

## Students

### Attendance and Truancy

#### Definitions

**Truant** – A "truant" is a child subject to compulsory school attendance and who is absent without valid cause from such attendance for a school day or portion thereof.

**Valid cause for absence** - A child may be absent from school because of illness, observance of a religious holiday, death in the immediate family, family emergency, situations beyond the student's control as determined by the Building Principal or such other circumstances that cause reasonable concern to the parent/guardian for the student's safety or health.

**Chronic or habitual truant** - A "chronic or habitual truant" is a child who is subject to compulsory school attendance and who is absent without valid cause from such attendance for 10 percent or more of the previous 180 regular attendance days.

**Truant minor** - A child to whom supportive services, including prevention, diagnostic, intervention and remedial services, alternative programs, and other school and community resources have been provided and have failed to result in the cessation of chronic truancy or have been offered and refused.

#### 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 of grades kindergarten through 12 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 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, family emergency, other situations beyond the control of the student, other circumstances that cause reasonable concern to the parent/guardian for the student's safety or health, 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.
2. A protocol for excusing a student in grades 6 through 12 from attendance to sound *Taps* at a military honors funeral held in Illinois for a deceased veteran.
3. A protocol for excusing a student from attendance on a particular day(s) or at a particular time of day 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-support postings.
4. A process to telephone, within 2 (two) hours after the first class, the parents/guardians of students in grade 8 or below who are absent without prior parent/guardian notification.
5. A process to identify and track students who are truants, chronic or habitual truants, or truant minors as defined in The School Code, Section 26-2a.
6. 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 staff members or other people who may have information about the reasons for the student's attendance problem..
7. The identification of supportive services that may be offered to truant, chronically truant, or chronically absent students, including parent-teacher conferences, student and/or family counseling, or information about community agency services. See Board policy 6:110, *Programs for Students At Risk of Academic Failure and/or Dropping Out of School and Graduation Incentives Program*.
8. 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, and (b) Encourage the habit of daily attendance and promote success.
9. 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.
10. 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.
11. 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.

12. 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.
13. 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.
14. 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 6 (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*.
15. 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.

LEGAL REF.: 105 ILCS 5/26-1 through 16.

705 ILCS 405/3-33.5, Juvenile Court Act of 1987.

23 Ill.Admin.Code 1.242 and 1.290

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), 7:190 (Student Behavior), and 7:340 (Student Records)

ADOPTED: MAY 18, 1998

REVISED: DECEMBER 20, 2004; JANUARY 14, 2008; SEPTEMBER 21, 2009;

APRIL 21, 2014; DECEMBER 19, 2016; DECEMBER 18, 2017; JANUARY 28, 2019; MARCH 14, 2022