

## Students

### Release During School Hours <sup>1</sup>

For safety and security reasons, a prior written or oral consent of a student's custodial parent/guardian is required before a student is released during school hours: (1) at any time before the regular dismissal time or at any time before school is otherwise officially closed, and/or (2) to any person other than a custodial parent/guardian.

#### Early Dismissal Announcement

The Superintendent or designee shall make reasonable efforts to issue an announcement whenever it is necessary to close school early due to inclement weather or other reason.

*[For high school and unit districts only]*

#### Voting <sup>2</sup>

The Superintendent or designee shall specify the hours during which students who are entitled to vote at a primary, general, or special election, or any election at which propositions are submitted to a popular vote in Illinois, may be absent from school for a period of two hours to vote. Students are entitled to be absent from school to vote beginning the 15th day before the primary, general, or

**The footnotes are not intended to be part of the adopted policy; they should be removed before the policy is adopted.**

<sup>1</sup> This sample policy and its contents are discretionary with each school board. Sample PRESS policy 4:170, *Safety*, authorizes the Superintendent to close school(s) in the event of hazardous weather or other emergency that threatens the safety of students, staff members, or school property.

Planning for unforeseen early dismissals furthers a positive parent-school relationship and reduces the possibility of unsupervised children. According to this sample policy's introductory section, the school does not need prior parental consent before releasing students for an early dismissal even when it is unforeseen. The second section, however, requires the superintendent or designee to use *reasonable efforts* to announce an early dismissal. The *reasonable efforts* could be satisfied, for example, by a website posting, telephone chain notification, or recorded message on the school's telephone.

<sup>2</sup> Optional. While 10 ILCS 5/7-42(b) and 5/17-15(b), amended by P.A. 101-624, eff. 6-1-20, do not require this information to be in policy, including it aligns with best practice (ensuring compliance and aligning with good governance principles).

Including it also serves several policy functions and purposes: ensuring legal compliance, directing or authorizing the superintendent or staff members, and/or providing information.

To implement this law, each board and superintendent may wish to engage in a conversation about balancing the students' right to be absent from school with the district's attendance and safety and security goals and its right to minimize disruption to the educational process and/or ensure orderly operation of a school. Factors affecting implementation will depend upon a board's local conditions and the community expectations that may include, but not be limited to: (1) the board attorney's recommendations, (2) the district's budget parameters, if any, for any increased security needs during the 15 days before and the day of the qualifying elections, (3) each individual building's unique needs, and (4) the community's expectations.

The superintendent and building principal may implement this policy differently in different buildings. Once the board and superintendent or designee determine implementation logistics, these should be communicated in student handbooks. A comprehensive student handbook can provide notice of the school's conduct rules, extracurricular and athletic participation requirements, and other important information. The handbook can be developed by the building principal, but should be reviewed and approved by the superintendent and board. The Ill. Principals Association maintains a handbook service that coordinates with PRESS material, *Online Model Student Handbook (MSH)*, at: [www.ilprincipals.org/resources/model-student-handbook](http://www.ilprincipals.org/resources/model-student-handbook).

For high school and unit districts not wanting to include this subhead, delete it and the Legal Reference to it in this policy, delete it from the Cross References in policy 7:70, *Attendance and Truancy*, and follow the instructions listed in paragraph three of f/n 3 of policy 7:70, *Attendance and Truancy*.

special election, or any election at which propositions are submitted to a popular vote in Illinois, or on the day of such election.

LEGAL REF.: 10 ILCS 5/7-42(b) and 5/17-15(b), Election Code.

CROSS REF.: 4:170 (Safety)