

251 Attendance/Truancy/Withdrawal

General Policy

Students enrolled in the School must attend School regularly in accordance with the laws of the State. The educational program offered by the School is predicated upon the presence and punctuality of the student and requires continuity of instruction and classroom participation. Student absences, whether excused or unexcused, take away from instructional time and have an adverse effect on student learning.

A parent must contact the School in accordance with the procedure set forth in Policy 252 whenever a student is absent.

Attendance shall be required of all students enrolled at the School during the days and hours that the School is in session. Attendance need not always be within the School facilities, but a student will be considered to be in attendance if present at any place where School is in session by authority of the Board.

Excused Absences

Absences due to the following will be excused:

1. Personal physical illness that prevents attendance at School (at the discretion of the Principal or his/her designee, a written statement from a physician/clinical nurse specialist/certified nurse practitioner may be required).
2. Personal mental illness such that the student will not benefit from instruction (at the discretion of the Principal or his/her designee, a written statement from a physician/clinical nurse specialist/certified nurse practitioner/mental health professional may be required).
3. Illness in the family necessitating the presence of the child (at the discretion of the Principal or his/her designee, a written statement from a physician and an explanation as to why the child's absence was necessary may be required).
4. Quarantine in the home (absence will be excused for the duration of the quarantine as determined by proper health officials).
5. Death in the family (absence will be excused for no more than eighteen (18) hours unless the Principal or his/her designee determines that a longer absence is reasonably necessary).
6. Medical, behavioral, or dental appointments (at the discretion of the Principal or his/her designee, a written statement from a physician, mental health professional, or dentist confirming the appointment may be required).
7. Observance of religious holidays or expression of religious beliefs consistent with the truly held religious beliefs of the child or the child's family for no more than three (3) school days (the Principal may require confirmation of the parent's signature requesting

the absence, but may not inquire as to the sincerity of the student's religious or spiritual belief system).

8. College or university visits (at the discretion of the Principal or his/her designee, verification of the date and time of the visit may be requested).
9. Pre-enlistment reporting to military enlistment processing station (at the discretion of the Principal or his/her designee, a written verification confirming the date and time reporting may be required).
10. Absence due to a placement in or changes to a foster care placement or any court proceeding related to a student's foster care status.
11. Absences due to a student being homeless.
12. Absences due to deployment activities of a parent or custodian.
13. The existence of an emergency condition at home such as absence, illness, or death of the parent or custodian.
14. Necessary work in a family business or on a family farm (after proof of necessary absence is provided to the Principal or his/her designee).
15. Necessary work directly and exclusively for a child's parent, if the child is over the age of fourteen (14) and has been in regular attendance at school during the current school year (after proof of necessary absence is provided to the Principal or his/her designee).
16. Instruction at home from a person qualified to teach the branches of education in which instruction is required, and such additional branches, as the advancement and needs of the child may require (after adequate certification of home instruction has been provided to the Principal or his/her designee).
17. An emergency or set of circumstances which in the judgment of the School constitutes a good and sufficient cause for absence.
18. If a student is absent from School for the sole purpose of traveling out of state to participate in a School-approved enrichment activity or extracurricular activity, the School shall count that absence as an excused absence, up to a maximum of twenty-four (24) hours per school year that the School is open for instruction. The student must complete any classroom assignments he/she misses due to the absence. If the student will be absent for twenty-four (24) or more consecutive hours that the School is open for instruction, a classroom teacher must accompany the student during the travel period to provide the student with instructional assistance in order to count the student as in attendance.

The Principal or his/her designee reserves the right to verify statements and to investigate the cause of absence.

Excuses from future school attendance:

1. Shall be limited to a period not to exceed thirty (30) school hours and can be renewed at the discretion of the Superintendent or his/her designee for thirty (30) additional hours. Absences shall not exceed sixty (60) consecutive hours unless the child's parent has recently died or

become totally or partially incapacitated and there is no older sibling living in the home who is out of school. At the discretion of the Superintendent or his/her designee, a written statement from a physician may be required.

2. May not materially endanger the child's educational welfare or scholastic advancement.

Withdrawal

A student who fails to participate in seventy-two (72) consecutive hours of learning opportunities will be automatically withdrawn, unless the student's absence is excused. Otherwise, a parent may withdraw a student voluntarily by signing a Voluntary Withdrawal form with the Principal or his/her designee.

Whenever a student withdraws from the School voluntarily, the Student's teacher shall attempt to ascertain the reason for withdrawal and shall immediately inform the Superintendent or his/her designee of the reason for the withdrawal. If the Student voluntarily withdrew from the School as a result of a change in residence, the Superintendent or his/her designee shall notify the superintendent of the district to which the Student has moved of all essential information regarding the Student, including the Student's new address.

If the Superintendent or his/her designee becomes aware that a Student who has withdrawn from the School for reasons other than a change of residence is not enrolled in another school, the Superintendent or his/her designee shall notify the juvenile judge of the county in which the School is located of the Student's likely violation of the State's compulsory education laws. Notice shall be given within two (2) weeks and shall include the Student's name, address, date of birth, School, and the district where the Student resides. Any notice given in error shall be immediately rescinded by the Superintendent or his/her designee.

Disciplinary Action for Unexcused Tardiness

Repeated unexcused absences/tardiness may be grounds for disciplinary action that will not include suspension or expulsion.

A student is tardy when a student is more than five (5) minutes late for School or for a class. If a student misses more than half a class, the student will be marked absent for the class. When tracking hours of missed instruction for excessive absence and truancy purposes, the School shall track tardiness and early dismissals to the nearest 60 minutes of missed instruction for each instance of tardiness or early dismissal per day.

Students shall not be considered absent for purposes of habitual truancy calculations while out of class for a legitimate reason, including but not limited to restroom breaks, visits to the nurses office, counselor meetings, or remediation sessions.

Any student who, due to a medically-documented physical or mental impairment, is absent for an extended period will not be disciplined. Such students may be entitled to receive an education tailored to their individual needs or abilities as provided for under federal and/or state law.

Truancy and Absence Intervention Strategies

The Principal or his/her designee may act as the School's attendance officer or delegate that duty as permitted by law. The School's attendance officer shall investigate possible School attendance violations, and is authorized under Ohio law, to serve warrants, to enter places where children of compulsory School age are employed, and to take such other actions as may be necessary to enforce the compulsory education laws.

A student is chronically absent from school if a student is absent from the School for ten percent (10%) or more of the minimum number of hours required in the school year with or without legitimate nonmedical or nonreligious excuse. When a student misses five percent (5%) of the minimum number of hours required in the school year, the attendance officer shall notify the student's parents of the student's absences.

The School shall employ absence intervention strategies for all students who are chronically absent from School. Such strategies shall include the following tiered systems of supports, which shall provide more intensive interventions and supports for students with greater numbers of absences and include resources to help students and families address root causes of absences:

1. Providing a truancy intervention plan for any student who is chronically absent or at risk of becoming chronically absent from school;
2. Providing counseling for a habitual truant;
3. Requesting or requiring a parent to attend parental involvement programs;
4. Requesting or requiring a parent to attend truancy prevention mediation programs; and
5. Taking legal action under R.C. 2919.222, 3321.20, and/or 3321.38.

A student is habitually truant if the student is absent without a legitimate excuse for thirty (30) or more consecutive hours, for forty-two (42) or more hours in one (1) school month, or seventy-two (72) or more hours in one (1) school year.

Legitimate excuses for the absence of a student otherwise habitually truant include but are not limited to:

1. the student was enrolled in another school;
2. the student's absence was excused in accordance with applicable law or policy; or,
3. the student has received an age and schooling certificate.

The attendance officer shall examine cases of supposed truancy within the School, and shall warn the child and the parent in writing of the legal consequences to being truant. When the child is not attending school, the attendance officer or his/her designee shall notify the parent of that fact and require the parent to cause the child to attend school immediately.

The attendance officer shall file a complaint with the juvenile court against a student if the student is a habitual truant, unless the attendance officer determines that the student is making satisfactory progress in improving the student's attendance at school. If a student is not deemed to be making progress to improve attendance at school, or ceases to continue making progress to

improve attendance, the attendance officer shall file a complaint in the juvenile court against the student. Any complaint filed under this policy shall alleged that the child is an unruly child for being a habitual truant and that the parent has violated Section 3321.38 of the Revised Code.

The Superintendent or his/her designee is also authorized to establish a parent education program for parents of students who are habitually truant. Any parent assigned to the program who does not complete the program is to be reported to law enforcement authorities for neglect of parent education, a fourth class misdemeanor if found guilty.

This Board consulted with the juvenile court of the counties in which the School is located, parents of students attending the School, and state and local agencies deemed appropriate by the Board prior to adopting this policy.

R.C. 2151.011; R.C. 2151.27; R.C. 3314.03(A)(6); R.C. 3314.11; R.C. 3321.01; R.C. 3321.041; R.C. 3321.13-.191; O.A.C. 3301-69-02.

Effective Date: _____