

The importance of students being in school on time to start the day, as well as attendance in school generally, is critical in student achievement.

The Importance of School Attendance

A recent review of student attendance data shows that regular school attendance from Kindergarten on is essential to successful learning:

- *Every day counts.* Missing school even 10% of the time has a significant negative impact on reading and math achievement and growth as children progress through school. 10% of the time is two absences per month.
- *Students with good attendance performed better and grew more in math and reading.*
- *Good attendance starts early.* Research has demonstrated that the attendance habits established in the early grades have lasting effects on students throughout their education: children with high attendance in the early grades continue to have good attendance; and students with low attendance in the early grades are more likely to have low attendance—and lower academic performance—throughout their elementary and middle school years.

Chronic Absenteeism

The State of Illinois defines Chronic Absenteeism as:

“Absences that total 10% or more of school days of the most recent academic school year, including absences with and without valid cause.”

What this means is that absences (regardless of whether they are excused or unexcused) totalling up to 10% or more of a student's school year, may warrant additional interventions from the school administrative designee. The number of students who are chronically absent are publicly reported each school year and are used for accountability purposes.

Attendance Procedures

Each day, teachers use TeacherEase to record attendance in their classes. When a student is marked absent, the office staff checks this list against the list of students who have been called in absent by their parents/guardians. When the school has not heard from a parent/guardian, then the office or classroom teacher contacts the parents to determine where the student is on that day.

At the end of each school year, the absences from TeacherEase are totaled up and reported electronically to the State of Illinois as mandated by the Illinois School Code.

Student Truancy

“Chronic or habitual truant” is defined as a child who is subject to compulsory school attendance and who is absent without valid cause from such attendance for 5% or more of the regular attendance days.

It is not possible for our teachers to replicate the classroom learning experiences through make-up work. Yet, teachers will provide students with work prior to an arranged absence, along with having homework available to pick up at the end of the school day for students who missed that day.

The Illinois Compulsory School Attendance Law (Article 26 of the Illinois School Code) holds parents responsible for the enrollment and regular school attendance of children between the ages of 6 and 17. Section 26-13 of the Code requires school districts to adopt absenteeism and truancy policies identifying appropriate supportive services and available resources for students who have chronic absenteeism (“truant”).

The district regularly monitors student tardies and absences and meets with families to encourage on-time practices for children as well as regular student attendance. We hope that by focusing on the benefits of being in school on time and working with our learning community, that our students benefit from all learning opportunities on school days.

You will hear about this often. If you are interested in the procedures that we will be working with on student tardies and absences, please contact the school office.

Tardy Procedures:

- **First letter for late / tardies** will go out when a student has three late/tardies (simple notification from School Principal).
- At **seven late / tardies**, a second letter will be sent from the principal notifying parents that they and their child will need to meet with the School Principal or designee. A plan of improvement will be created at this meeting.
- At **ten late / tardies**, a third letter will come out and a meeting will be scheduled with the student's guardian and School Principal or designee. Following this scheduled meeting, a determination will be made as to the student's continued enrollment.

Excused Absences

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, family emergency, other situations beyond the control of the student as determined by the School Principal or designee, 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 School Principal or designee. Students absent for a valid cause may make up missed homework and classwork assignments in a reasonable timeframe.

- **At six full days** of excused absences, a letter will go out from the principal to notify the parents.
- **At ten full days** of excused absences, a letter will again go out from the principal and it will inform them that a meeting must occur with the building principal or designee.
- **At thirteen full days** a third letter will come out and a meeting will be scheduled with the student's guardian and School Principal or designee. Following this scheduled meeting, a determination will be made as to the student's continued enrollment.

Unexcused Absences are those absences not considered excused.

- At **five full days** of unexcused absences, a letter will go out from the School Principal to notify the parents.
- At **eight full days** of unexcused absences, a letter will go out from the School Principal to notify the parents and inform them that a meeting must occur with the School Principal or designee.

- At **twelve full days** of unexcused absences, a letter will come out and a meeting will be scheduled with the student's guardian and School Principal or designee. Following this scheduled meeting, a determination will be made as to the student's continued enrollment.

Resources:

<https://oese.ed.gov/resources/learning-at-home/resources-parents-families/>

<https://www.attendanceworks.org/resources/handouts-for-families/>

<https://www.publicservicedegrees.org/resources/students-with-family-challenges/>

<https://www.learningforjustice.org/magazine/supporting-students-who-are-often-absent>

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