

**SERIES 400  
STUDENTS**

Board Rule 431

**STUDENT ATTENDANCE PROCEDURES**

A. Student Absences and Excuses

The responsibility for regular school attendance of a student rests with the student's parent(s)/guardian(s).

1. Excused Absences

All excused absences require parent/guardian written verification which is to be submitted to the school attendance officer, or his/her designee, in advance of the absence or prior to re-admittance to school. In addition, when a student is absent, his/her parent/guardian shall call the school office before or during that day.

- a. Absences Authorized Solely by Parent/Guardian – A student is excused from school attendance if his/her parent/guardian submits a written excuse to the school prior to the student's absence from school. A student may be excused under this provision for not more than 10 days in the school year.
- b. School-Approved Absences – The school principal is empowered to approve a legal excuse for any student for the following reasons:
  - (1) Evidence that the student is not in proper physical or mental condition to attend school or an educational program. The school attendance officer may request the parent/guardian to obtain a written statement from a licensed physician, dentist, chiropractor, optometrist or psychologist as provided by state law as proof of the physical or mental condition of the student. Such excuse shall be made in writing, shall state the period of time for which it is valid and shall not exceed 30 days. During the time a student is absent from school due to illness, he/she shall not attend any school activities as a participant or a spectator. It is assumed that if a student is too ill to be in school, he/she is too ill to attend school activities.
  - (2) Personal illness.
  - (3) Contagious disease in a family.
  - (4) Medical, dental, chiropractic, optometric or other valid professional appointments. Parents/guardians are requested to schedule appointments for non-school hours.
  - (5) Short-term family emergency.
  - (6) Emergencies in a family.
  - (7) Illness or death in the family.
  - (8) Family trips that can be taken only during the normal school term. The intent of this statement is to provide an opportunity for students to

accompany their parent(s)/guardian(s) on a vacation which cannot be scheduled when school is not in session. A parent/guardian shall be required to notify the school attendance officer or his/her designee prior to leaving on vacation of the pending absence for the purpose of reviewing the student's attendance record and overall performance record. As much as is reasonable, all homework/assignments shall be completed prior to the trip. Student vacations or trips without parent/guardian accompaniment shall not be considered excused absences.

- (9) A court appearance or other legal procedure which requires the attendance of the student.
- (10) A quarantine as imposed by a public health officer.
- (11) Attendance at special events of educational value as approved by the school attendance officer or designee.
- (12) Approved school activities during class time.
- (13) A funeral.
- (14) Taking a driver's license test.
- (15) Visiting a college (three-day maximum).
- (16) Donating blood.
- (17) A religious holiday.
- (18) Special circumstances that show good cause which are approved in advance by the school attendance officer or designee.
- (19) Deer hunting. Students shall be permitted to go deer hunting providing they have no incompletes or failures from the previous grading period. The following procedures are to be adhered to:
  - (a) The student shall select the day(s) that he/she desires to be absent to go deer hunting.
  - (b) A written excuse from the parent/guardian must be presented to the school attendance officer.
  - (c) The student's teachers must be informed of such absence. All assignments are expected to be completed by the student prior to the intended absence.

Anticipated absences must receive prior approval of the school attendance officer or designee.

## 2. Tardiness

A pattern of 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, appropriate disciplinary action shall be taken.

### 3. Unexcused Absences

Absences that do not fall under point A-1(a) or (b) above, shall be considered unexcused. Students with unexcused absences shall not be permitted to take part in or attend extracurricular activities the day of the unexcused absence.

### 4. Excessive Absences

Any pattern of excessive absences inhibits the learning process. For this reason, the following steps shall be taken to address excessive absences. Excessive absences is defined as ten (10) or more per school year. When appropriate, state laws relating to truants and habitual truants shall be followed.

- a. The principal shall be notified by the teacher or building secretary upon the fifth absence in any one semester.
- b. The student's parent/guardian shall be contacted to discuss the reasons for the absences unless there is an obvious, known and acceptable explanation. If the student is attending elementary school, such contact shall be made by the student's teacher. If the student is attending middle or high school, such contact shall be made by the school attendance officer.
- c. If problems are suspected, a meeting shall be conducted to discuss and document any social, health, learning or emotional problems contributing to the pattern of absence. A plan shall be developed to address whatever problems are identified. The plan may include, but shall not be limited to:
  - (1) Methods of verification of an "excused absence," meaning excused absences will be verbal
  - (2) Disciplinary action or outside agency referral.
  - (3) Change in academic program.
  - (4) Counseling to help the parent(s)/guardian(s) to gain the child's compliance with attendance standards.
  - (5) Referral for at-risk programming under the district's at-risk policy.
  - (6) Special monitoring of the student. (The student shall be removed from special monitoring when he/she has two consecutive semesters without 10 or more absences.)

## B. Make Up of Work and Examinations Missed

### 1. Excused Absences

- a. Students whose absence is excused solely by their parent/guardian must complete the course work missed during the absence. Students with school-approved absences shall be given the opportunity to make up course work missed.
- b. Students with pre-approved excused absences shall be given the opportunity, whenever possible, to make up work missed when they return to school. It shall be the student's responsibility to contact the teacher(s) to make arrangements for making up work missed during an absence from school. Teachers shall be asked

to grant the number of days absent plus one for make-up time. This provision applies to all work assigned during the absence.

- c. Examinations missed during an excused absence shall be permitted to be taken at a time mutually agreed upon by the student and the teacher.
- d. Students and parents/guardians need to be aware that grades may be affected or credit denied when make-up work is not completed and/or examinations are not taken.

## 2. Unexcused Absences

- a. Students with an unexcused absence may or may not be permitted to make up missed class work and/or examinations other than final examinations. It shall be the student's responsibility to contact the teacher(s) to make arrangements for making up work and/or examinations missed during an unexcused absence from school. Teachers shall set the length of time allotted for the make-up of class work and/or examinations missed.
- b. All students with an unexcused absence shall be permitted to make up a final examination (semester or full-year course) but shall be allowed only to make up the exam during the regular school year and during the teacher's unscheduled time. The teacher may, under extenuating circumstances, administer the exam outside the regular school year or during his/her scheduled time.
- c. Students and parents/guardians need to be aware that grades may be affected or credit denied when make-up work is not completed and/or examinations are not taken.

## 3. Suspensions

- a. Students shall be permitted to make up class work and examinations missed during a period of suspension. Teachers shall set the length of time allotted for the make-up of class work and/or examinations.
- b. Students and parents/guardians need to be aware that grades may be affected or credit denied when make-up work is not completed and/or examinations are not taken.

## C. Responsibilities for Attendance

### 1. School Attendance Officer Responsibilities

The building principal or designee shall serve as the school attendance officer for his/her school and shall deal with all matters relating to school attendance and truancy.

- a. The school attendance officer or designee shall determine daily which students enrolled in the school are absent from school and whether that absence is excused in accordance with state law or Board policy and established procedures.
- b. The school attendance officer shall determine how many students enrolled in his/her school were absent in the previous year and whether the absences were excused. This information shall be submitted to the District Administrator who shall notify the State District Administrator of the determination.

- c. Except as provided in point (d) below, the school attendance officer, or designee, shall notify the parent/guardian of a child's truancy. "Truancy" means any absence of part or all of one or more school days during which the school attendance officer or teacher has not been notified of the legal cause of such absence by the parent/guardian of the absent student and also means intermittent attendance carried on for the purpose of defeating the intent of the compulsory attendance law.

Notice 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 (all of which a written record is kept), except that notice by personal contact or telephone call shall be attempted before notice by mail may be given.

The notice shall:

- (1) Encourage the parent/guardian to seek assistance from the school in dealing with unexcused absences.
  - (2) Provide parent/guardian with the name and phone number of school staff available to help with problems contributing to the student's absenteeism.
  - (3) Indicate the consequences that may result from the absence.
  - (4) Direct the parent/guardian to return the child to school no later than the next day on which school is in session or to provide an excuse.
- d. The school attendance officer shall notify the parent/guardian of a student who is a habitual truant in accordance with state law. "Habitual truant" means a student who is absent from school without an acceptable excuse for part or all of five or more days on which school is held during a school semester.

When a student initially becomes a habitual truant, the school attendance officer shall send the student's parent/guardian a certified letter that includes the following:

- (1) A statement of the parent's/guardian's responsibility to cause the child to attend school regularly;
- (2) A statement that the parent/guardian or child may request program or curriculum modifications and that the child may be eligible for enrollment in a program for children at risk;
- (3) A request that the parent/guardian meet with appropriate school personnel to discuss the child's truancy. The notice shall include the name of the school personnel with whom the parent/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. The date for the meeting shall be within five school days after the date that the notice is sent, except that with the consent of the child's parent/guardian, the date for the meeting may be extended for an additional five school days;

- (4) A statement of the penalties that may be imposed on the parent/guardian if he/she fails to cause the child to attend school regularly; and
  - (5) A statement that the case shall be referred to court for action if the parent/guardian refuses to cooperate with appropriate school personnel.
- e. The school attendance officer may visit places of employment to ascertain minors' employment contrary to state law.
  - f. The school attendance officer shall have access to information regarding the attendance of any child between the ages of five and 18 who is a resident of the district or who claims or is claimed to be in attendance at a private school located in the district.
  - g. The school attendance officer shall furnish student attendance information to the appropriate agencies or individuals in accordance with provisions of state law and the district's student records policy.
  - h. The school attendance officer shall annually notify students enrolled in the district and their parents/guardians of their right to request program or curriculum modifications, the types of modifications available, the procedures used in requesting and approving modifications, their right to request the Board to review any decision made in response to a request and the timelines and procedures for the Board to take action.

## 2. Parent/Guardian Responsibilities

- a. When a student is absent, his/her parent/guardian shall contact the school before or during that day. Failure to contact the school may result in a telephone call to the home or work place of the parent/guardian.
- b. Parents/guardians are required to provide a written explanation of absences at the time the student returns to school, or in the case of anticipated absences, prior to the absence.

## 3. Student Responsibilities

- a. Students are expected to be in attendance in order to learn subject matter and gain knowledge and skills needed in life and to develop positive work habits. Students are required to attend all of their scheduled classes, study halls and lunch periods, unless they have obtained parent/guardian permission and a pass approved by the school attendance officer or designee.
- b. A student who has been absent, or is anticipating to be absent, shall be expected to provide a written explanation of the absence signed by his/her parent/guardian.
- c. Students must always check in and out at the school building office when they leave and return to school.

## 4. Teacher Responsibilities

- a. Teachers shall be required to emphasize the importance and necessity of good attendance. Classroom procedures and grading requirements shall be developed which reflect the importance of daily assignments, classroom discussion and examinations in grading students.

- b. Teachers are required by law to take daily attendance in their classes and maintain a record of absences.
- c. Teachers shall notify the attendance officer or building principal when a student has had unexcused or excessive absences from their class as defined by this rule.

5. Building Principal Responsibilities

- a. Building principals shall request from each teacher, the procedures used for grading students. All grading systems throughout the district should reflect the importance of daily assignments and classroom discussion in grading students.
- b. Principals shall maintain office records for all excused and unexcused absences that occur in their school building.

6. District Administrator Responsibilities

- a. The District Administrator shall notify the State District Administrator of Public Instruction of how many students enrolled in the district were absent in the previous year and whether the absences were excused.
- b. The District Administrator shall present student requests for participation in a program or curriculum modification leading to a high school equivalency diploma or graduation from high school. High school equivalency or high school graduation program proposals shall be presented along with such requests.

7. District Responsibilities

- a. The district has a responsibility to stress, on a regular basis, the importance of regular school attendance to students, parents/guardians, teachers, employers and the community.
- b. District's Responsibility to Students – Educate students about the importance of regular attendance, provide positive reinforcement for school attendance and communicate the importance of school attendance through newspapers, radio and available community youth resources.
- c. District's Responsibility to 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.
- d. District's Responsibility to Teachers – Inform teachers of new truancy laws and school procedures and inservice teachers on how to incorporate into the curriculum the value of school attendance.
- e. District's Responsibility to Employers of Students – Make district calendars and schedules available, provide information on child labor laws, encourage work hours that are compatible with school attendance and performance.
- f. District's Responsibility to the General Population – Make available school calendars and schedules, increase community awareness of the need to enforce school attendance and use local media to stress laws and the need for cooperation

and provide for regular, direct dialogue with businesses and residents directly impacted by truant students.

D. Response to Unexcused Absence and Truancy

1. The school attendance officer shall notify the parent/guardian of a truant child in accordance with state law and established procedures.
2. Prior to a truant's return to school, a meeting between the building principal, child and parent/guardian is required.
3. When any child becomes a habitual truant, the school shall offer a meeting that includes appropriate school staff, the parent/guardian and child. The goal of this meeting shall be to provide all parties involved with the opportunity to engage in creative problem solving. At this meeting:
  - a. The participants shall determine the factors contributing to the child's truancy.
  - b. Educational options and support services such as curriculum modifications, alternative school programs, a referral for special education programs and special counseling shall be explored.
  - c. An assessment to determine if learning and/or social problems may be a cause of the child's truancy shall be explored. The child need not be evaluated to determine if learning problems may be a cause of the child's truancy if tests administered to the student within the previous year indicate that the student is performing at his/her grade level. If it is determined that learning and/or social problems may be a cause of the child's truancy, appropriate action or referrals shall be made.
  - d. The parent/guardian and child shall receive information describing the various educational options available within the district.
  - e. If problems and needs beyond the scope of the district are identified, school staff shall provide the family with information on appropriate community resources. If out-of-school resources appear needed, the parent/guardian should be encouraged to give written permission allowing school personnel to share information with appropriate outside agencies if such permission is necessary. If the parent/guardian wishes, school staff may assist in contacting appropriate agencies and participate as needed.

The end result of the meeting shall be:

- a. The development of a mutually agreed upon plan, in writing, to deal with the issues identified.
  - b. The school shall provide the parent/guardian and child with the name and phone number of the staff person who will monitor and follow up.
  - c. The school shall inform the family of the penalties for not cooperating in efforts to address the truancy problems.
4. Except as otherwise provided, before any proceeding may be brought against a child for habitual truancy or a violation of an ordinance or against the child's



parent/guardian for failure to cause the child to attend school regularly, the school attendance officer shall provide evidence that appropriate school personnel in the school or school district in which the child is enrolled have, within the school year during which the truancy occurred, done all of the following:

- a. Met with the child's parent/guardian to discuss the child's truancy or attempted to meet with the child's parent/guardian and received no response or were refused. If a meeting between the parent/guardian and appropriate school personnel to discuss the child's truancy is not held within 10 school days after the date that the habitual truancy notice is sent, court proceedings may be initiated without the required meeting;
- b. Provided an opportunity for educational counseling to the child to determine whether a change in the child's curriculum would resolve the child's truancy and have considered curriculum modifications;
- c. Assessment to determine whether learning problems may be a cause of the child's truancy and, if so, have taken steps to overcome the learning problems, except that the child need not be evaluated if tests administered to the child within the previous year indicate that the child is performing at his/her grade level; and
- d. An assessment to determine whether social problems may be a cause of the child's truancy and, if so, taken appropriate action or made appropriate referrals.

Points b, c and d above do not apply if the school attendance officer provides evidence that appropriate school personnel were unable to carry out the activity due to the child's absences from school.

Once the district has satisfactorily completed the requirements as outlined above and the child is determined to be a habitual truant, a legal referral should be made in accordance with the district's truancy plan and the Marshall Municipal Truancy Ordinance. Priority will be given to cases involving elementary and middle school children.

#### E. Alternative Attendance Options for Students Age 16 and Above

1. Upon the child's request of the Board and with the written approval of the child's parent/guardian, any child who has reached the age of 16 and is a child at risk may be excused from regular school attendance to attend a technical college in lieu of high school or on a part-time basis if the child and his/her parent/guardian agree, in writing, that the child will participate in a program leading to the child's high school graduation.
2. A child who has reached the age of 16 may be excused from regular school attendance under the following conditions:
  - a. The child has requested permission to be excused and has the written approval of his/her parent/guardian; and
  - b. The child and his/her parent/guardian agree, in writing, that the child will participate in a program or curriculum modification leading to the child's high school graduation. Program or curriculum modifications include the following:

- (1) Modifications within the child's current academic program.
  - (2) A school work training or work study program.
  - (3) Enrollment in any alternative public school or program located in the school district in which the child resides.
  - (4) Enrollment in any nonsectarian private school or program, located in the school district in which the child resides, which complies with federal nondiscrimination requirements (Title VI of the Civil Rights Act).
  - (5) Home-bound study, including nonsectarian correspondence courses or other courses of study approved by the Board or nonsectarian tutoring provided by the school in which the child is enrolled.
  - (6) Enrollment in any public educational program located outside the school district in which the child resides.
3. A child who is 17 years of age or over may be excused from regular school attendance under the following conditions:
- a. The child has requested permission to be excused and has the written approval of his/her parent/guardian; and
  - b. The child and his/her parent/guardian agree, in writing, that the child will participate in a program or curriculum modification leading to the child's high school graduation or a high school equivalency diploma. Program or curriculum modifications include those identified above.
4. The following procedures shall apply to the above alternative attendance options:
- a. Prior to being excused from school, the school attendance officer shall discuss the program or curriculum modification options with the child and his/her parent/guardian.
  - b. The school attendance officer shall inform the District Administrator, in writing, of the request and of the program or curriculum modifications leading to high school graduation or a high school equivalency diploma tentatively agreed upon by the child and his/her parent/guardian.
  - c. A written agreement must be signed by the child, his/her parent/guardian, the Board and a representative of the high school equivalency program or program leading to the child's high school graduation. This agreement must be signed prior to the child's admission to such program.
  - d. At least once each semester, the school attendance officer shall review compliance with each child's agreement. If it is determined that the child is not complying with the agreement, the child and his/her parent/guardian and the high school equivalency program or program leading to high school graduation shall be notified that the agreement may be modified or suspended within 30 days.
  - e. If the agreement is suspended, the child shall be expected to attend school on a regular basis in accordance with state law, Board policy and established

procedures. Failure to attend school shall result in forfeiture for truancy in accordance with established county ordinances.

5. With the approval of the child's parent/guardian, any child who is 17 years of age or over shall be excused by the Board from regular school attendance if the child began a program leading to a high school equivalency diploma in a secured correctional facility, a secured child caring institution, a secure detention facility or a juvenile portion of a county jail, and the child and his/her parent/guardian agree that the child will continue to participate in such a program.

Prior to the admission of a child to such a program, the child, his/her parent/guardian, the Board and a representative of the agency providing the program shall enter into a written agreement as specified in state law. If the agency providing the program determines that the child is not making progress toward completion of the program, the agency shall notify the child and his/her parent/guardian that the agreement may be suspended within 30 days. If the agency suspends the agreement, the agency shall notify the child, his/her parent/guardian and the Board.

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