

SERIES **500** CODE **503** TITLE **ATTENDANCE**

Elementary and Middle School

Daily, punctual attendance is an integral part of the learning experience and is required of all students to receive the maximum benefit of the educational program. Students are expected to attend classes regularly and to be on time.

There is a strong correlation between good attendance and academic success. Students who receive excessive excused absences can expect that their learning will be affected even though work may be made up. Anytime students, parents/guardians, teachers and/or administrators are concerned about a student's attendance, they are encouraged to contact the appropriate party.

Certain absences may be excused under this policy, but students will still be required to make up work missed due to an absence.

Subject to the provisions of this policy and any corresponding administrative procedures, students shall not be absent more than two days due to an unexcused absence in any school year. Excessive absences are defined as more than two unexcused absences in one school year or chronic excused absences. Excessive absences in a class may result in a review by the school's Building Attendance Team and may result in a supportive intervention or disciplinary action under this policy.

This policy shall apply to all students including special education students except in those cases where decisions involve a special education student's evaluation or placement. Such cases shall be referred to Student Services for disposition through established hearing procedures.

A. Attendance

In accordance with Iowa law, it is the parent's responsibility to cause the child to attend school (Code of Iowa, Chapter 299).

B. Absence

Parent(s)/guardian(s) are expected to notify the school regarding a student's absence on the day of the absence. An absence must be reported within 24 hours of the date of absence.

C. Excused Absence

Students are encouraged to attend school daily. However, students may not be subject to disciplinary action for failure to attend school if lack of attendance is beyond the control of the student. A student may be excused by a parent for a valid reason. Other reasons for which a student's absence from school will be excused are:

1. Illness;
2. medically documented chronic or extended illness, hospitalization, or doctor's care, or nurse's approval;
3. medical or dental care;
4. death or serious illness in the immediate family or household;
5. suspension from school;
6. religious holidays requiring absence from school;
7. court appearances or other legal proceedings beyond the control of the family;
8. classes missed because of attendance at a school-sponsored trip or activity;
9. other verified emergency as approved by the building administrator; and
10. other reasons which can be justified from an educational standpoint and which are approved in advance by the building administrator.

School work missed because of absence must be made up. Students will be given two days for each day missed to make up work. Make up time may not exceed six school days following the student's return. The time allowed for makeup work may be extended at the discretion of the classroom teacher. Full credit will be given for school work made up because of absences.

D. Unexcused Absence

An absent student not meeting the provisions required to have an excused absence will have an unexcused absence. An unexcused absence is a student's absence from school or class without a valid reason. Students may have two unexcused absences per school year. The third unexcused absence will be considered excessive and an intervention will occur.

E. Excessive Absences

1. Excessive absence is any unexcused absence beyond the district limit of two allowable unexcused absences per school year.
2. If a student's excused absences become excessive each student's case will be reviewed for consideration of a supportive intervention. Absences

will be recorded as part of a student's attendance record.

a. Interventions include but are not limited to the following

- i. A student may be referred to, the SUCCESS case manager, nurse, a social worker, a counselor, and/or a teacher advocate for assistance;
- ii. The student may be referred to the school's Building Attendance Team.
- iii. The student may be allowed to make up absences through an agreement whereby the student agrees to perform specified school assignments outside the student's regular school day;
- iv. The student's schedule may be modified and an adult mentor assigned.
- v. The student may be assigned to an in-building alternative educational program to receive additional academic support; and
- vi. The student may be referred for a target group intervention through the school counselor;

b. The principal or designee may refer the student to Student Services for referral to the Polk County Attorney Mediation Center.

c. Class work missed because of excessive absences can be made up and will be treated the same as make-up work for all other absences.

F. Tardiness

1. Tardiness is a student's initial appearance in an assigned area at any time after the designated starting time. The first two unexcused tardies in a class will be dealt with by the classroom teacher. Teachers will emphasize the importance of punctuality and class rules and procedures for tardies. Sanctions for tardiness are to be consistently applied and sequential. Sanctions may include, but are not limited to: warning, detention and parent contact.
2. The third unexcused tardy in a class may, at the discretion of the classroom teacher, result in a referral to the school counselor or other school-based support person.
3. The fourth unexcused tardy in a class will result in an office referral.

High School

Daily, punctual attendance is an integral part of the learning experience and is required of all students to receive the maximum benefit of the educational program. Students are expected to attend classes regularly and to be on time.

There is a strong correlation between good attendance and successful completion of high school courses. Students who receive excessive excused absences can expect that their learning will be affected even though work may be made up. Anytime students, parents/guardians, teachers and/or administrators are concerned about a student's attendance, they are encouraged to contact the appropriate party.

Certain absences may be excused under this policy, but students will still be required to make up work missed due to an absence.

Subject to the provisions of this policy and any corresponding administrative procedures, students shall not be absent more than two days due to an unexcused absence in any school year. Excessive absences are defined as more than two unexcused absences in one school year or chronic excused absences. Excessive absences in a class may result in a review by the school's Building Attendance Team and may result in a supportive intervention or disciplinary action under this policy.

This policy shall apply to all students including special education students except in those cases where decisions involve a special education student's evaluation or placement. Such cases shall be referred to Student Services for disposition through established hearing procedures.

A. Attendance

In accordance with Iowa law, it is the parent's responsibility to cause the child to attend school (Code of Iowa, Chapter 299).

B. Absence

Parent(s)/guardian(s) are expected to notify the school regarding a student's absence on the day of the absence. An absence must be reported within 24 hours of the date of absence.

If requested, students who are absent from school shall submit in writing the specific reasons for their absence. Such notice shall include the specific days or times they were absent, verification by a health care provider (when appropriate), and a signature of a parent/guardian. If a student is 18 years of age or older or is otherwise emancipated and not living with a parent or guardian, the student may present evidence of an excused absence without parent verification.

C. Excused Absence

Students are encouraged to attend school daily. However, students may not be subject to disciplinary action for failure to attend school if lack of attendance is beyond the control of the student.

A student may be excused by a parent for a valid reason. Other reasons for which a

student's absence from school will be excused are:

1. Illness;
2. medically documented chronic or extended illness, hospitalization, or doctor's care, or nurse's approval;
3. medical or dental care;
4. death or serious illness in the immediate family or household;
5. suspension from school;
6. religious holidays requiring absence from school;
7. court appearances or other legal proceedings beyond the control of the family;
8. classes missed because of attendance at a school-sponsored trip or activity;
9. other verified emergency as approved by the building administrator; and
10. other reasons which can be justified from an educational standpoint and which are approved in advance by the building administrator.
11. visits to college
 - 11th grade-two days per semester
 - 12th grade-three days per semester

Schoolwork missed because of absence must be made up. Students will be given two days for each day missed to make up work. Make up time may not exceed six school days following the student's return. The time allowed for makeup work may be extended at the discretion of the classroom teacher. Full credit will be given for schoolwork made up because of absences.

D. Unexcused Absence

An absent student not meeting the provisions required to have an excused absence will have an unexcused absence. An unexcused absence is a student's absence from school or class without a valid reason. Students may have two unexcused absences per school year. The third unexcused absence will be considered excessive and an intervention will occur.

E. Excessive Absences

1. Excessive absence is any unexcused absence beyond the district limit of two unexcused absences per school year.
2. If a student's excused absences become excessive each student's case will be reviewed for consideration of a supportive intervention.

Absences will be recorded as part of a student's attendance record. The following steps may be taken in dealing with high school students who have excessive absences:

- c. Interventions include but are not limited to the following:
 - i. A student may be referred to, the SUCCESS case manager, nurse, a social worker, a counselor, and/or a teacher advocate for assistance;
 - ii. The student may be referred to the school's Building Attendance Team.
 - iii. The student may be allowed to make up absences through an agreement whereby the student agrees to perform specified school assignments outside the student's regular school day;
 - iv. The student's schedule may be modified and an adult mentor assigned;
 - v. The student may be assigned to an in-building alternative educational program to receive additional academic support;
 - vi. The student may be referred for a target group intervention through the school counselor; and
 - vii. In the event that multiple interventions prove to be unsuccessful the student may be dropped from the class or referred for consideration for placement in another setting. The decision to drop a class or refer to another program will consider the students' individual circumstances.
 - viii. Prior to the student's reassignment, parent(s)/guardian(s) shall be notified in writing of their right to appeal.
- d. The principal or designee may refer the student to Student Services for appropriate action which may include an administrative hearing regarding the student's continued enrollment or referral to the Polk County Attorney Mediation Center.
- e. Class work missed because of excessive absences can be made up and will be treated the same as make-up work for all other absences.

F. Tardiness

Tardiness is a student's initial appearance in an assigned area at any time after the designated starting time.

1. The first two unexcused tardies in a class will be dealt with by the classroom teacher. Teachers will emphasize the importance of punctuality and class rules and procedures for tardies. Sanctions for tardiness are to be consistently applied and sequential. Sanctions may include, but are not limited to: warning, detention and parent contact.

2. The third unexcused tardy in a class may, at the discretion of the classroom teacher, result in a referral to the school counselor or other school-based support person.

3. The fourth unexcused tardy in a class will result in an office referral.

G. Appeals

Sanctions are subject to appeal upon request of the student or parent/guardian.

1. Building Appeals Committee

a. Students or parents/guardians seeking to review a decision regarding truancy, absence, tardiness, or make-up work under this policy must file a written or oral request for appeal with the attendance office within four school days of receipt of notification of the violation or decision. The appeal request may include the reasons why the appeal is requested and any information that the parent/guardian or student wishes to be considered in the appeal.

b. If the student or parent/guardian files an appeal, the student will remain in the class pending the completion of the appeal process.

c. The appeals may be heard by one or more of the following: a vice principal, certificated attendance personnel or a counselor. (Additional resource personnel may be requested by any party: school nurse, teacher, social worker, psychologist, etc.)

d. Parents/guardians shall be informed of their right to address the appeal committee before any sanction is administered.

e. The appeals committee will consider whether the student's conduct or absence should be excused under this policy. The committee will consider:

i. attendance history of the student;

ii. extenuating or other circumstances as documented in the student's records or in the written request for an appeal;

iii. educational alternatives to removal from class or school; and

iv. the total educational program for each individual student.

f. The appeals hearing will be held within five school days after the appeal is filed. Committee response to the appeal will be issued the following school day.

2. Appeal to the Principal/Designee

Students or parent(s)/guardian(s) may request review of the building appeals committee's decision regarding sanctions rendered under this absence rule may do so by filing a written or oral request for review with the principal within five days after the committee's decision. The principal will determine an agreeable time, place, and date for the review and notify the student and parent/guardian. At the conclusion of the review, the principal shall affirm, reverse, or modify the committee's decision.

3. Appeal to the Superintendent/Designee

Students or parent(s)/guardian(s) may request a review of a building principal's written decision under this policy by filing a written request for review with the superintendent within five days of the principal's decision. The superintendent or designee, in conjunction with the parent/guardian, will attempt to determine an agreeable time, place, and date for the review and notify the interested persons accordingly. At the conclusion of the review, the superintendent or the superintendent's designee shall affirm, reverse, or modify the principal's decision.

4. Appeal to the Board of Directors

Students or parent(s)/guardian(s) may appeal the superintendent's decision by filing a written request for review with the secretary of the Board of Directors within five days of the superintendent's decision. The secretary will set the time, place, and date for the review and notify the interested persons accordingly. At the conclusion of the review, the board may affirm, reverse, or modify the superintendent's decision.

5. Appeal to the State Board of Education

Students or parent(s)/guardian(s) may appeal the Board of Directors' decision by submitting an affidavit of appeal to the State Board of Education within 30 days after the decision of the Board of Directors.

Administrative Procedures: Code 503.4

Legal reference: Iowa Code Sections 280.3, 294.4 and Chapters 256B, 282, 299 (2001)

Revised August 6, 1991; February 4, 1992; June 21, 1994; August 19, 1997; July 14, 1998; July 2002; August 6, 2002

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