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SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

The Board of Education of the Evansville Community School District encourages a strong partnership between the home, school, and community. It recognizes a positive relationship between good school attendance and success in school and employment. Frequent absence of students from regular classroom learning experiences disrupts the continuity of the instructional process. Consequently, students who miss school frequently experience difficulty in achieving the maximum benefit of schooling.

In accordance with state law, all children between five and eighteen years of age must attend school full time until the end of the term, quarter or semester in which they become eighteen years of age, or unless they have a legal excuse, fall under one of the exceptions outlined in the state statutes, or have graduated from high school.

School Notification

Student attendance is monitored throughout each school day. Parent(s)/guardian(s) should call the school office prior to 9:00 a.m. the morning of an absence to report the absence. If it is not possible to call, a note explaining the student's absence should be presented to the school attendance clerk immediately upon return to school. All absences must be cleared before the end of the second school day or the student may be considered unexcused and truant.

Parent(s)/guardian(s) who have not notified the school of the absence will be notified by voice mail/phone that their child is absent as part of our safe arrival program. Parent(s)/guardian(s) may substitute email for a phone call or a note providing they have completed a form specifying their preference for email. These are available on-line on the District website and annually at our back-to-school days. Should a student abuse this family privilege, all attendance excuses for at least the remainder of the year must be in writing

Parent/Guardian Excused:

Parent(s)/guardian(s) may excuse their children for up to ten (10) days per year for any purpose providing the parent/guardian submits prior written approval to excuse their students. If the principal/attendance officer determines that the student will exceed the ten (10) day limit, days beyond 10 will be considered unexcused unless they are documented by the parent/guardian as meeting one of the "School Excused" exceptions and have approval of the principal. Policies for obtaining and completing work for pre-arranged absences will be set by each building and provided annually in the school handbook.

School Excused/Unexcused:

Students are expected to be in attendance unless there is a need to be absent for one of the following reasons under the following conditions:

1. Student illness: The school may require a written verification from physician.
2. Sudden emergencies: The school will require written verification upon return to school.
3. Educational opportunities approved by the district administrator or building principal.
4. Suspension from school.
5. Religious holidays.

A note specifying the reason for the absence must be given to the school before the end of the second school day of returning to school. The school reserves the right to record the absence as unexcused if no excuse is given or the reason given cannot be substantiated. The parent(s)/guardian(s) will be notified if the absence is recorded as unexcused. Five (5) or more unexcused absences will require an attendance conference with the parent(s)/guardian(s) and a written plan to improve attendance.

Medical Related Absences

Students going to the doctor or dentist during school hours must bring back a slip from their doctor/dentist stating the date and time of the appointment. On appointment days, students are expected to spend the balance of the day in school unless excused by the doctor/dentist. While infrequent absences due to illness are normal, frequent absences jeopardize a student's standing in classes. If a student is absent more than five (5) days per semester because of illness, the school may require a doctor's statement to excuse the student for illness. Failure to produce a doctor's excuse at that point would result in an unexcused absence.

Missed School Work

In the case of excused absences, time will be allowed for make-up work, including exams with full credit given for work completed.

The school may not deny a student credit in a course or subject solely because of the student's unexcused absences from school. Students will be permitted to take examinations missed during unexcused absences, following the procedures in the relevant school handbook.

Unexcused Absences or Truancy

School officials will proactively involve parent(s)/guardian(s) when a student's attendance is of concern due to frequency of absences and/or tardiness. The school attendance office will communicate with the parent(s)/guardian(s) to discuss the causes of the absences and to try to arrange for a solution. The Board does not distinguish between truant and unexcused. Thus, all absences not covered under the excused absence list above will be considered unexcused and have the same meaning as "truancy" under Wisconsin Statutes. Consequences will vary depending on the age of the student. Each building is responsible for establishing age-appropriate consequences consistent with State Statute. Under State Statute and City Ordinance, a truancy citation may be issued, depending on age of the student and length of absence.

A student's parent(s)/guardian(s) will be notified by telephone and/or voice mail as soon as it is ascertained that a student is truant. Any student found to be truant will be required to attend a conference with the principal/attendance officer or designee. The student and parent/guardian will be informed of the penalty to be imposed by the school for the truancy. Mitigating factors in a student's family, emotional, educational, or health situation will be considered along with the need to develop an attendance plan. The student will also be warned of the consequences of continued truancy both at school and through the municipal court. The principal/attendance officer will positively reinforce the reasons for good attendance, attempt to assess the factors that may have contributed to the truancy, and call upon appropriate school personnel as needed. If the student has more unexcused absences and reaches the habitual truant level, a certified letter will be sent to the parent(s)/guardian(s) requesting a parent/guardian conference to discuss the truancy. At this time, a referral to the municipal court may also be sent for action under state truancy laws for habitual truants.

As a consequence of a student's truancy the student may be assigned to detention or to a supervised, directed study program. The program need not be held during the regular school day. The building team will develop the conditions under which credit may be given for work completed during the period of detention or assignment to a supervised, directed study program. A student must be permitted to take any examinations missed during a period of assignment to a supervised, directed study program.

Habitual Truancy

A student who is absent from school without an acceptable excuse for part or all of five (5) or more school days per semester will be declared habitually truant. If so, the student's parent(s)/guardian(s) will be notified in writing of the student's status. Within five (5) days after the date the habitual truancy notice has been sent to the parent(s)/guardian(s), by certified mail, a meeting will be scheduled with them and school officials to discuss the student's truancy. With the consent of the student's parent/guardian, the date for the meeting may be extended for an additional five school days. The Board will actively support any and all ordinances and laws dealing with truant students.

Legal Ref.: Sections 118.15 of the Wisconsin Statutes (Compulsory School Attendance)
118.153 (Children At Risk of Not Graduating From High School)
118.155 (Released Time for Religious Instruction)
118.16 (School Attendance Enforcement)
118.162 (Truancy Committee and Plan)
118.163 (Municipal Truancy and School Dropout Ordinances)
118.164 (Removal of Pupils From the Class)
118.165 (Private Schools)

Local Ref.: Policy #431, Compulsory Student Attendance & Alternative Programs