

Policy

BOARD OF EDUCATION
HORTONVILLE AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT

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ATTENDANCE

The Board will enforce regular student attendance in the District's program in which each student is enrolled as required pursuant to State law. Further, the Board recognizes that the District's educational program is predicated upon the participation of each student in the program of instruction in which the student is enrolled and required to attend. Student success requires continuity of instruction and program participation. For purposes of this policy, the regular period and hours of instruction including both those periods and hours a student's program require that they are in school as well as any attendance requirements defined as part of a course of virtual instruction, or a combination of the more than one type of instructional delivery.

All children between six (6) and eighteen (18) years of age shall attend school regularly during the full period and hours, religious holidays excepted, that the school in which the child is enrolled is in session until the end of the term, quarter, or semester of the school year in which the child becomes eighteen (18) years of age, unless they fall under an exception under State law, this policy, or administrative guideline issued under this policy. A child who is enrolled in five (5) year-old kindergarten shall attend school regularly, religious holiday accepted, during the full period and hours that kindergarten is in session until the end of the school term.

For information on summer school attendance, see Policy 2440 – Summer School Attendance.

Parent Notification of Absence Required

The District Administrator shall require, from the parent or legal guardian of each student or from an adult student, who has been absent for any reason a written or verbal notification. Administration reserves the right to verify any absence, except a parent-excused, pre-planned absence requires written notification for an absence of more than two (2) days duration.

School Attendance Officer

The District Administrator shall designate an administrator at each school to be the School Attendance Officer. The School Attendance Officer shall perform any duties and responsibilities as required by State law, this policy, and any administrative guidelines issued by the school. The duties of the School Attendance Officer shall include, but not be limited to, the following:

- A. Determining daily from attendance reports submitted by teacher which student enrolled in the school are absent from school or failed to fulfill the attendance requirements of a virtual instruction program component, and whether the absence is excused.
- B. Submitting to the District Administrator, on or before August 1st of each year, a report of the number of students enrolled in the school who were absent in the previous year and whether the absences were excused. The District Administrator shall then submit this information to the State Superintendent. To the extent feasible, absentee data shall be separated by absences for in-person instruction periods and absences based on virtual instruction attendance requirements.

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- C. Providing student attendance information to individuals and agencies for purposes authorized by State law and the Board's Policy #5007 – Student Records.

Excused Absences

As required under State law, a student shall be excused from school for the following reasons:

- A. Physical or Mental Condition

The student is temporarily not in proper physical or mental condition to attend a school program. Absences for this reason may be excused by oral or written notification to the attendance office by the adult student or minor student's parent. The attendance officer in appropriate circumstances may require a written statement from a health care provider describing the condition and excusing the student for a period not to exceed thirty (30) calendar days.

- B. Obtaining Religious Instruction

To enable the student to obtain religious instruction outside the school during the required school period.

- C. Parent-Excuse Pre-Planned Absence

The student has been excused in writing by their parent or guardian before the absence for any reason. A student may not be excused for more than ten (10) days per school year under this paragraph and must complete any course work missed during the absence. Examples of reasons for being absent that should be counted under this paragraph include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Professional and other necessary appointments (e.g., medical, dental, and legal) that cannot be scheduled outside the school day. A parent may be required to provide medical verification;
2. To attend the funeral of a relative;
3. Legal proceedings that require the student's presence;
4. College visits ;
5. Job Fairs;
6. Vacations.

- D. Religious Holiday

For observance of a religious holiday consistent with the student's creed or belief.

- E. Suspension or Expulsion

The student has been suspended or expelled.

- F. Program or Curriculum Modification

The Board has excused the student from regular school attendance to participate in a program or curriculum modification leading to high school graduation or a high school equivalency diploma as provided by State law.

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G. High School Equivalency – Secured Facilities

The Board has excused a student from regular school attendance to participate in 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 student and the student's parent(s) agrees that the student will continue to participate in such a program.

H. Child at Risk

The student is a "child at risk" as defined under State law and is participating in a program at a technical college on either a part-time or full-time basis leading to high school graduation, as provided under State law.

J. Virtual Access

The student is unable to access virtual instruction programming due to a temporary disruption in the student's access to necessary technological systems (i.e. internet outage, computer failure, software malfunction, etc.) as communicated by the student's parent.

A student may be excused from school, as determined by the School Attendance Officer, or the School Attendance Officer's designee for the following reasons:

- A. Quarantine of the student's home by a public health officer.
- B. Illness of an immediate family member.
- C. An emergency that requires the student to be absent because of familial responsibilities or other appropriate reasons.

Unexcused Absences

Unexcused absences are absences from school for part or all of one (1) or more days from school without an acceptable excuse. Unexcused absences demonstrate disregard for the educational program and are considered a serious matter.

Definitions

A. **Tuancy**

A student will be considered truant if the student is absent part or all of one (1) or more days from school during which the School Attendance Officer, principal, or teacher has not been notified of the legal cause of such absence by the parent of the absent student. A student who is absent intermittently for the purpose of defeating the intent of the Wisconsin Compulsory Attendance Statute 118.15, Wis. Stats., will also be considered truant.

D. **Habitual Truant**

A student will be considered a habitual truant if the student is absent from school without an acceptable excuse for part or all of five (5) or more days on which school is held during a school semester.

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E. Part of a School Day

Part of a school day is any time period within a school day, which is from the time the first class period of that begins until the end of the last class period of the day.

Tardiness/Late Arrival and Early Dismissal

It is necessary that a student be in attendance throughout the school day, or as required by the student's virtual instruction program, in order to benefit fully from the educational program of the District. Unless excused per this policy, tardiness, or late arrival, occurs when a student arrives at the student's registered class location after the bell that signals the start of the class period has sounded.

Unless excused, early dismissal occurs when a student leaves the student's registered class location before the bell has rung signaling the end of the class period or the end of the school day. Tardiness and early dismissal can occur more than once per day. Tardiness and early dismissal constitute being absent for part of a school day.

The Board recognizes, however, that from time-to-time compelling circumstances require that a student be late to school or dismissed before the end of the school day.

As agent responsible for the education of the children of this District, the Board shall require that the school be notified in advance of such absences by personal request (phone or face-to-face) or written (including e-mail) by the student's parent, who shall state the reason for the tardiness or early dismissal. Justifiable reasons shall be determined by the Principal or Truancy Officer.

No student who has a medical disability which may be incapacitating may be released without a person to accompany him/her.

No student shall be released to anyone who is not authorized such custody by the parents.

Truancy Plan

The Board will issue a Truancy Plan based upon the recommendation of the County Truancy Committee convened under State law, the Board's policies and procedures, and applicable provisions of State law. The Board will review and, if appropriate, revise the Truancy Plan at least once every two (2) years.

The Truancy Plan will include, at a minimum, the following:

- A. Procedures to be followed for notifying the parents of the unexcused absences of a student who is truant or a habitual truant and for meeting and conferring with such parents
- B. Plans and procedures for identifying truant children of all ages and returning them to school, including the identity of school personnel to whom a truant child shall be returned

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- C. Methods to increase and maintain public awareness of and involvement in responding to truancy within the School District
- D. A provision addressing the immediate response to be made by school personnel when a truant child is returned to school
- E. The types of truancy cases to be referred to the District Attorney and the time periods within which the District Attorney will respond to and take action on the referral
- F. Plans and procedure to coordinate the responses to the problems of habitual truants, as defined under Sec. 118.16(1)(a), Wis. Stats., with public and private social service agencies
- G. Methods to involve the truant child's parent in dealing with and solving the child's truancy problem

Notice of Truancy

The School Attendance Officer shall notify a truant student's parent or guardian of the student's truancy and direct the parent or guardian to return the student to school no later than the next day on which school is in session or to provide an excuse for the absence. The notice under this paragraph shall be given before the end of the second school day after receiving a report of an unexcused absence. The notice may be made by electronic communication, personal contact, telephone call, or 1st class mail, and a written record of this notice shall be kept. This notice must be given every time a student is truant until the student becomes a habitual truant.

Notice of Habitual Truancy

When a student initially becomes a habitual truant, the School Attendance Officer shall provide a notice to the student's parent or guardian, by registered or certified mail, or by 1st class mail. The School Attendance Officer may simultaneously notify the parent of the habitually truant student by an electronic communication. The notice must contain the following:

- A. A statement of the parent's or guardian's responsibility under State law to cause the student to attend school regularly.
- B. A statement that the parent, guardian, or student may request program or curriculum modifications for the student under State law and that the student may be eligible for enrollment in a program for children at risk.
- C. A request that the parent or guardian meet with the appropriate school personnel to discuss the student's truancy.

The notice shall include the name of the school personnel with whom the parent or 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 shall be within five (5) school days after the date that the notice is sent, except that with the consent of the student's parent or guardian the date for the meeting may be extended for an additional five (5) school days.

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- D. A statement of the penalties, under State law or local ordinances that may be imposed on the parent or guardian upon failure to cause the child to attend school regularly as required by State law.
- E. If the student is attending the District through Open Enrollment Program, each notification shall also inform the parent: (1) that the student's open enrollment may be terminated if the student is habitually truant; and (2) the process described in Board Policy 5113 – Open Enrollment, which the parent or student may follow if they believe the student was erroneously marked truant.

The School Attendance Officer will also continue to notify the parent or guardian of a habitual truant's subsequent unexcused absences.

Referral to the District Attorney or Local Police Department

Truancy cases will be referred to the District Attorney or local police department. The School Attendance Officer will ensure that appropriate school personnel have done the following before any case is referred:

- A. Met with the student's parent or guardian to discuss the student's truancy or attempted to meet with the student's parent or guardian and received no response or were refused.
- B. 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 curriculum modifications under State law.
- C. 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, except that the student need not be evaluated if tests administered to the student within the previous year indicate that the student is performing at grade level
- D. Conducted an evaluation to determine whether social problems may be a cause of the student's truancy and, if so, have taken appropriate action or made appropriate referrals

(Note that paragraph A, is not required if the meeting between school personnel, the student, and the student's parent, which was requested in the Notice of Habitual Truancy to the parent, did not occur within ten (10) school days after the Notice was sent. Paragraphs B., C., and D. are not required if appropriate school personnel were unable to carry out the activity due to the student's absences from school.)

Make-up Course Work and Examinations

Students who are absent from school, whether the absence was excused or unexcused, shall be permitted to make-up course work and examinations missed during the absence when they return to school. It is the student's responsibility to contact his/her teachers to determine what course work and

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examinations must be made-up. Teachers shall have the discretion to assign substitute course work and examinations. Teachers shall also have the discretion to specify where and when examinations and course work shall be completed, including outside regular school hours. The time for completing the work shall be commensurate with the length of the absence, unless extended by the principal based upon extenuating circumstances.

Legal References:

7.30(s)(am), Wis. Stats.

118.15, Wis. Stats.

118.153, Wis. Stats.

118.16, Wis. Stats.

118.162, Wis. Stats

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Guidelines

The District Administrator or designee shall develop administrative guidelines concerning the attendance of students which:

- A. Ensure a school session which is in conformity with the requirement of the law;
- B. Ensure that students absent for an excusable reason have an opportunity to make-up work they missed;
- C. Govern the keeping of attendance records in accordance with State law;
- D. Identify the habitual truant, investigate the cause(s) of his/her behavior, and consider modification of his/her educational program to meet particular needs and interests;
- E. Ensure that any student who, due to a specifically identifiable physical or mental impairment, exceeds or may exceed the District's limit on excused absence is referred for evaluation for eligibility either under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) or Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and Chapter 115, Wis. Stats.;
- F. Provide that a student's grade in any course is based on his/her performance in the instructional setting and is not reduced for reasons of conduct. If a student violates the attendance or other rules of the school, s/he should be disciplined appropriately for the misconduct, but his/her grades should be based upon what the student can demonstrate s/he has learned;
- G. Ensure that all parents and students are informed of the District's Attendance Policy and related guidelines;
- H. Address unexcused absences.