

5001

Compulsory Attendance and Excessive Absenteeism

Required Attendance

Every person residing in the school district who has legal or actual charge or control of any child who is of mandatory attendance age shall cause that child to attend a public or private school regularly unless the child has graduated from high school or has been allowed to disenroll pursuant to this policy.

Mandatory Attendance Age

All children who are or will turn six years old before January 1 of the current school year are of mandatory attendance age. Children who have not turned eighteen years of age are of mandatory attendance age.

Exceptions

This policy does not apply when attendance is made impossible or impracticable by severe weather conditions or by the mental or physical illness of the student or a child whom the student is parenting.

A child who will not reach age 7 before January 1 of the current school year may be excused from mandatory attendance if the child's parent or guardian completes an affidavit affirming that alternative educational arrangements have been made for the child. A copy of the required affidavit is attached to this policy.

Discontinuing Enrollment – 5 Year Old Students

The person seeking to discontinue the enrollment of a student who will not reach six years of age prior to January 1 of the current school year shall submit a signed, written request and to the superintendent using the form which is attached to this policy. The school district may request written verification or documentation that the person signing the form has legal or actual charge or control of the student. The school district shall discontinue the enrollment of any student who satisfies these requirements. Any student whose enrollment is discontinued under this subsection shall not be eligible to reenroll in this school district until the beginning of the following school year unless otherwise required by law or as determined by the Superintendent.

Discontinuing Enrollment – 16 and 17 Year Old Students

Only children who are at least 16 years of age may be disenrolled from the district. The person seeking to discontinue the child's enrollment shall submit a signed, written request and submit it to the superintendent using the form which is attached to this policy. The district will follow the procedures outlined on the attached form in considering requests to disenroll.

Only children disenrolling to attend an exempt school may be exempt from this policy. The person with legal or actual charge or control of the child must provide the superintendent with a copy of the signed request submitted to the State Department of Education for attending exempt schools. The superintendent may confirm the validity of the submission with the State Department of Education.

Attendance Officer

Each building principal is designated as an attendance officer for the district. Each building principal, at his or her discretion, may delegate these responsibilities to any other qualified individual. The attendance officer is responsible for enforcing the provisions of state law relating to compulsory attendance. This responsibility includes but is not limited to filing a report with the county attorney of the county in which a student resides. Compensation for the duties of attendance officer is included in the salary for the superintendent or designee.

Excused Absences

The following absences will be considered excused if they are confirmed by communication to the school from the student's parent/guardian:

1. Physical or mental illness of the student (a physician's verification is required after four (4) consecutive days of absence for illness)
2. Severe weather
3. Medical appointments for the student
4. Death or serious illness of the student's family member
5. Attending a funeral, wedding or graduation

6. Appearance at court or for other legal matters
7. Observance of religious holidays of the student's own faith
8. College planning visits and other educational opportunities as defined and limited in the student handbook

Excessive Absenteeism

During each semester, when a student receives 3 unexcused absences, the Attendance Officer will call to discuss the absences with the parents and send a letter home. At 5 unexcused absences, the Attendance Officer shall call the parents to set up a meeting with the principal, counselor, and family to create a plan to address barriers to attendance. At 8 absences, the Attendance Officer will call home to indicate that any further absences will result in the student either being required to stay after school (for elementary students) or required to attend Saturday School (for high school students).

When a student is absent more than twenty days per year or the hourly equivalent and any portion of the absences is unexcused, the Attendance Officer must file a report with the county attorney of the county in which the student resides. For example, if the student accumulates 23 days of excused absences due to documented illness and is tardy one time, the Attendance Officer may file a report with the appropriate county attorney.

Consequences for Absenteeism

Students will be required to make up the hourly equivalent of any absence that is marked unexcused. This time will be made up before or after school, on Inservice days, on Saturdays, or during the summer.

Excessive absences, whether excused or unexcused, may be used as the basis for students to be declared ineligible for school extra-curricular activities.

Students are allowed a total of eight (8) absences or the hourly equivalent, regardless of whether they are excused or unexcused, each semester. Starting with the ninth absence, students will be required to make up the hourly equivalent of any absence, regardless of the absence being excused or unexcused.

Credits will be withheld from any high school student at the end of each semester until they have completed any make-up time for absences they received.

Absences that make attendance impossible or impracticable by severe weather conditions and the mental or physical illness of the student or a child whom the student is a parent are automatically exempt as a part of the calculated absences.

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