

Document Status: Draft Update

STUDENTS

7:70 Attendance and Truancy

Compulsory School Attendance

The Board as an agency of the State is required to enforce the regular attendance of students. The Board recognizes that active presence in the learning environment enables students to participate in instruction, class discussions, and other related activities. As such, regular attendance and participation are essential to promoting student learning.

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, (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 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 (including mental or behavioral health of the student), observance of a religious holiday, death in the immediate family, attendance at a civic event, [PRESSPlus1](#) 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 Superintendent 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 Superintendent or designee shall manage an absenteeism and truancy program in accordance with the School Code and Board of Education 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 Superintendent or designee is authorized to determine when the student's absence is justified.
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 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.
5. 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.
6. A process to telephone, within two hours after the first class, the parents/guardians of students in grade 8 or below who are absent without prior parent/guardian notification.
7. 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](#).
8. 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.
9. 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*.

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-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.
12. 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.
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 Superintendent 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 6 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, *Students School Admissions and 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.

Monitoring [PRESSPlus2](#)

Pursuant to State law and policy 2:240, *Board Policy Development*, the Board updates this policy at least once every two years. The Superintendent or designee shall assist the Board with its update.

LEGAL REF.:

[105 ILCS 5/22-92 and 5/26-1 through 18.](#)

[705 ILCS 405/3-33.5](#), Juvenile Court Act of 1987.

[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 and Student Transfers To and From Non-District Schools), 7:60 (Residence), 7:80 (Release Time for Religious Instruction/Observance), 7:90 (Release During School Hours), 7:190 (Student Behavior), 7:340 (Student Records)

PRESSPlus Comments

PRESSPlus 1. Updated in response to 105 ILCS 5/26-1 and 5/26-2a, amended by P.A. 102-891, eff. 1-1-23, requiring that, subject to Ill. State Board of Education (ISBE) guidelines, middle and high school students be permitted one school day-long excused absence per school year to engage in a *civic event*, defined as “an event sponsored by a non-profit organization or governmental entity that is open to the public. *Civic event* includes, but is not limited to, an artistic or cultural performance or educational gathering that supports the mission of the sponsoring non-profit organization. Schools may require students to provide an appropriate administrator with reasonable advance notice of the intended absence and documentation of participation. **Issue 110, October 2022**

PRESSPlus 2. Updated in response to 105 ILCS 5/22-92(b), added by P.A. 102-157 and renumbered by P.A. 102-813; 23 Ill.Admin.Code §207.30(a), requiring that every two years a board update its absenteeism and truancy policy and file it with the Ill. State Board of Education and the regional superintendent of schools [or Intermediate Service Center Executive Director, whichever is appropriate].

The policy must contain all requirements of 105 ILCS 5/22-92, indicate the date of adoption (by month, day, and year) and any revision dates, and be filed electronically by September 30 each review year through ISBE’s Web Application Security (IWAS) system. 23 Ill.Admin.Code §§207.20(a), 207.30(a). If, after review and re-evaluation of the policy, the district determines that no updates are necessary, either a copy of board minutes clearly indicating the policy was re-evaluated and no changes were deemed necessary or a signed statement from the board president indicating the policy was re-evaluated and no changes were deemed necessary must be submitted to IWAS. 23 Ill.Admin.Code §207.30(a)(3). ISBE has stated that for districts that update the

adoption date listed on a policy whenever the policy is updated, the date of adoption is sufficient to also indicate the revision date. See ISBE's *Absenteeism and Truancy Policy FAQ*, at: www.isbe.net/Documents/Absenteeism-Truancy-Policy-FAQ.pdf.

ISBE rules implementing this requirement were published in the Ill. Register in October 2022 but provide that “[n]o later than September 30, 2022, or no later than September 30 of the first full school year a school becomes subject to this Part, each school or district must file the policy through the State Board of Education’s Web Application Security (IWAS), and must submit an updated policy every two years thereafter by no later than September 30 of the year due.” 23 Ill.Admin.Code §207.30(a). ISBE informed the **PRESS** Editors that due to the late publication date, the submission deadline for the 2022-2023 school year is extended to 1-13-23, and the September 30 submission deadline is not operative until the 2023-2024 school year. **Issue 110, October 2022**