

STUDENT ATTENDANCE GUIDELINES/PROCEDURES

A. Types of Student Absences

1. Absences Approved 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.

The district does not encourage absences of this nature because of lost instructional time. Students and parents/guardians should not expect the school to alter its program for such absences.

2. School-Excused Absences

Students may be excused from school by the school attendance officer for the following reasons:

- a. Personal illness
- b. Funerals
- c. Religious services
- d. Professional or court appointments that could not be scheduled outside of the regular school day
- e. Serious personal or family crisis
- f. Approved school activities during class time

The student's parent/guardian, if a child, or adult student must call school by 8:30 a.m. if the student is to be absent. In these cases where the school is not notified, the school shall attempt to contact the parent/guardian or adult student about the absence.

Parents/guardians or adult students may be asked, at the discretion of the principal, to furnish a medical excuse for any absences, which are due to the child's medical or mental condition, when they exceed 10 days in a school year.

3. Unexcused Absences

These are absences for reasons other than those listed in (1) and (2) above.

4. Truancy

"Truancy" means any absences of part or all of one or more days from school during which the school attendance officer, principal or teacher has not been notified in writing or by personal phone call from the parent/guardian of the absent student of the legal cause of such absence and also means intermittent attendance carried on for the purpose of defeating the intent of the state's compulsory attendance law.

5. Habitual Truancy

"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.

Parents/guardians who choose to absent their child from the public schools because of enrollment in a home-based private educational program shall cause said absence to be treated as a truancy unless the Superintendent of Public Instruction has determined that the home-based private educational program meets the definition of a private school.

B. Make-Up Assignments/Examinations

1. Absences Approved Solely by Parent/Guardian

A student who is excused from school attendance solely by his/her parent/guardian must complete the course work missed during the absence.

2. School-Approved Absences

Students with school-approved absences are entitled to make up work and examinations missed. The teacher may provide the student with alternative yet equivalent assignments and exams.

3. Unexcused Absences

Students who are absent from school under point A-1 above or who are absent, with or without the consent of their parent(s)/guardian(s), but whose absence is not excused in accordance with point A-2 above may or may not be permitted to make up class work missed. The student on his/her return to school shall be expected to submit a written statement signed by his/her parent/guardian explaining the reasons for the absence. On the basis of this statement, the school attendance officer or designee shall determine whether credit for the make-up work will be granted.

All students with an unexcused absence may be permitted to make up an examination missed during an absence. The teacher may provide the student with an alternative yet equivalent examination.

4. Suspensions

Suspensions are considered excused absences, students shall be allowed to make up all assignments and tests missed during a period of suspension. Students will be given two days for every day missed in order to complete missed assignments and tests. The teacher may provide the student with alternative yet equivalent assignments and exams.

C. Tardiness

The student's parent/guardian, if a child, or adult student must call school by 8:30 a.m. if the student is to be tardy.

A pattern of tardiness on the part of a student shall be brought to the attention of the student's parent/guardian. If it appears that the student is negligent, appropriate disciplinary action shall be taken.

D. Responsibilities for Attendance

1. Parent/Guardian Responsibilities

a. Parents/guardians are required to provide a written explanation of absences at the time their child returns to school, or in the case of anticipated absences, prior to the absence. School-approved anticipated absences must receive prior approval of the school attendance officer or designee.

- b. Once notified, a child's parent/guardian is required to return a truant child to the school's attendance officer or designee.
- c. The parent/guardian of a child must call school by 8:30 a.m. if the child is to be absent or tardy. In these cases where the school is not notified, the school shall attempt to contact the parent/guardian about the absence.

2. Student Responsibilities

- a. Students are required to attend all of their scheduled classes and study halls, unless they have obtained parent/guardian permission and a pass approved by the principal, or designee.
- b. A student who has been absent, or is anticipating being absent, shall be expected to provide a written explanation of the absence signed by his/her parent/guardian. An adult age student shall be expected to provide a written excuse for all absences.
- c. Students should always check in and out at the school building office when they leave and return to school, unless their departure is part of a school sanctioned program or activity.
- d. An adult student must call school by 8:30 a.m. if he/she is to be absent or tardy. In these cases where the school is not notified, the school shall attempt to contact the adult student about the absence.

3. Teacher Responsibilities

- a. Teachers are 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 discussions and examinations in grading students.
- b. Teachers are required by law to take daily attendance (period by period) in their classes and maintain a record of absences. Absences shall be recorded and reported to the school attendance officer.

4. School Attendance Officer Responsibilities

The principal shall serve as the attendance officer for his/her building. If the principal is out of the district, or otherwise unavailable, he/she may designate a faculty member to temporarily serve in this capacity. He/she:

- a. Shall maintain office records for all excused absences and unexcused absences that occur in their school building.
- b. Shall notify the parent/guardian of a child who has been truant of the child's truancy and 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. (The period during which a student is absent from school due to a suspension is not an absence without legal cause). The notice 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 personal contact, mail or telephone call 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.

- c. Notify the parent/guardian of a child who is a habitual truant, by registered or certified mail, when the child initially becomes a habitual truant. (The period during which a student is absent from school due to a suspension is not an absence without an acceptable excuse.) The notice shall include all of 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 for the child 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 telephone 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; and
 - (4) A statement of the penalties that may be imposed under state law on the parent/guardian if he/she fails to cause the child to attend school regularly as required by the state's compulsory school attendance law.
- d. Shall initiate truancy proceedings for habitual truancy.

E. Truancy

1. The following procedures shall be followed regarding unexcused absences:
 - a. Parent/guardian shall be contacted either by phone or letter.
 - b. Student involved shall be confronted and shall meet with the school attendance officer, attendance personnel and/or guidance counselor.
 - c. Detention, suspension or make up assignments shall be assigned at the discretion of the school attendance officer, or attendance personnel as well as any other necessary restrictions. A student shall be permitted to take any examinations or major assignments missed, during a period detention or directed study program, and receive full credit. Teachers may provide an alternative, yet equivalent, examination or assignment. Students shall also be permitted to make up major assignments missed or assignment.

Students who have been truant from school shall be given an opportunity to take and examinations or major assignments missed during the period of his/her absence. The student must make arrangements with the teacher to complete the tests and assignments, within two days his/her return to school. Full credit will be awarded for work thus completed; however, the teacher may provide an alternative, yet equivalent examination or assignment.

- d. When a student is truant five times in a semester, the school attendance officer shall be alerted. Upon his/her review and recommendation an attendance notification letter shall be sent to the student's parent/guardian.
- e. Prior to a student being habitually truant (see definition), the attendance officer shall again review the case and if appropriate, shall cause a second attendance notification letter to be sent to the student's parent/guardian and a copy of this letter shall also be sent to Marathon County Juvenile Court. A parent/guardian conference shall be requested by the school attendance officer to discuss the attendance of the student and to determine strategies for remediating the situation. Pupil services personnel shall be involved in the conference.
- f. Students whose truancy continues and become habitual truants and must be referred to Marathon County Juvenile Court authorities.
 - (1) A notification letter shall be sent to the parent/guardian by registered mail.
 - (2) A meeting with the parent/guardian shall be required. If the parent/guardian fails to attend a letter noting this noncompliance shall be sent.
 - (3) If truancy continues a referral form and citation shall be sent to Marathon County Juvenile Court authorities.
- g. If truancy continues after juvenile court referral and/or court appearance by the cited person(s), a letter shall be sent to the child's parent/guardian and Marathon County Juvenile Court.

F. Permission to be Excused from Regular School Attendance

- 1. Upon the child's request and with the written approval of the child's parent/guardian, any child who is 16 years of age may be excused by the Board from regular school attendance if 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.
- 2. Upon the child's request and with the written approval of the child's parent/guardian, any child who is 16 years of age or over and a child at risk may attend, in lieu of high school or on a part-time basis, a technical college if the child and his/her parent/guardian agree, in writing, that the child will participate in a program leading to the child's graduation from high school.
- 3. Upon the child's request and with the written approval of the child's parent/guardian, any child who is 17 years of age or over may be excused by the school board from regular school attendance if 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.

APPROVED:

October 11, 2000