

SCHOOL DISTRICT OF THE MENOMONIE AREA

431-Rule

STUDENT ATTENDANCE/TRUANCY PROCEDURES

A. EXCUSED ABSENCES:

1. Prior parent-excused absences: Any student excused in writing by his/her parent/guardian prior to an absence is excused from school attendance. A student may be excused by the parent/guardian under this provision for not more than 10 days in the school year. Students so excused are responsible for making up work missed during the absence. Prior parent-excused absences may include the following:
 - a. Family vacations or trips – For high school students to be excused for family vacations, they must meet the following: a) Regular education students must have satisfactory progress reports, a C average in the last 9-week grading period; and, b) Special education students must be making satisfactory progress on their individualized education programs (IEPs).
 - b. Activities that have a direct relationship to school curriculum.
 - c. College visitation for high school seniors and second semester high school juniors (2 days). Additional days may be granted on an individual basis by the guidance department/administration.

In all cases involving reasons *a* or *b* above, the student must be accompanied by a parent/guardian or other adult so designated by the parent/guardian in writing.

2. Board-excused absences: The Board of Education has established the following additional acceptable reasons for excused absences. Parents/guardians are required to notify the school of an absence prior to or on the day of the absence. All excused absences also require written approval by the student's parent/guardian.
 - a. Illness – The student is temporarily not in proper physical or mental condition to attend school. The school attendance officer 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. Such excuse shall be in writing, shall state the period of time for which it is valid, and shall not exceed 30 days.
 - b. Medical (including doctor or dental appointments)
 - c. Family emergency
 - d. Religious holidays or instruction (limited by law)
 - e. School-sponsored or recommended activities

- f. 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 parent/guardian and the building principal.
 - g. Sounding Taps – A student enrolled in grade 6 to 12 may be excused for the purpose of sounding “Taps” during a military honors funeral for a deceased veteran.
 - h. Any absences not categorized above may be discussed with the building principal or designee and excused as deemed appropriate.
 - i. Absence from school during a period of suspension or expulsion will be considered an excused absence for the purposes of these procedures.
3. Students with excused absences are responsible for the work they miss while absent from school. Assignments may be obtained from teachers prior to the absence or upon the student’s return. All tests and assignments missed during the absence must be made up within a reasonable mutually agreeable time after the student returns to class.

B. SPECIAL STUDENT EXEMPTIONS FROM SCHOOL ATTENDANCE:

- 1. Upon a student’s notification to the Board, and with written approval of the student’s parent/guardian, any student who is 16 years of age or over and a child at risk may attend a technical college in lieu of high school or on a part-time basis. The student and his/her parent/guardian must agree, in writing, that the student will participate in a program or curriculum modification leading to the student’s high school graduation.
- 2. Upon a student’s request, and with written approval of the student’s parent/guardian, any student who is 16 years of age or over may be excused by the Board from regular school attendance if the student and his/her parent/guardian agree, in writing, that the student will participate in a program or curriculum modification leading to the student’s high school graduation.
- 3. Upon a student’s request, and with written approval of the student’s parent/guardian, any student who is 17 years of age or over may be excused by the Board from regular school attendance if the student and his/her parent/guardian agree, in writing, that the student will participate in a program or curriculum modification leading to the student’s high school graduation or leading to a high school equivalency diploma.
- 4. Prior to a student’s admission to a program or curriculum modification leading to the student’s high school graduation or a high school equivalency program under 2 and 3 above, the student, his/her parent/guardian, the Board and a representative of the high

school equivalency program or program leading to the student's high school graduation shall enter into a written agreement. The written agreement shall state services to be provided, the time needed to complete the high school equivalency program or program leading to the student's high school graduation, and how the performance of the student will be monitored. The agreement shall be monitored by the Board or designee on a regular basis, but in no case shall the agreement be monitored less frequently than once per semester. If the Board determines that a student is not complying with the agreement, the Board shall notify the student, his/her parent/guardian, and the high school equivalency program or program leading to the student's high school graduation that the agreement may be modified or suspended in 30 days.

5. Upon a student's request and with the approval of the student's parent/guardian, any student who is 17 years of age or over shall be excused from regular school attendance if the student began a program leading to a high school equivalency diploma in a secured correctional facility or a secured child caring institution and the student and his/her parent/guardian agree, in writing, that the student will continue to participate in the program.
6. Prior to a student's admission to a program leading to the student's high school equivalency, the student, his/her parent/guardian, the Board, and a representative of the agency providing the program shall enter into a written agreement. The agreement shall specify that the student is excused from regular school attendance while he/she is enrolled in the program and making progress toward completion of the program, or successfully completes the program. If the agency providing the program determines the student is not making progress toward completion of the program, the agency shall notify the student 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 student, his/her parent/guardian, and the Board.
7. Any student's parent/guardian, or the student if the parent/guardian is notified, may request the Board, in writing, to provide the student with program or curriculum modifications, including, but not limited to:
 - a. Modifications within the student's current academic program.
 - b. A school work training or work study program.
 - c. Enrollment in an alternative public school or program located in the District.
 - d. Enrollment in any nonsectarian private school or program located in the District.
 - e. Homebound study, including nonsectarian correspondence courses or other courses of study approved by the Board, or nonsectarian tutoring provided by the school in which the student is enrolled.
 - f. Enrollment in any public educational program located outside the District.

8. Program and curriculum modifications shall be requested and approved in accordance with state law and established District procedures. Any decision made in response to the request for program or curriculum modifications shall be review by the Board upon request of the student's parent/guardian. The Board shall render its determination upon review, in writing, if requested by the student's parent/guardian.

C. UNEXCUSED ABSENCES/TRUANCY

Students with unexcused absences shall be considered truant and shall be dealt with in accordance with the following procedures:

1. Truancy – The school attendance officer shall notify the parent/guardian of a student who has been 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. "Truancy" means any absence for part or all of one or more school days during which the school 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. The truancy notification may be made by personal contact, mail, or telephone call of which a written record is kept. Notice by personal contact or telephone call shall be attempted before notification by mail is given.
 - a. High school students with excused absences will be assigned to a supervised study program during school, before school, after school, or on Saturday for the purpose of making up missed work from the unexcused absence(s). The time assigned will be determined by the high school administration and will have a direct relationship to the amount of time and amount of work missed.
 - b. It is recommended that, for any student who is truant, a meeting be held with the student's parent/guardian, building principal, counselor, teachers, and/or others deemed appropriate. The purpose of the meeting will be to consider possible curriculum modifications; motivational techniques; evaluation, including assessment for possible learning or social problems; or other intervention that might result in regular school attendance. If it is determined that the family is in crisis and/or in need of counseling, then the school should provide said counseling or refer the family to the Dunn County Department of Human Services or other appropriate resource. School personnel should check with the parent(s)/guardian(s) within 48 hours to determine if the family *has* followed up on counseling. If not, the family should be aggressively encouraged to do so.
 - c. If parent(s)/guardian(s) are uncooperative, the assistance of a Juvenile Court intake worker may be requested. The intake worker will send out a registered letter to the student's parent(s)/guardian(s) explaining legal consequences for failure to cooperate with the school regarding their student's absenteeism. If parent(s)/guardian(s) fail to respond to the intake worker, a referral will be made

to either the local police department or to Dunn County Sheriff's Department for issuance of a citation for contributing to truancy.

2. Habitual Truancy

- a. A notice must be sent to the student's parent or guardian by registered or certified mail when the student initially becomes a habitual truant. "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 semester. The notice shall include the following:
 - (1) A statement of the parent's/guardian's responsibility under state law to cause the student to attend school regularly.
 - (2) 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 enrollment in a program for children at risk.
 - (3) 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 personnel with whom the parent/guardian should meet; a date, time and place for the meeting; and the name, address and telephone number of a person to contact to arrange a different date, time or place. 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; however, the date for the meeting may be extended for an additional five days.
 - (4) 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 regularly.
- b. School personnel must notify a truant student's parent/guardian of any additional unexcused absences that occur after the required notice outlined in ¶C2a. The same procedure listed under ¶C1 will be followed.
- c. Prior to any proceeding being brought against a student or against a student's parent/guardian under the compulsory attendance law, 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 student's parent/guardian to discuss the student's truancy or attempted to meet with the student's parent/guardian and received no response or were refused. This requirement does not apply if the meeting with the parent/guardian is not held within 10 school days after the date that the habitual truancy notice is sent.
 - (2) Provided an opportunity for educational counseling to the student to determine whether a change in the student's curriculum would resolve the student's truancy, and have considered modifications.

- (3) Evaluated the student to determine whether learning problems may be a cause of the student's truancy and, if so, have taken steps to overcome the learning problems. The student need not be evaluated if tests administered to the student 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, have taken appropriate action or made appropriate referrals.

Items 2, 3, and 4 above do not apply if the school attendance office provides evidence that appropriate school personnel were unable to carry out the activity due to the student's absences from school.

If the steps outlined above have been followed, a legal referral may be made.

- d. A completed "Dunn County Truancy Referral" form will be sent to the Dunn County Department of Human Services. A copy of all forms will be kept by the school. The truancy referral will be handled as follows:
 - (1) A juvenile court intake worker will be assigned to handle the truancy referral.
 - (2) If the referring school attendance officer has followed the procedures noted above, the intake worker will make either a referral for the issuance of a citation or a referral to the Corporation Counsel within five working days of being assigned.
 - (3) If the Corporation Counsel believes the referral form is sufficiently completed, he/she will file a petition with Juvenile Court within five working days of receiving the referral.
 - (4) A court hearing or hearings will be held, with the following possible Juvenile Court dispositions:
 - Counsel and release
 - Consent decree with specific rules (6 months)
 - Supervision with specific rules (12 months)
 - Placement in alternative care (foster home, group home, institution)
 - Participation in a counseling program
 - Suspension of student's operating privilege for no less than 30 nor more than 90 days
 - Home detention

- Student ordered to attend a program for children at risk
 - Student ordered to attend educational program pursuant to a contractual agreement with the District in which the student resides in a licensed child welfare agency, a private, non-profit non-sectarian agency or a vocational school located in the District in which the student resides.
- (5) The Court shall order the mutual disclosure of records between the school and the Department of Health and Family Services as is necessary to assure the provision of appropriate educational services. (A copy of this order will be sent to the building principal by the assigned intake worker.)
- (6) Once the Court imposes one of the aforementioned dispositions, the school attendance officer shall notify the student's parent/guardians and the assigned social worker (as appropriate) within 24 hours of any subsequent unexcused absences by the student.
- (7) If a juvenile student continues to be truant in violation of the court order, the juvenile will be brought back to Court for imposition of one of the aforementioned dispositions and/or will be given a warning for contempt of court.

D. CONTINUED INTERVENTIONS AFTER REFERRAL TO INTAKE

If truancy continues to exist, the Dunn County Juvenile Court will assume responsibility for future interventions.

CROSS REF.: 431, Student Attendance
431-Exhibit, Notification of Habitual Truancy

APPROVED: March 9, 2009