

Students

Attendance and Truancy

Compulsory School Attendance

This policy applies to individuals who have custody or control of a child: (a) between the ages of 6 (on or before September 1) and 17 years (unless the child has graduated from high school) or (b) who is enrolled in any of grades kindergarten through 12, in the public school regardless of age.

Subject to specific requirements in State law, the following children are not required to attend public school: (1) any child attending a private school (including a home school) or parochial school, (2) any child who is physically or mentally unable to attend school (including a pregnant student suffering medical complications as certified by her physician), (3) any child lawfully and necessarily employed, (4) any child over 12 and under 14 years of age while in confirmation classes, and (5) any child absent because of religious reasons, including to observe a religious holiday, for religious instruction, or because his or her religion forbids secular activity on a particular day(s) or time of day, and (6) any child 16 years of age or older who is employed and is enrolled in a graduation incentives program.

The parent/guardian of a student who is enrolled in a SASED program must authorize all absences from school and notify SASED in advance or at the time of the student's absence. A valid cause for absence includes illness (including mental or behavioral health of the student), observance of a religious holiday, death in the immediate family, family emergency, other situations beyond the control of the student as determined by the Board, voting pursuant to policy 7:90, *Release During School Hours* (10 ILCS 5/7-42 and 5/17-15), other circumstances that cause reasonable concern to the parent/guardian for the student's mental, emotional or physical health or safety, or other reason as approved by the Executive Director or designee. Students absent for a valid cause may make up missed homework and classwork assignments in a reasonable timeframe.

Absenteeism and Truancy Program

The Executive Director or designee shall, in collaboration with the member districts, manage absenteeism and truancy in accordance with The School Code and Board policy. The program shall include but not be limited to:

1. A protocol for excusing a student from attendance who is necessarily and lawfully employed. The Executive Director or designee is authorized to determine when the student's absence is justified. A student may be excused, at the Executive Director's or designee's discretion, when: (1) the student has a last period study hall, (2) the parent/guardian provides written permission, (3) the student's employer provides written verification of employment, (4) the student provides evidence of a valid work permit, or (5) other reason deemed justifiable by the Executive Director or designee.
2. A protocol for excusing a student in grades 6 through 12 from attendance to sound *Taps* at a military honors funeral held in Illinois for a deceased veteran.
3. A protocol for excusing a student from attendance on a particular day(s) or at a particular time of day when his/her parent/guardian is an active duty member of the uniformed services and has been called to duty for, is on leave from, or has immediately returned from deployment to a combat zone or combat-support postings.
4. A process to telephone, within 2 hours after the first class, the parents/guardians of students in grade 8 or below who are absent without prior parent/guardian notification.

5. A process to identify and track students who are truants, chronic or habitual truants, or truant minors as defined in 105 ILCS 5/26-2a, and inform the member district of the student's status.
6. Methods for identifying the cause(s) of a student's unexcused absenteeism, including interviews with the student, his or her parent(s)/guardian(s), and staff members or other people who may have information.
7. The identification of supportive services that may be offered to truant or chronically truant students, including parent-teacher conferences, student and/or family counseling, or information about community agency services. See board policy 6:110 *Programs for Students At Risk of Academic Failure and/or Dropping Out of School and Graduation Incentives Program*.
8. A process for the collection and review of chronic absence data and to:
 - a. Determine what systems of support and resources are needed to engage chronically absent students and their families, and
 - b. Encourage the habit of daily attendance and promote success.
9. Reasonable efforts to provide ongoing professional development to teachers, administrators, Board members, school resource officers, and staff on the appropriate and available supportive services for the promotion of student attendance and engagement.
10. A process to request the assistance and resources of outside agencies, such as, the juvenile officer of the local police department or the truant office of the appropriate Regional Office of Education, if truancy continues after supportive services have been offered.
11. A protocol for cooperating with non-SASED agencies including County or municipal authorities, the Regional Superintendent, truant officers, the Community Truancy Review Board, and a comprehensive community-based youth service agency. Any disclosure of student records must be consistent with Board policy 7:340, *Student Records*, as well as State and federal law concerning student records.
12. An acknowledgement that no punitive action, including out-of-school suspensions, expulsions, or court action, shall be taken against a chronic truant minor for his or her truancy unless available supportive services and other school resources have been provided to the student.
13. The criteria to determine whether a student's non-attendance is due to extraordinary circumstances shall include economic or medical necessity or family hardship and such other criteria that the Executive Director or designee believes qualifies.
14. A process for a 17-year-old resident to participate in the District's various programs and resources for truants. The student must provide documentation of his/her dropout status for the previous six months. A request from an individual 19 years of age or older to re-enroll after having dropped out of school is handled according to provisions in 7:50, *School Admissions and Student Transfers To and From Non-District Schools*.
15. A process for the temporary exclusion of a student 17 years of age or older for failing to meet minimum attendance standards according to provisions in State law. A parent/guardian has the right to appeal a decision to exclude a student.

LEGAL REF.: 105 ILCS 5/26-1 through 1.
 705 ILCS 405/3-33.5.
 23 Ill.Admin.Code §§1.242 and 1.290.

CROSS REF.: 5:100 (Staff Development Program), 6:110 (Programs for Students At Risk of Academic Failure and/or Dropping Out of School and Graduation Incentives Program), 6:150 (Home and Hospital Instruction), 7:10 (Equal Educational

Opportunities), 7:50 (School Admissions/Eligibility for Services), 7:60 (Residence), 7:80 (Release Time for Religious Instruction/Observance), 7:90 (Release During School Hours), 7:190 (Student Discipline), 7:340 (Student Records)

UPDATED: January 26, 2022