



ATTENDANCE POLICY

(approved July 13, 2010)

ELEMENTARY AND MIDDLE SCHOOL

Daily, punctual attendance is an integral part of the learning experience and is required of all students to receive the maximum benefit of the educational program. Students are expected to attend classes regularly and to be on time.

There is a strong correlation between good attendance and academic success. Students who receive excessive excused absences can expect that their learning will be affected even though work may be made up. Anytime students, parents/guardians, teachers and/or administrators are concerned about a student's attendance, they are encouraged to contact the appropriate party.

Certain absences may be excused under this policy, but students will still be required to make up work missed due to an absence regardless of whether it is excused or unexcused.

Subject to the provisions of this policy and any corresponding administrative procedures, students shall not be absent more than five days due to an unexcused absence per semester or more than three days due to an unexcused absence per trimester. Buildings shall establish and implement a notification and support plan regarding unexcused absences beginning with the student's second unexcused absence. Excessive absences are defined as more than five unexcused absences per semester or three unexcused absences per trimester. Excessive absences in a class may result in a review by the school's Building Attendance Team and may result in a supportive intervention or disciplinary action under this policy.

This policy shall apply to all students including special education students except in those cases where decisions involve a special education student's evaluation or placement. Such cases shall be referred to the special education department for disposition through established hearing procedures.

A. Attendance

In accordance with Iowa law, it is the parent's responsibility to cause the child to attend school (Code of Iowa, Chapter 299). Excessive loss of instruction time due to late arrivals or early withdrawals may result in the student being referred to the Building Attendance Team.

B. Absence

Parent(s)/guardian(s) are expected to notify the school regarding a student's absence on the day of the absence. An absence must be reported within 24 hours of the date of absence. Failure to report the absence within 24 hours of the date of absence will result in the absence being recorded as unexcused unless the parent(s)/guardian(s) demonstrates there was a hardship that prevented him or her from reporting. If requested, the parent(s)/guardian(s) of students who are absent from school shall submit in writing the specific reasons for their absence. Such notice shall include the specific days or times they were absent, verification by a health care provider (when appropriate), and a signature of a parent/guardian.

C. Excused Absence

Students are encouraged to attend school daily. However, students may not be subject to disciplinary action for failure to attend school if lack of attendance is beyond the control of the student. A student may be excused by a parent for one of the following reasons:

1. Illness;
2. Medically documented chronic or extended illness, hospitalization, or doctor's care, or nurse's approval;
3. Medical or dental care;
4. Death or serious illness in the immediate family or household;
5. Suspension from school;
6. Religious holidays requiring absence from school;
7. Court appearances or other legal proceedings beyond the control of the family;
8. Classes missed because of attendance at a school-sponsored trip or activity;

D. Unexcused Absence

An absent student not meeting the provisions required to have an excused absence will have an unexcused absence. An unexcused absence is a student's absence from school or class that does not fall within the above stated reasons. Students may have five unexcused absences per semester or three unexcused absences per trimester. The sixth unexcused absence of the semester or the fourth unexcused absence of the trimester will be considered excessive and an intervention will occur. However, buildings shall establish and implement a notification and support plan regarding unexcused absences beginning with the student's second unexcused absence.

E. Make-up Work

School work missed because of absence must be made up. Students will be given two days for each day missed to make up work. Make up time may not exceed six school days following the student's return. The time allowed for makeup work may be extended at the discretion of the classroom teacher. Full credit will be given for school work made up because of absences.

F. Excessive Absences

1. Excessive absence is any unexcused absence beyond the district limit of five allowable unexcused absences per semester or three unexcused absences per trimester.
2. If a student's excused absences become excessive each student's case will be reviewed for consideration of a supportive intervention. Absences will be recorded as part of a student's attendance record.
3. Interventions include but are not limited to the following:
 - a. A student may be referred to, the SUCCESS case manager, nurse, a social worker, a counselor, and/or a teacher advocate for assistance;
 - b. The student may be referred to the school's support team for a targeted intervention;
 - c. The student may be allowed to make up absences through an agreement whereby the student agrees to perform specified school assignments outside the student's regular school day;
 - d. The student's schedule may be modified and an adult mentor assigned;
 - e. The student may be assigned to an in-building alternative educational program to receive additional academic support; or
 - f. A recommendation for retention may be made to the Building Attendance Team.
4. The principal or designee may refer the student to the Polk County Attorney Mediation Center.
5. Class work missed because of excessive absences can be made up and will be treated the same as make-up work for all other absences.

G. Tardiness

Excessive tardies shall be dealt with pursuant to the district's Discipline Code and Procedures.