

2022-2023 PJHS Proposed Handbook Changes

The handbook committee met on May 11, 2022, to review and discuss proposed changes to the PJHS Student Handbook in accordance with the IPA Model Handbook and updates to adopted board policies. The proposed changes were also reviewed by the Building Leadership team.

The suggested changes are highlighted in yellow.

P. 4 - Absenteeism/Attendance

To be a successful student, it is essential that you attend school on a regular basis. It is difficult to keep up with classroom activities if your attendance is irregular.

The school day begins at 8:05 A.M. and ends at 3:18 P.M. The school district operates under the authority, policies, and laws set forth in the School Code of the State of Illinois

Punctual and regular attendance at school is the joint responsibility of the student and his/her parent(s) and/or guardian(s) and is necessary if a student is to obtain maximum benefit from his/her educational experience. Regular attendance is a value and standard that prepares the student for the world of work and adult responsibilities. The school district expects all students to attend school, to be on time, and bring appropriate school materials with them.

Illinois law requires that whoever has custody or control of any child between six and seventeen years of age shall assure that the child attends school in the district in which he or she resides, during the entire time school is in session. Illinois law also requires that whoever has custody or control of a child who is enrolled in the school, regardless of the child's age, shall assure that the child attends school during the entire time school is in session. (Board Policy 7:70, Attendance and Truancy)

In accordance with Illinois State compulsory attendance laws, high school students must attend school for three hundred (300) minutes per day. Therefore, if a student misses SIXTY-FOUR (64) minutes during the school day, he/she will be considered absent for one-half (1/2) day.

The reasons for your absence and whether those reasons warrant an excused or unexcused absence will be sent to the teachers. Family trips, working at home, group absences, or other questionable absences should receive approval from the office in advance. Otherwise, these absences are unexcused and no makeup privilege will be given.

A. ATTENDANCE POLICY

(Board Policy 7:70)

- **EXCUSED ABSENCE or EXCUSED TARDY** to school are absences reported to the attendance office by a parent for valid cause as defined in the Illinois State School Code: "illness, observance of a religious holiday, death in the immediate family, family emergency, mental health or such other circumstances which cause reasonable concern to the parent for the safety or health of the student." In order to ensure the health and safety of our students, the counselor may meet with a student who is absent from school for a mental health day.
 - Court appearances and medical/dental appointments will be excused only if cleared through the office and verified with the proper paperwork.
 - In accordance with Illinois School Code, a student who misses more than 9 days of school is a chronic truant. Therefore, students will be allowed 9 absences, excused for valid cause, per year. The 10th and all future absences will require a note from the doctor to be excused.
- **UNEXCUSED ABSENCES or UNEXCUSED TARDIES** to school (even with parental consent) include such things as missing the bus, oversleeping, shopping, car trouble, personal appointments, needed at home to babysit, skip days, leaving school without permission, and other avoidable absences, vacations, and hunting (unless excused prior to absence).
 - If there is doubt about whether an absence will be considered excused or unexcused, check in advance with the attendance office. You will have forty-eight (48) hours to get an unexcused absence cleared. **Students may not be allowed to make up work from unexcused absences, so it is imperative that parents and guardians communicate absences and encourage regular daily attendance.**
 - A student is unexcused when he/she:
 - is absent from school without prior permission.

- is absent from class without permission (skipping).
- obtains a pass to go to a certain place and does not report there.
- is sent home for refusal to complete classroom activities.
- Students who fail to attend without valid cause and who are absent fifteen (15) consecutive school days without cause and who can not be located or, after exhausting all available support services, can not be compelled to return to school is subject to expulsion from school. A parent or guardian who knowingly and willfully permits a child to be truant is in violation of State law.

B. EXCESSIVE ABSENCES

According to the Illinois School Code, a “chronic truant” is defined as a child subject to compulsory school attendance and who is absent from school for 5% or more of the regular attendance days in a school year. Therefore, students with excessive absences (excused or unexcused) will be subject to administrative review.

In order to keep parents of PJHS students informed, if a student accumulates five (5) absences before or by the end of the first quarter of the school year, a letter of warning will be sent to the parent/guardian. **If a student accumulates nine (9) absences before or by the end of the first semester of the school year, a letter will be sent to the parent/guardian informing the parent that all excused absences for the year have been exhausted and verification by a physician **WILL** be required for absences to be excused moving forward and a follow-up with the attendance specialist will be made.** If a student accumulates fifteen (15) absences before or by the end of the third quarter of the school year, a letter will be sent to the parent/guardian, and verification by a physician **WILL** continue to be required for the remainder of the school year if the absence is to be excused. **All doctor notes should be given to the school within 48 hours of a student's return.**

Please note that if a student is absent from school after receiving a fifteen (15) day notice, a parent/guardian call/note is still required. If no call/note is received, the student will be considered truant and may be reported to the truant officer for possible legal action.

Students who have seven (7) or more unexcused absences may be referred to the *Regional Attendance Program* through the *Regional Office of Education* or the truant officer, and any possible court action may follow. Students who have been referred to RAP / Truancy must have a doctor's note to excuse every absence.

A student who is absent from school for more than one-fourth of the school year (45 days) will severely jeopardize his/her chances of advancing in grade level and obtaining a diploma on time.

C. ANTICIPATED ABSENCE

Students with an anticipated absence in which the student would be accompanied by a parent may be given an excused absence [limit one (1) per semester] if the following criteria is met:

- The office must be informed [recommended at least three (3) days in advance] by a signed note from the parent stating the reason for the absence.
- The student's attendance has been excellent prior to the anticipated absence, and an absence day will not severely impact the student's grades. (Determination of excused absence based upon attendance will be made by the administration.)
- If a student's activity requires any type of permit, a copy of that permit is received along with the parent's note, or immediately thereafter.
- Clearance slips must be taken around by the student and signed by each of the student's teachers and approved by the office.

D. HOW TO REPORT AN ABSENCE

When a student is absent from school, have a parent/guardian call the school before 9:00 a.m. on the day of your absence (562-6500) for verification. Bring a note the following day as a follow-up and reminder for the reason you were absent. Parents can check their child's attendance in the Parent Portal of Lumen SIS if they have provided the necessary information to Pana CUSD #8 for log-in access.

If the parent/guardian does not call on the day of the absence, they have forty-eight (48) hours to get the absence cleared (otherwise, the student will be counted as UNEXCUSED). If the office doesn't receive a call parents will receive a phone call from the office.

Notes and doctor's slips must be turned in to the office when a student arrives at school. Parents and students have the responsibility to arrange for make-up work.

E. CLEARANCE SLIPS

Students who are going to miss school for family vacations, all-day medical or dental appointments, field trips, funerals, hunting, etc., should bring a note from their parent(s) 3 days in advance of the day or days missed. A clearance slip will be issued by the office and signed by teachers, assuring that the student has checked in with the teacher in regards to any assignments during his/her absence. The clearance paper must be turned in to the office prior to the absences.

Clearance slips will not be granted on school-wide testing days. This includes the 3 MAP testing dates, Illinois Science Assessment, and Illinois Assessment of Readiness.

To be granted clearance for hunting, the student must have a note from the parent and have proof of hunting license. Only one hunting clearance will be granted per semester.

The administration realizes that situations arise that are beyond our control. Therefore, each situation will be dealt with on an individual basis.

P. 5 - Activities

Pana Junior High School offers a variety of activities to students. Among some of these are band and music concerts and contests, interscholastic sports, art exhibits and science exhibits, cheerleading, dances, literary publications and contests, mathematics contests, spelling academic contests, field trips, and various club activities. **Participation in school activities is a privilege and not a right.**

In addition, students who participate in extracurricular activities must abide by the policies outlined in the is handbook as well as the PJHS IESA Student Athletic Handbook. Student athletes with major disciplinary infractions may also face suspension of part of their athletic season.

P. 7 - Arrival at School

Students are discouraged from arriving at school prior to 7:40 A.M. unless they have made arrangements with the office and/or a teacher. Students will enter the school through the main entrance and proceed to either the cafeteria to eat breakfast or auditorium. use three separate entrances (8th grade auditorium side doors; 7th grade main office doors; 6th grade east end doors) and be allowed entry at 7:45 A.M. Breakfast will be ala carte and students will eat in their 1st hour classrooms from 7:45-8:05 A.M. Students arriving to school late or returning from an appointment should use the main office entrance and must bring a note or a phone call must be received by the office. Students must also be sure to sign-in. A sign-in sheet is provided at the office desk.

P. 7 - ~~Bullying, Intimidation & Sexual Harassment~~ Prevention of and Response to Bullying, Intimidation, and Harassment

Bullying, intimidation, and harassment diminish a student's ability to learn and a school's ability to educate. Preventing students from engaging in these disruptive behaviors and providing all students equal access to a safe, non-hostile learning environment are important district and school goals.

Bullying on the basis of actual or perceived race, color, national origin, immigration status, military status, unfavorable discharge status from the military service, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender-related identity or expression, ancestry, age, religion, physical or mental disability, order of protection status, status of being homeless, or actual or potential marital or parental status, including pregnancy, association with a person or group with one or more of the aforementioned actual or perceived characteristics, or any other distinguishing characteristic is prohibited in each of the following situations:

1. During any school-sponsored education program or activity.
2. While in school, on school property, on school buses or other school vehicles, at designated school bus stops waiting for the school bus, or at school-sponsored or school-sanctioned events or activities.
3. Through the transmission of information from a school computer, a school computer network, or other similar electronic school equipment.
4. Through the transmission of information from a computer that is accessed at a non-school-related location, activity, function, or program or from the use of technology or an electronic device that is not owned, leased, or used by the school district or school if the bullying causes a substantial disruption to the educational process or orderly operation of a school.

Bullying includes cyber-bullying (bullying through the use of technology or any electronic communication) and means any severe or pervasive physical or verbal act or conduct, including communications made in writing or electronically, directed toward a student or students that has or can be reasonably predicted to have the effect of one or more of the following:

1. Placing the student or students in reasonable fear of harm to the student's or students' person or property;
2. Causing a substantially detrimental effect on the student's or students' physical or mental health;
3. Substantially interfering with the student's or students' academic performance; or
4. Substantially interfering with the student's or students' ability to participate in or benefit from the services, activities, or privileges provided by a school.

Cyberbullying means bullying through the use of technology or any electronic communication, including without limitation any transfer of signs, signals, writing, images, sounds, data, or intelligence of any nature transmitted in whole or in part by a wire, radio, electromagnetic system, photo-electronic system, or photo-optical system, including without limitation electronic mail, Internet communications, instant messages, or facsimile communications. Cyberbullying includes the creation of a webpage or weblog in which the creator assumes the identity of another person or the knowing impersonation of another person as the author of posted content or messages if the creation or impersonation creates any of the effects enumerated in the definition of bullying. Cyberbullying also includes the distribution by electronic means of a communication to more than one person or the posting of material on an electronic medium that may be accessed by one or more persons if the distribution or posting creates any of the effects enumerated in the definition of bullying.

Examples of prohibited conduct include name-calling, using derogatory slurs, stalking, sexual violence, causing psychological harm, threatening or causing physical harm, threatened or actual destruction of property, or wearing or possessing items depicting or implying hatred or prejudice of one of the characteristics stated above.

Students are encouraged to immediately report bullying. A report may be made orally or in writing to the building principal, district complaint manager or any staff member with whom the student is comfortable speaking. All school staff members are available for help with a bully or to make a report about bullying. Anyone, including staff members and parents/guardians, who has information about actual or threatened bullying is encouraged to report it to the district complaint manager or any staff member. Anonymous reports are also accepted by phone call or in writing. (Board Policy 7:180)

P. 8 - Cafeteria Procedures

During lunch and breakfast, students must proceed directly to the cafeteria, and after getting their trays, immediately sit at a table. At breakfast, once they are finished eating, students must exit the cafeteria and wait in the auditorium until they are dismissed. At lunch, students should remain seated until dismissed for recess. Students shall not cut or save places in line or save seats for others at tables. Loud talking, yelling, screaming, or other disruptions are prohibited. Students are expected to be polite and courteous with all cafeteria staff and supervisors, which includes cleaning up their eating areas. Students should refrain from taking any food out of the cafeteria and bringing energy drinks to the cafeteria as part of their breakfast and/or lunch.

P. 8 - Clothing & Dress

The dress code is in effect at all times in the building as well as at school-related activities and practices. Any dress or grooming that adversely affects the health and/or safety of the student and is disruptive to the classroom or school environment will not be permitted. We do insist, however, that you meet the following criteria:

- No excessively dirty or torn clothes are to be worn to school. No pockets or undergarments are to be exposed.
- ~~No leggings, jeggings, yoga pants and/or tights may be worn unless the bottom is covered by a long shirt, dress or skirt.~~ Legging, jeggings, and yoga pants must be of quality material. You should not be able to see through the pants.
- No pants, shorts, shirts, or blouses that are either too short or reveal the back, belly (no crop tops), and/or breast areas (cleavage) are allowed. In addition, the area from a student's neck to their shoulders must be covered at all times with a clothing garment.
 - o Tank tops for both male and female students should follow the "three-finger width" guideline. Tank tops for male and female students cannot be cut out on the sides bigger than the size of a normal sleeve. No undergarments (cami or bra straps) should be visible.
 - o Shorts and skirts/skorts must come below a student's fingertips while arms are hanging naturally at their sides be at least mid-thigh (i.e. longer than your shirt).

- Students are discouraged from wearing jeans or other pants with holes. Any holes, rips, and/or tears in jeans and/or pants must be at or come below a student's fingertips while arms are hanging naturally at their sides have at least mid-thigh.
- No excessively baggy pants, pajama bottom, or similar type pants, and no pants worn around the buttocks exposing undergarments.
- No obscene, degrading, highly suggestive, or explicit language on apparel will be allowed. In addition, vulgar patches or pins or clothing that advertises illicit substances or that is sexually suggestive is not permitted (this includes clothing that contains advertising for illegal drugs, tobacco, or alcoholic beverages or is suggestive toward these substances).
- Clothes that advertise or display hate messages, death, suicide, or violent messages will not be allowed.
- Clothes that promote gangs or are worn in such a manner as to promote gang affiliation are not permitted.
- Hats, bandannas, sunglasses, or any other head cover (hoods) are not allowed to be worn while in the building. Students should refrain from having hoods on hoodies up during the course of the day. This poses a potential disruption to safety, as students are not easily identifiable with hoods up.
- Apparel and accessories that can be used as a weapon is prohibited.
- Jackets, coats, and other types of outdoor apparel should be left in the student's locker during school hours.
- Shoes must be worn at all times.
- P.E. clothing must also meet dress code criteria.

The school reserves the right to be the judge of what constitutes "tasteful" dress and grooming.

P. 9 - Curriculum

6th-8th Grade

- Year-long courses include Language Arts, Reading, Math, Wellness (which includes both Physical Education and Health), Science, and Social Studies.
- Quarterly Electives such as band, music, art, STEM, advisory, and other project-based learning activities.
- Social and Emotional Skills
- RTI and Enrichment activities based on individual needs.

7th Grade

Year-long courses include Language Arts, Reading, Math, Physical Education (which includes Health), Science, and Social Studies. Students will also have an advisory period where they can choose from a variety of 9 week electives which include, but are not limited to, Band, Chorus, Art, Conservation, Self-Esteem, and/or Robotics and/or study skills based upon individual needs. All students will also receive resource time on a daily basis to assist their math, reading, career, character, and/or general academic skills.

8th Grade

Year-long courses include Language Arts, Reading, Math, Physical Education (which includes Health), Science, and Social Studies. Students will also have an advisory period where they can choose from a variety of 9 week electives which include, but are not limited to, Band, Chorus, Art, Conservation, Self-Esteem, and/or Robotics and/or study skills based upon individual needs. All students will also receive resource time on a daily basis to assist their math, reading, career, character, and/or general academic skills.

P. 9 - Disaster Drills Safety Drills

During the course of the year, the junior high school will conduct disaster drills. It is ESSENTIAL that students take such drills seriously by listening and responding to directions given by instructors during the duration of drills. In the event of a tornado or other disaster, such as an earthquake, one's own life and the lives of others can be saved by following correct procedures.

In general, students are to do the following:

- Stay away from glass areas in rooms or halls or away from mounted objects that could fall.
- Kneel with hands over head, next to the lockers or walls in the hall or room.

If the emergency involves a tornado, windows in the classroom should be closed to prevent flying objects from becoming projectiles. Pull shades to cover windows to protect against any flying glass.

Safety drills will occur at times established by the school board. Students are required to be silent and shall comply with the directives of school officials during emergency drills. There will be a minimum of three (3) evacuation drills, a minimum of one (1) severe weather (shelter-in-place) drill, a minimum of one (1) law enforcement lockdown drill to address a school shooting incident, and a minimum of one (1) bus evacuation drill each school year. There may be other drills at the direction of the administration. The law enforcement lockdown drill will be announced in advance and a student's parent/guardian may elect to exclude their child from participating in this drill. All other drills will not be preceded by a warning to students.

P. 11 Honor Roll

The Honor Roll is a student incentive used to encourage excellence in class work. PJHS has two levels of HONOR ROLL recognition. Students who earn A's in ALL of their classes during each 9 week grading period shall have earned HIGH HONOR recognition. Students who earn all A's and/or B's in ALL of their classes during each 9 week grading period shall have earned HONOR recognition. ****Seventh grade students enrolled in Pre-Algebra and 8th grade students enrolled in Algebra who earn a B will count as High Honor recognition, and students who earn a C will count as Honor recognition.**

P. 15 - Progress Reports

Progress reports are used to indicate a student's academic status periodically throughout the school year. It is the expectation of PJHS to distribute these reports to parents/guardians **on three week intervals half-way through the quarter (mid-term).** Hopefully with parent, student, and teacher cooperation and communication, the deficiencies can be significantly improved. Should a parent/guardian request a more frequent communication relating to his/her child's progress, it can be arranged to send weekly or bi-weekly progress reports home. **Parents can check their child's academic progress in their classes in the Parent Portal of Lumen SIS if they have provided the necessary information to Pana CUSD #8 for log-in access.**

P. 17 - Report Cards

Students receive grade reports within one week after the end of the nine week grading periods. These reports are usually given out at the end of the day prior to dismissal. Should a student find any error or have any question about their grades, he or she should report it to the office or double check the grade with his or her instructor. Every attempt will be made to resolve any error and make appropriate corrections if necessary. Letter grades (A, B, C, D, F) and their corresponding cumulative percentage are used in classes which meet on a daily basis for at least one semester. An "S" (satisfactory), "NI" (needs improvement), "I" (improved), or "U" (unsatisfactory) grade can be used in certain academic situations. **A "P" (pass) or "F" (fail) can be used for Elective classes.** Remote learning grading will be determined based on the length of the remote learning circumstance. Any changes in grading practices during remote learning will be communicated to students and families (See Remote Learning Plan for more information.)

P. 17 - Student Drop-Off & Pick-Up

We encourage parents to use caution as they drop off or pick up their students from school. **Parents should drop off 6th grade students at the East doors, 7th grade students at the main office door, and 8th grade at the auditorium door.** Student pick up is in front of the junior high school (8th Street) or in back of the junior high school (south side). Because of the number of vehicles, traffic around the junior high school becomes quite heavy before and after school and on many occasions, has caused a hazardous situation for both students and drivers. We ask that students look carefully and use good judgment as they are leaving transportation coming to school or getting into vehicles as they are leaving the premises for the day. When dropping off or picking up students at the school, we do ask that parents please recognize and be respectful of both traffic and parking lot markings. **Please DO NOT park in the handicap areas unless warranted and do not park in the yellow-lined area at the east end of the parking lot.**

P. 30 - ~~Gum/Candy in School~~ Food and Drinks in School

Gum and candy at school is not encouraged. Gum placed on school property will be considered an act of vandalism and the offending student may receive some form of punishment. **Food purchased a la carte during lunch should remain in the cafeteria. sealed until after school. Students should not be taking open packages of food back to the classroom to eat.** Energy drinks should not be brought to school as part of a student's lunch or to keep in their locker. Students may carry a **clear water bottle** with them during the day as long as they are not causing a disruption to the learning environment. Carrying a water bottle is a privilege, if student's can not use theirs appropriately they will not be allowed to have one during the day.

P. 33 - Tardiness

Tardy is defined as not being in the physical classroom assigned to that student prior to the bell ringing and/or before the assigned time for that specific class period to begin. Students tardy to a class will be reported by the individual teacher to the office. The penalties for being tardy can be as follows:

1st Tardy: Warning

2nd Tardy: Warning

3rd Tardy: 30 minute Detention (minor assessed via Lumen)

4th Tardy: 60 minute Detention

5th Tardy: 120-minute Detention

6th Tardy: Saturday Detention (**major assessed via Lumen**)

7th Tardy: Office Referral

Additional tardiness after the 7th 3rd will be dealt with appropriately. Staff at PJHS is encouraged to observe patterns of behavior throughout each school day to monitor excessive tardiness from period to period. If a student is more than ten (10) minutes late to class, it is considered truancy and that student will be sent to the office immediately.