

Two Rivers Public School District Bylaws & Policies

5200 - ATTENDANCE/TRUANCY PLAN

The Board of Education and staff have devised procedures regarding attendance that clearly demonstrate a commitment of care and concern for the student's success and the importance of regular attendance. This commitment includes scheduling procedures that match teachers and students according to teaching-learning styles, course content that interests students and motivates them through a sense of achievement, and an involvement of students in curricular and co-curricular activities that will help them achieve a sense of belonging. This commitment through curriculum includes devising alternatives to traditional courses and traditional teaching methods to reach the diverse needs of students.

Formal and informal communication with the home about the role of the parent or guardian in assuming responsibility for the regular attendance of their children will be carried out on a regular basis. The combined efforts of the professional staff, students, and the home are needed to promote regular attendance.

COMPULSORY ATTENDANCE

- A. In accordance with State law, all children between six (6) and eighteen (18) years of age must attend school fulltime until the end of the term, quarter, or semester in which they become eighteen (18) years of age unless they have a legal excuses. s. 118.15(1) (a)
- B. Upon the child's request and with the written approval of the child's parent or guardian, any child who is sixteen (16) years of age may be excused by the School Board from regular school attendance if the child and his/her parent or guardian agree, in writing, that the child will participate in a program or curriculum modification leading to the child's high school graduation. s. 118.15(1) (c)
- C. Upon the child's request and with the written approval of the child's parent or guardian, any child who is seventeen (17) years of age or over may be excused by the School Board from regular school attendance if the child and his/her parent or guardian agree, in writing, that the child will participate in a program or curriculum modification leading to the child's high school graduation, or leading to a high school equivalency diploma under s. 115.29(4). s. 118.15(1)(c)
- D. "Truancy" means any absence of part or all of one(1) or more school days during which the school attendance officer or designee has not been notified of the cause of such absence by the parent or guardian of the absent student, and also means intermittent attendance carried on for the purpose of defeating the intent of the compulsory attendance law.

STUDENT ABSENCES/EXCUSES AND TRUANCY

- A. An EXCUSED ABSENCE is defined as follows:
 - 1. A student is sick and has written acknowledgment from a parent or guardian. A parent/guardian may also verify the absence through a telephone call to the attendance office. Absences exceeding three (3) consecutive days or ten (10) days total in a semester may require a doctor's notice.

2. A student has a written anticipated absence request from his/her parent/guardian and has not exceeded ten (10) days per school year.
3. A student is absent due to family bereavement or serious illness in the family with the written or recorded acknowledgment of a parent/guardian.
4. A student is absent for other reasons approved by the building attendance officer and accompanied by the written or recorded acknowledgment of a parent/guardian.

Make-up Work - Students with excused absences shall be permitted to make up all assignments and exams. Students will be allowed a minimum of two (2) class periods for each excused period missed to make up assignments and exams. Points that are given for class participation and discussion may be made up with alternative assignments at the discretion of the teacher.

B. UNEXCUSED ABSENCES are defined as follows:

1. A student who is past the age in which truancy laws apply, is absent without an acceptable reason as determined by the attendance officer.
2. The reason a student was absent was inappropriate in the opinion of the attendance officer, even though the absence was approved by the parent or guardian; OR if the absences exceeded ten (10) days, as provided in A(2) above.

Make-up work and/or disciplinary action will be at the discretion of the attendance officer. Attendance Officer will have the discretion to determine whether such absence will be regarded as truancy (see C-2).

C. TRUANCY is defined as follows:

1. A student does not have his/her parent's or guardian's permission to be absent from school.
2. The reason a student was absent was inappropriate in the opinion of the attendance officer, irrespective of whether the parent/guardian's permission was given.

Make-up Work - Students who are truant shall be permitted to make up major exams missed as a result of truancy during their next scheduled detention, in a supervised, directed study program, or at the discretion of the teacher. If a student does not take one (1) of the aforementioned opportunities to make up his/her exam, s/he will not receive credit for the exam. Daily assignments (including labs) and class participation/discussion points may NOT be made up if missed due to truancy.

D. A SUSPENDED student is defined as follows:

1. A student has been removed from ongoing instruction for adjustment purposes.
2. Student suspensions will be processed by the principal or designee of the school in which the student is enrolled at the time of the misbehavior.

Make-up Work - Students who are suspended shall be permitted to make up quarterly or semester exams missed as a result of suspension within a minimum of two (2) periods for each period missed. Students may take the opportunity to complete daily assignments. Points that are given for class participation, tests, and discussion may be made up with alternative assignments at the discretion of the teacher.

3. A student who is suspended is not permitted to be on any school grounds or participate in any school related activities during the time of the suspension.

STUDENT ATTENDANCE OFFICER

- A. The building principal of the middle school and each of the elementary schools and the assistant principal of the high school will serve as the school building attendance officer and deal with all matters relating to school attendance and truancy.
- B. Each attendance officer shall determine daily, which students enrolled in the school are absent from school and whether that absence is excused in accordance with Board policy and established procedures.
- C. Annually, on or before June 15th, the school attendance officer shall determine how many students enrolled were absent in the previous year, indicating which were excused or unexcused and submit it to the District Administrator.
- D. The school attendance officer, or designee, shall notify the parent or guardian of a child who has been truant. The notice under this paragraph must be given before the end of the second day after receiving a report of an unexcused absence and may be made by personal service, mail or telephone call on which a written record is kept.
- E. In cases of truancy, the school attendance officer shall:
 1. Notify the parent or guardian of a child who has been truant, of the child's truancy and direct the parent or guardian to return the child to school no later than the next day on which school is in session or to provide an acceptable excuse.
 2. On the first and second days of truancy:
 - a. Parents are notified by phone.
 - b. At the high school and middle school, the student will be assigned detention in the amount of time equal to (to the nearest hour) the amount of time the student was truant from school.
 3. "Habitual truant" means a student who is absent from school without an acceptable excuse under section II above for either of the following (s. 118.16): part or all of five (5) or more days on which school is held during a school semester.
 4. Shall notify the parent or guardian of a child who is a habitual truant, by registered or certified mail, when the child initially becomes a habitual truant. The notice shall include all of the following:
 - a. Statement of the parent's or guardian's responsibility, under s. 118.15(1)(a), to cause the child to attend school regularly.
 - b. List of the dates of absences; both excused and unexcused.
 - c. 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 under s. 188.153(c).
 - d. A request that the parent or guardian meet with appropriate school personnel to discuss the child's truancy. The notice shall include:
 - 1) the name of the school personnel with whom the parent or guardian should meet;
 - 2) the date of the meeting;
 - 3) the time of the meeting;
 - 4) the location of the meeting, including room number(s);
 - 5) the name, address and telephone number of a person to contact to arrange a different date, time, or place.

- e. A statement of the penalties, under s. 118.15(5), that may be imposed on the parent or guardian if s/he fails to cause the child to attend school regularly.
- F. Shall initiate a referral to municipal court if the truancy patterns continues and after the principal or the principal's designee have completed the following:
 - 1. Met with the child's parent or guardian to discuss the child's truancy or have attempted to meet with the child's parent or guardian and been refused.
 - 2. Provided an opportunity for educational counseling to the child to determine whether a change in the child's curriculum would resolve the child's truancy and have considered curriculum modifications possible within the current school program.
 - 3. Evaluated the child to determine whether learning/emotional problems may be a cause of the child's truancy, and, if so, have taken appropriate action or made appropriate referrals.
 - 4. Conducted an evaluation to determine whether social problems may be a cause of the child's truancy, and, if so, have taken appropriate action or made appropriate referrals to community agencies.
 - 5. Following receipt of evidence that the four (4) criteria have been met, the school attendance officer may file a referral on any child who continues to be truant with municipal court. The number of referrals to municipal court shall be determined by a joint meeting of the municipal court judge, Two Rivers Police Department and representatives from the School District. Filing a referral on a child does not preclude concurrent prosecution of the child's parent or guardian under s. 118.15(5).
- G. The school attendance officer may contact home-based and/or private educational programs to attempt to discover whether such programs meet the program criteria established by law. All such contracts shall be documented.
- H. The school attendance officer shall furnish student attendance information to the county welfare agency as requested for implementation of Wisconsin's Learnfare program. Student attendance information shall only be released if appropriate "release of confidentiality" forms have been filed with the District in accordance with provisions of State law and the District's student records policy.

PROCEDURES AND RESPONSIBILITIES FOR ATTENDANCE

- A. Procedures:
 - 1. High school - Attendance will be taken in all classes each period; absences will be recorded in the attendance office each period.
 - 2. Middle school - Attendance will be taken in all classes each period; absences will be reported and recorded in the attendance office each morning and each afternoon.
 - 3. Elementary schools - Attendance will be taken each morning and each afternoon; absences will be recorded and reported to the attendance officer.
- B. Parent(s)/guardian responsibility:
 - 1. When a student is absent, his/her parent(s) or guardian shall contact the school attendance officer during the day by the time established at each school. Failure to contact the school attendance officer may result in a telephone call to the home or work place of the parent or guardian.
 - 2. Parents or guardians are required to telephone the school while the child is absent, or to provide a written explanation of absences at the time the student returns to school, or in

the case of anticipated absences, submit a written explanation prior to the absence. Anticipated absences shall receive prior approval of the school attendance officer, or designee.

C. Student responsibility:

1. Students are required to attend all of their scheduled classes, study halls and lunch periods, unless they have obtained parental permission and a pass approved by the student's attendance officer, or designee.
2. A student who has been absent, or is anticipating to be absent, shall be expected to provide a written explanation of the absence signed by his/her parent(s) or guardian.
3. Students should always check in and out at the school building office when they leave and return to school.

D. Teacher responsibility:

1. Teachers are required to emphasize the importance and necessity of good attendance. Classroom procedures and grading requirements will be developed which reflect the importance of daily assignments, classroom discussion and examinations in grading students.
2. Teachers are required to take daily attendance in their classes and maintain a record of absences as provided in "A" above.

RETURN OF A TRUANT STUDENT TO SCHOOL

- A. When a truant student returns or is returned to school, school personnel should immediately acknowledge the return and encourage regular attendance in the future. All truants, whether occasional or habitual, need attention. The degree of attention may vary depending upon the age of the student and the pattern of truancy.
- B. Additional responses to be made by school personnel regarding truant students returning to school may include but are not necessarily limited to, the following;
 1. Assessment of factors contributing to truancy.
 2. Discussion of student's commitment and responsibility to assist in returning to regular programming.
 3. Offer of counseling to the student.
 4. Development of a plan for consequences to truancy.
 5. Discussion of alternative educational options and limitations.
 6. Review possible curriculum modifications.
 7. Counseling guided re-entry to classes/programs.
 8. Utilize appropriate referrals to other agencies.

METHODS TO INCREASE AND MAINTAIN PUBLIC AWARENESS AND/OR INVOLVEMENT IN RESPONDING TO TRUANCY WITHIN THE SCHOOL DISTRICT

- A. Education is a responsibility that extends beyond the confines of the schools. Community support and involvement are essential ingredients.

B. Attendance/truancy can be an item on the following agendas:

1. Parent teacher organizations
2. School boards
3. AODA advisory groups
4. Education for employment council
5. Liaison groups such as police, social services and legislative bodies
6. Student personnel committee meetings such as Student Assistance Programs
7. Chamber of Commerce
8. Local churches

C. Truancy can be an item in the following reports:

1. statistics on annual performance disclosure reports on periodic basis;
2. periodic informational releases such as District newsletters and press releases.

115, 118.15, 118.125(2), 118.153, 118.16, 118.162, Wis. Stats.