

Attendance and Truancy

Compulsory School Attendance

This policy applies to individuals who have custody or control of a child: (a) between the ages of six (on or before September 1st) 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 over 12 and under 14 years of age while in confirmation classes, and (4) any child absent because his or her religion forbids secular activity on a particular day.

The parent/guardian of a student who is enrolled must authorize all absences from school and notify the school in advance or at the time of the student's absence. A valid cause for absence includes illness, 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**, other circumstances that cause reasonable concern to the parent/guardian for the student's **mental, emotional, or physical health or safety**, or ~~health~~, or other reason as approved by the Superintendent or designee.

Absenteeism and Truancy Program

The Superintendent or designee shall manage an absenteeism and truancy program in accordance with The School Code and School Board policy. The program shall include but not be limited to:

1. 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.
2. 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.
3. A process to identify and track students who are truants, chronic or habitual truants, or truant minors as defined in **105ILCS 5/26-2A** The School Code, ~~Section 26-2a~~.

4. A description of diagnostic procedures 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 about the reasons for the student's attendance problem.
5. The identification of supportive services that may be offered to truant, chronically truant, or chronically absent 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*.
6. 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.
7. 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.
8. A protocol for cooperating with non-District 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 school student records must be consistent with Board policy 7:340, *Student Records*, as well as State and federal law concerning school student records.
9. An acknowledgement that no punitive action, including out-of-school suspensions, expulsions, or court action, shall be taken against a truant minor for his or her truancy unless available supportive services and other school resources have been provided to the student.
10. 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 Superintendent believes qualifies.