

The Board of Education recognizes the positive relationship between good school attendance and success in school and employment. If students are to learn and grow, parent(s)/guardian(s), students, and school personnel must recognize their responsibilities to ensure regular attendance.

1. Responsibilities

A. Parent/Guardian Responsibilities: It is the responsibility of the parent(s)/guardian(s) to ensure regular school attendance by their child. When students need to be absent from school, parent(s)/guardian(s) assume full responsibility for communicating the reason for the absence via phone call to the school attendance officer the morning of the absence. Pre-arranged absences of more than a day must be approved in advance of the absence via written explanation by the parent(s)/guardian(s).

For all student partial-day or full-day absences from school (except for absences resulting from a period of a school-imposed suspension), the student's parent or guardian is:

- 1) Expected to call the school office's attendance line prior to 8:05 a.m. on the day of each absence in order to verify that the student is absent with the parent's or guardian's knowledge, except that no such call is necessary for any absence(s) that the parent arranged and that the school excused in advance.
OR
- 2) Required to submit a written communication to the school office identifying the date(s) the student will be (or was) absent from school and the reason(s) for the absence. This written notification must be provided:
 - a) Prior to the absence for all parent-excused absences, as identified in the Board's attendance policy as set forth herein; or
 - b) Either prior to or immediately following the absence for all school-excused absences, but always within two school days following the student's return to school from the absence in order for the absence to be considered excused, except when a different time period has been approved by the building principal.

B. Student Responsibilities: Students are required to attend all classes on their daily schedule unless they have obtained approval from the attendance officer and have parent(s)/guardian(s) permission. Failing to attend all or a portion of a scheduled class, lunch period, or other activity (e.g., skipping class) without an appropriate excuse or school approval subjects a student to appropriate consequences as both an attendance matter and as a violation of school rules, including in situations in which the student remains on school grounds but is not in a location where he/she is supposed to be. Other than at the regular student arrival and departure times for the day in question, students are required to check in and check out at the school building's designated attendance office whenever they arrive at, leave from, or return to school during the scheduled school day for students.

Students are responsible for making up all work missed during any absences including examinations, in accordance with the Administrative Procedures.

C. Teacher Responsibilities: Teachers are required to emphasize the importance and necessity of student attendance. Teachers shall allow students to make up class work and examinations missed during an excused or unexcused absence in accordance with Board policy, and shall not deny credit in a course solely because of the student's unexcused absences. Teachers are permitted to establish reasonable deadlines for the completion of make-up work. Teachers are required by law to take daily attendance in their classes and to maintain a record of student absences. They are also required to submit daily attendance reports to the school attendance officer on all students in their charge.

D. Attendance Officer Responsibilities: It is the responsibility of the school attendance officer to oversee the daily attendance of all students in accordance with state law, Board policy, and Administrative

Procedures, and to determine whether absences are excused or not excused (truant). "Truant" means any absence of part or all of one or more days from school during which the school attendance officer or teacher has not been notified of the legal cause of the student's absence by the parent/guardian. It also means intermittent attendance carried on for the purpose of defeating the intent of the compulsory attendance law. "Habitual truant" means a student who is absent from school without an acceptable excuse for part or all of five days on which school is being held during a school semester.

The Board of Education, in recognition of the statutory requirements for school attendance and the overwhelming public need for an educated society, believes school attendance should take precedence over non-school activities. State law requires every child between 6 and 18 years of age to be in school unless he/she

- 1) is excused temporarily for physical or emotional reasons or for other reasons defined by the Board of Education.
- 2) has graduated.
- 3) has been authorized to attend an alternative educational program.
- 4) has been excused by his/her parent(s)/guardian(s) prior to an absence in accordance with state law.

2. School Attendance Officer

- A. The principal/designee shall serve as the school attendance officer for the Richmond School District. The school attendance officer shall deal with all matters relating to school attendance and truancy. School attendance officers have responsibility for all matters relating to school attendance and truancy and have all of the powers and duties specified in state law.
- B. The school attendance officer shall receive, review and act on requests for and notifications of pre-planned, parent-excused absences.
- C. The school attendance officer shall determine daily which students enrolled in the school are absent from school and whether their absences are excused or unexcused (truant) in accordance with Board policy.
- D. Reasonable and appropriate attempts will be made to notify the parent(s)/guardian(s) of a student's attendance patterns or attendance concerns. Reasonable and appropriate attempts will also be made to notify the parent(s)/guardian(s) of a student's truancy as outlined below and direct the parent(s)/guardians(s) to return the student to school no later than the next day on which school is in session or to provide an excuse for the student's absence.
- E. The school attendance officer or designee shall furnish student attendance information to designated agencies for purposes authorized by state law and by the Board of Education's student records policy/procedures.
- F. Upon the request of a teacher, the school attendance officer shall assist teachers and students with excused or unexcused absences in formulating a plan for the completion of make-up work. The attendance officer may also assign students with unexcused absences to a period of detention or a supervised directed study program for the purpose of making up class work and tests/examinations missed during an unexcused absence.
- G. The parent has the ability to challenge or notify the District of an error in the student's attendance records. In the event of a challenge to or possible error in a student's attendance records, the school attendance officer shall evaluate the totality of circumstances and determine whether a student's official attendance records should ultimately reflect that the student was attending, tardy, or absent with or without an acceptable excuse. The reason for any discretionary changes to a student's existing official attendance record shall be sufficiently documented.

- H. The school attendance officer shall notify, or cause a designee to notify on his/her behalf, the parent or guardian of a student who has been truant of the student's truancy and direct the parent or guardian to return the student to school no later than the next day on which school is in session or to provide an excuse. Subject to Section 3, subsection D of this policy regarding tardiness, "truancy" means any absence of part or all of one or more school days during which the school attendance officer or teacher has not been notified of the legal and excusable 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. The notice under this paragraph must be given before the end of the second school day after receiving a report of an unexcused absence. The attendance officer shall first attempt to notify the parent/guardian by personal contact or telephone call, keeping a written record of the contact or attempted contact. In the event that contact cannot be established in person or by telephone, the notice shall be sent by mail.
- I. The school attendance officer shall notify the parent or guardian of a student who is a habitual truant by registered or certified mail when the student initially becomes a habitual truant. Subject to Section 3, subsection D of this policy regarding tardiness, "habitual truant" means a student who is absent from school without an acceptable excuse for part or all of 5 or more days on which school is held during a semester. The notice shall include the following:
- 1) A statement of the parent's or guardian's responsibility under state law to cause the student to attend school regularly.
 - 2) A statement that the parent or guardian or student may request program or curriculum modifications for the student and that the student may be eligible for enrollment in a program for children at risk.
 - 3) A request that the parent(s)/guardian(s) meet with appropriate personnel to discuss the student's truancy. The notice must include the name of the school personnel with whom the parent(s)/guardian(s) should meet, a date, time, and place for the meeting, and the name and telephone number of a person to contact to arrange a different date, time, or place. The date for the meeting must be within five school days after the date that the habitual truancy notice has been sent to the student's parent(s)/guardian(s). The date for the meeting may be extended for an additional five school days with the consent of the student's parent(s)/guardian(s).
 - a. A statement of the penalties under state law and city ordinance that may be imposed on the parent(s)/ guardian(s) if he/she fails to cause the child to attend school regularly as required by state law.
 - b. Procedures Toward Legal Referral
Before any legal proceeding may be brought against a student for habitual truancy or against his/her parent(s)/guardian(s) for failure to cause the student to attend school regularly, the school attendance officer must provide evidence that appropriate school personnel have, within the school year during which the truancy occurred, done all of the following:
 - i. Met with the student's parent(s)/guardian(s) to discuss the student's truancy or attempted to meet with the student's parent(s)/guardian(s) and received no response or were refused. This does not apply if the required parent meeting is not held within 10 school days after the date the habitual truancy letter was sent.
 - ii. Provided to the student an opportunity for educational counseling to determine whether a change in the student's curriculum would resolve the student's truancy, and have considered curriculum modifications possible within the current school program.
 - iii. Evaluated the student to determine whether learning problems may be a cause of the student's truancy and, if so, have taken steps to overcome the learning problems. (The student need not be evaluated if tests administered to the student within the previous year indicate that the student is performing at his/her grade level.)

- iv. Conducted an evaluation to determine whether social/emotional problems may be a cause of the student's truancy and, if so, taken appropriate action or made appropriate referrals to community agencies.

Items ii, iii, and iv above do not apply if the school attendance officer provides evidence that appropriate school personnel were unable to carry out the activities due to the student's absences from school.

- J. After a notice of habitual truancy has been issued to the student's parent or guardian in any school year, notify the parent or guardian of any further unexcused absences as provided in the District's truancy management plan.
- K. The school attendance officer shall receive and, after consulting with appropriate school personnel determine the district's response, respond in writing to requests from students or their parents or guardians for program or curriculum modifications as set forth in section 5, below.

3. Student Absences

Richmond School District defines a full-day absence as an absence for the total amount of time for which an individual student is scheduled. A half-day absence is defined as an absence for one or more class periods in a day.

A. Prior Parent-Excused Absences.

A student excused in writing by his/her parent or guardian prior to an absence is excused from school attendance. A student may be excused by the parent or guardian under this provision for not more than 10 school days in the school year. Students so excused are responsible for making up work missed during the absence. It is the student's responsibility to make arrangements with their classroom teacher(s) to complete any assignments or examinations that are or will be missed during the absence. Absences falling into this absence category include discretionary absences known in advance such as family vacations/travel, family weddings, hunting, and, unless within the number of visits counted as school-excused absences under the next section of these procedures, college visitation days.

B. Other Excused Absences of a Temporary Nature.

- 1) Illness, including reasonable treatment for such illness, where the student is temporarily not in proper physical or mental condition to attend school. A written statement from a health care provider may be required to be submitted as proof of the student's condition for student absences due to illness that are *3 school days* or more in length. Such health care provider's excuse shall state the period of time for which it is valid, and shall not exceed 30 days.
- 2) Medical appointments (although the District strongly encourages parents and guardians to make every effort to schedule non-emergency medical examinations and appointments, e.g., for health maintenance/preventative care, at times that avoid or at least minimize the student's loss of instructional time);
- 3) Religious holidays or instruction to the extent authorized by law;
- 4) Family emergency;
- 5) Severe weather conditions that, in the parent's or guardian's reasonable judgment, are a danger to the health and welfare or safety of the student;
- 6) Funerals of a family member or friend;
- 7) Suspension from school;
- 8) Mandatory court appearances;

- 9) Visiting a parent or guardian who is on active military duty and has been called to duty for or is on leave from deployment to a combat zone or combat support posting, or has returned from deployment to a combat zone or combat support posting within the past 30 days;
- 10) Sounding Taps – A student in grades 6 to 8 may be excused for the purpose of sounding “Taps” during a military honors funeral for a deceased veteran; and
- 11) Any other reasonably non-discretionary absence deemed appropriate by the school attendance officer.

Parents and guardians are required to notify the school of an absence prior to or on the day of the absence. Excused absences other than a suspension from school require written approval of the student’s parent or guardian. All students with excused absences will be given the opportunity to make up class assignments missed during the absence, including tests and examinations. It is the student's responsibility to contact the teacher(s) to make arrangements for making up the work missed during an absence from school.

As indicated above, absence from school during a period of suspension will be considered an excused absence for purposes of this policy. Students serving a suspension will be permitted to make up class work and examinations missed during their suspension from school under the same conditions as other excused absences.

Students who are participating, with District approval, in extracurricular activities, athletics, and other District-sponsored programs or events during any portion of an instructional day are not considered absent from school, but teachers shall treat their absence from class as excused with the right to make up work to the same extent permitted in connection with excused absences from school.

C. Unexcused Absences (Tardy)

A student is considered “tardy” if he/she is late for any part of the first class period. All tardies will be considered unexcused, unless approved by the school attendance officer. Parents will be notified when a student has accrued five (5) tardies within any quarter. Notices shall be made by personal contact, telephone call, or mail of which a written record is kept. Notice by personal contact or telephone shall be attempted prior to notice by mail. At the fifth tardy, the student will be subject to disciplinary action, including after-school and/or Saturday detention.

D. Unexcused Absences (Truancy)

A student is considered “truant” if he/she is absent from part or all of one or more school days during which the school has not been notified of the legal cause of such absence by the parent(s)/guardian(s). Parent(s)/guardians(s) shall be notified when a student has an unexcused absence(s). Notices shall be made by personal contact, telephone call, or mail of which a written record is kept. Notice by personal contact or telephone shall be attempted prior to notice by mail. An unexcused absence from school will result in disciplinary action, including after-school and Saturday detention.

E. Truancy-Related Criteria - Interaction with Open Enrollment:

The school board may prohibit a non-resident pupil from attendance in the nonresident school district (i.e. Richmond) under the open enrollment provisions of s. 118.51 (11), Stats., if the pupil has had excessive unexcused absences or tardiness. For the purposes set forth herein, five or more days of unexcused absences or tardiness may result in termination of the pupil's open enrollment. This policy and the administrative procedure details a process a parent or pupil may follow if they believe the pupil was erroneously marked as truant.

F. Habitual Truancy

A student is considered a “habitual truant” if he/she is absent from school without an acceptable excuse for all or part of five or more days on which school is held during a semester.

4. Make-up Assignments/Examinations

All students with absences shall be given the opportunity to make up examinations and work missed in accordance with the guidelines outlined below. Credit in a course or subject shall not be denied solely because of a student's unexcused absence from school.

A. Excused Absences

- 1) Students who are absent from school for reasons that are determined to be excused by the school attendance officer shall be given the opportunity to make-up work missed when they return to school. It is the student's responsibility, as age appropriate, to contact the teacher(s) to make arrangements for making up work missed during an absence from school. If any question arises as to the appropriateness and/or feasibility of making up a particular assignment, the teacher shall discuss with the principal the extent to which make-up work and/or substitute assignments are possible.
- 2) Examinations missed during an excused absence shall be taken at a time mutually agreed upon by the student and the teacher. A student has one day to make up work for each day absent. The principal has discretion to extend make-up opportunities if warranted by extenuating circumstances.

B. Unexcused Absences (Truancy)

All students with unexcused absences shall be given the opportunity to make up work missed in accordance with the following guidelines:

- 1) Credit in a course or subject shall not be denied solely because of a student's unexcused absence from school.
- 2) Students with unexcused absences shall be permitted to make up major examinations (quarter, semester, or grading period) missed if course work credit is at risk. Examination make-up date(s) shall be determined at the discretion of the principal/teacher. Students in this circumstance shall be prepared to make up the exam on the day of return.

5. Program or Curriculum Modifications.

A child may be excused from regular school attendance pursuant to a program or curriculum modification, as further defined under state law, that has been requested by the student's parent or guardian and approved by the District Administrator and/or his/her designee.

Program or curriculum modifications shall be requested in writing. The administrative decision in response to the request shall likewise be provided in writing. If a child, or his/her parent or guardian, is not satisfied with the decision made by the District Administrator and/or his/her designee, he/she may ask the School Board to review and act on the request. The Board shall render its determination upon review in writing, if the student's parent or guardian so requests.

Teachers, students, and parents and guardians shall be informed of the District's student attendance policy and procedures annually via school handbooks or other means necessary to provide proper notice of student attendance-related responsibilities.

Wisconsin Statutes

Section 115.28(51)	[state superintendent duty; encourage school boards to grant excused absences for students sounding "Taps" during a military honors funeral of a deceased veteran]
Section 115.997(5)(e)	[military compact on educational opportunity for military children]
Section 118.125(2)(cg)	[disclosing student attendance records to law enforcement agency]
Section 118.125(2)(ch)	[disclosing student attendance records to fire investigator]
Section 118.15	[compulsory school attendance]

Section 118.16	[school attendance enforcement]
Section 118.162	[truancy committee and plan]
Section 118.163	[municipal truancy and dropout ordinances]
Section 118.18	[teacher attendance reporting requirements]
Section 118.33(1)(b)	[high school graduation requirements]
Section 118.51(11)	[habitual truancy]
Section 948.45	[contributing to truancy]

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