



RIVER VALLEY SCHOOL DISTRICT

660 West Daley Street

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Spring Green, Wisconsin 53588

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Phone: 608-588-2551

431-Rule(1)

Student Attendance Guidelines

A. Student Absences and Excuses

1. Regular attendance is a responsibility that should be shared by parents, students, and the school.
2. Students will be required to attend all their scheduled classes, activities, and study halls, unless they have legal permission and a pass approved by a building administrator.
3. For the Middle School and High School, based on a nine period day, a half-day's absence is recorded between four and seven periods of absence. At seven periods of absence, a full day's absence is recorded.
4. At the Elementary School level, if the child is absent for half of the day, it is counted as a half-day's absence. If they are gone the entire day, it is a full day's absence.
5. A student may be excused from school attendance as follows

a. **Absences that DO count toward the "10 day rule" related to state law**

Absences authorized solely by parent/guardian: A student is excused from school attendance if his/her parent/guardian notifies the school prior to the student's absence from school. A student may be excused under this provision for not more than 10 occurrences in a school year. Examples include:

- 1) All personal family vacations
- 2) Attendance at special events of educational value not sponsored by the school (i.e. college visits)
- 3) Appointments (medical/dental/legal that cannot be scheduled outside the school day)
- 4) Court appearances or other legal proceedings or related matters

A student that has 10 or more days absent as authorized by the parent/guardian must do the following for absence beyond 10 occurrences to be excused:

A pre-arranged absence must be completed in advance for any additional absences for personal/family vacations. In addition the student must be in good academic standing. For students leaving for health related appointments, administration reserves the right to require a written appointment card from the Clinic or Doctor before the student leaves or when the student returns.

b. **Absences that DO NOT count toward the “10 day rule” related to state law**

The school attendance officer or designee is empowered to approve a legal excuse to any student for the following reasons:

- 1) Personal illness or injury.
 - 2) Illness or injury of the student resulting in hospitalization or medical ordered home rest for mental health or AODA issues. Administration reserves the right to require a note from the student’s health care provider or treatment director for more than 5 days of absence in a semester.
 - 3) Accidents or death in the immediate family.
 - 4) Suspension from school.
 - 5) Religious observances.
 - 6) School-sponsored activities.
 - 7) A quarantine as imposed by a public health officer.
 - 8) Special circumstances that show good cause. Such circumstances shall be considered on a case by case basis by the school attendance officer or their designee.
6. Students whose absence from school does not fall under the reasons listed above shall be considered unexcused (truant).
 7. When a student is absent, his/her parent(s), guardian, or the student, if he/she is 18 or an emancipated student, shall contact the school prior to 9:00 a.m. Failure to contact the school will result in a school contact to the home or place of employment before the end of the second day of absence.
 8. Parents/guardians will be expected to provide a written explanation of absences at the time the student returns to school, or in the case of absences authorized by the parent, prior to absence.
 9. Students with excused absences shall be entitled to make up the work missed, including examinations, and shall be responsible for doing so. Examinations and work missed shall be completed at a time mutually agreed upon by the student and the teacher, but within the number of days absent plus one-day.
 10. Students that leave school grounds without notification and authorization will be considered as unexcused absence/truant.
 11. Students with unexcused absences will not be allowed to make up work missed. Major examinations including semester examinations must be made up on the day the student returns to school.
 12. Four unexcused tardies will be treated as an unexcused absence. (Administration can consider these unexcused absences as truancy.)
 13. Students who are absent as a result of a suspension shall be permitted to take any quarterly, semester or grading period examination missed during the period of suspension and shall be permitted to make up course work missed during a period of suspension under the following conditions:

- a. A quarterly, semester or grading period examination missed as a result of a suspension shall be made up on the first day on which the student returns from suspension unless a different date is established by the teacher.
 - b. Course work and examinations missed during a period of suspension shall be completed at a time mutually agreed upon by the student and the teacher, but within the number of days absent plus one day.
14. Students under the age of 18 may be excused from regular school attendance or permitted to attend in lieu of regular school attendance to participate in specific alternative programs or curricular modifications according to state statutes.

B. School Attendance Officer

1. The building principal, or designee, will serve as the school attendance officer for each school in the district and deal with all matters relating to school attendance and truancy.
2. The school attendance officer shall determine daily which students enrolled in the school are absent and whether that absence is excused in accordance with Board policy and established procedures.
3. The school attendance officer shall notify the parent or guardian of a child's truancy and direct the parent or guardian to return the child to school no later than the next day on which school is in session or to provide an excuse. The notice under this paragraph must be given before the end of the second school day after receiving a report of an unexcused absence and may be made by personal service, mail or telephone call on which a written record is kept.

"Truancy" means any absence of part or all of one or more school days during which the school attendance officer, principal or teacher has not been notified of the legal cause of such absence by the parent or guardian of the absent student, and also means intermittent attendance carried on for the purpose of defeating the intent of the compulsory attendance law.

4. The school attendance officer shall notify the parent or guardian of a child who is a habitual truant at the time the child becomes a habitual truant. This will be done by registered or certified mail. "Habitual truant" means a student who is absent from school without an acceptable excuse for part or all of five days in a semester. The notice shall include the following:
 - a. A statement of the parent's or guardian's responsibility under state law to cause the child to attend school regularly.
 - b. A statement that the parent, guardian or child may request program or curriculum modifications for the child and that the child may be eligible for enrollment in a program for children at risk.
 - c. A request that the parent or guardian meet with the appropriate school personnel to discuss the child's truancy. The notice shall include the name of the school personnel with whom the parent or guardian should meet; a date, time and place for the meeting; and, the name, address and telephone number of a person to contact to arrange a different date, time, or place.
 - d. A statement of the penalties under state law that may be imposed on the parent or guardian if he/she fails to cause the child to attend school regularly as required by state law and Board policy.
5. The school attendance officer may visit any place of employment in the school district to ascertain whether any minors are employed there contrary to state law. He/she shall require that school

certificates and lists of minors who are employed there, be produced for inspection, and shall report all cases of illegal employment to the proper authorities and to the Department of Industry, Labor and Human Relations.

6. The school attendance officer may have access to information regarding the attendance of any child between the ages of six (6) and eighteen (18) years who is a resident of the school district and claims to be in attendance at a private school located in the school district, including home-based private educational programs.
7. Annually, on or before August 1, the school attendance officer shall determine how many students enrolled in each school in the district were absent in the previous year and whether the absences were excused. This information will be forwarded to the Department of Public Instruction.
8. The school attendance officer shall furnish student attendance information to the county welfare agency as requested for implementation of Wisconsin's Learnfare Program. Student attendance information shall only be released if appropriate "release of confidentiality" forms have been filed with the district in accordance with provisions of state law and the district's student records policy.
9. The school attendance officer shall provide parents and students with information regarding program and curriculum modifications, including the types of modifications available, the procedures to be used in requesting and obtaining approval for modifications, their rights to request that the school board review decisions made in response to such requests and the time lines and procedures applicable to such board review.

C. Truancy Prevention Procedures

Upon a student's return to school after a truancy or repeated truanies, school personnel will take positive measures to help prevent additional truanies by the student. These measures may include:

1. A student conference with the school attendance officer in regards to truancy.
2. A student conference with guidance staff, psychologist, social worker or other designated personnel in regards to personal or social problems that may be influencing non-attendance or truancy.
3. A parental conference set up with the student and his/her parent(s)/guardian(s) to discuss the problem of truancy.
4. Enrollment of the student(s) in the district's children at risk program.
5. Evaluation of the student to discover if he/she is in need of special educational support services.
6. A meeting with the student and his/her parent(s) or guardian to discuss alternative education programs that are available within the district and county.

D. Procedure Toward Legal Referral

Prior to any legal proceeding being brought against a student or against the student's parent or guardian, the school attendance officer shall provide evidence that the appropriate school personnel in the district have, within the school year during which the truancy occurred:

1. Met with the student's parent(s) or guardian to discuss the student's truancy, or attempted to meet with the student's parent(s) or guardian and has been refused.

2. Provided an opportunity for educational counseling to the student to determine whether a change in the student's curriculum would resolve the student's truancy, and considered curriculum modifications.
3. Evaluated the student to determine whether learning problems may be a cause of the student's truancy and, if so, taken appropriate action or made appropriate referrals.
4. Conducted an evaluation to determine whether social problems may be a cause of the student's truancy and, if so, taken appropriate action or made appropriate referrals.

E. Legal Referral

1. Following receipt of evidence that activities under Section D have been completed, the school attendance officer may make a referral to the county authorities in which the student resides. This will be in accordance with each respective county truancy policy.
2. The school attendance officer may make referrals for prosecution of misdemeanor actions related to school truancy directly to the district attorney's office. Any referral should contain as complete and clear a statement of supporting facts as is possible and identify the author of the referral, telephone number and address at which he/she may be contacted for further information.
 - a. Referrals may be made to the district attorney's office for prosecution of children and/or their parents under state law (section 118.15(5)). These referrals must include documentation that the activities required in Section D above have been completed by the school. In addition, the referral must indicate that the evidence unequivocally shows that the disobedience of the child has not rendered the parent(s), guardian(s), legal custodian(s) or other allegedly responsible party unable to comply with the law. This proceeding may not be pursued against a person with regard to a child who has been sanctioned under Wisconsin's Learnfare law.
 - b. Referrals may be made to the district attorney's office for persons contributing to a child's truancy. Any person eighteen years of age or older who, by any act or omission, knowingly encourages or contributes to the truancy of a child may be subject to a fine not to exceed \$500, imprisonment not to exceed thirty (30) days, or both. Referrals containing allegations of evidence supporting such a charge may be referred directly to the district attorney's office, reported to local law enforcement agencies for further investigation, or included with information referred to the Department of Human Services in conjunction with other referred matter.

LEGAL REF.: Section 118.15(3)(c)
118.15(1)(f)
118.16(4)(b)

CROSS REF.: Policy #443.3 - Student Drug and Alcohol Abuse
Policy #452.6 - Student Assistance Program
Policy #342.3 - Program for Children at Risk
Policy #347 - Student Records

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