduation or a high school equivalency program in accordance with applicable District policies and state law requirements.
5. School District Responsibility
- The District has the responsibility to communicate strategies to the following populations to deal with truancy education and prevention:
- a. Students. Educate students (K-12) about the importance of regular attendance.
  - b. Parents/Guardians. Develop and incorporate into existing parent education programs material that specifically addresses attendance policies and concerns, with an emphasis on reaching parents/guardians of elementary age students. Encourage and support parent networking and help facilitate parent/school/community collaboration efforts.
  - c. Teachers. Inform teachers of new truancy laws and school procedures, inservice teachers on how to incorporate into the curriculum the value of school attendance, and inservice the teachers on the importance of maintaining a positive, supportive attitude toward returning students.
  - d. Child-Serving Professionals. Establish an annual meeting of all school and community professionals involved with the truancy issue for an exchange of information and reacquainting of procedures.

- e. Employers of Students. Make school district calendars and schedules available, provide information on child labor laws, and encourage work hours that are compatible with school attendance and performance.
- f. General Population. Make school calendars and schedules available, increase community awareness of the need for a united effort to enforce school attendance requirements, use local media to stress laws and need for cooperation, and provide regular, direct dialogue with businesses and residents directly impacted by truant students.

**D. LEGAL REFERRALS FOR TRUANCY**

Prior to any proceedings being brought against a student for habitual truancy or against the student's parent/guardian for failing to cause the student to attend school regularly, the school attendance officer must provide evidence that appropriate school personnel have, within the school year during which the truancy occurred, done all of the following:

1. Met with the child's parent/guardian to discuss the student truancy or attempted to meet with the parent/guardian and received no response or been refused. This meeting is not required if it is not held within 10 days of the District's initial notice to the parent/guardian that the student is a habitual truant.
2. Provided an opportunity for educational counseling to the student to determine whether a change in the student's curriculum would resolve the truancy and has considered curriculum modifications.
3. Evaluated the student to determine whether learning problems may be the cause of the student's truancy and, if so, taken steps to overcome the learning problems, except that the student need not be evaluated if tests administered within the previous year indicate that the student is performing at his/her grade level.
4. Conducted an evaluation to determine whether social problems may be the cause of the student's truancy, and, if so, taken appropriate action or made appropriate referrals.

The activities in items (2), (3) and (4) above need not be carried out if the school attendance officer provides evidence that appropriate school personnel were unable to carry out the activity due to the student's absences from school.

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