

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 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 religious requirements forbid secular activity on a particular 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 shall be illness, including the mental or behavioral health of the student, observance of a religious holiday, death in the immediate family, attendance at a civic event, family emergency including situations beyond the control of the student, as determined by the board of education, or such other circumstances which cause reasonable concern to the parent for the mental, emotional, or physical health or safety of the student. For students who are parents, expectant parents, or victims of domestic or sexual violence, valid cause for absence also includes the fulfillment of a parenting responsibility and addressing circumstances resulting from domestic or sexual violence. 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 8 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 the student's 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 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. This process shall include a) interviews with student, the student's parents/guardians, and any school officials that have information about the student, b) the review of quantitative academic assessment data and grades and, c) the review of any other relevant information to assist in understanding the reason(s) for the student's absences.
6. A description of diagnostic procedures for identifying the cause(s) of a student's unexcused absenteeism, including interviews with the student, 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.
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 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.

LEGAL REF.: 105 ILCS 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 1.290.

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