

STUDENT ATTENDANCE

The Appleton Area School District believes there is a positive relationship between school attendance and student success. It further believes that school attendance is a responsibility shared by students, parents, schools and community.

The District, in accordance with State law, requires that all students between six and eighteen years of age (and those students enrolled in 5-year-old kindergarten) attend school regularly during the full period and hours, religious holidays excepted, that the school in which the student is enrolled is in session until the end of the school term, quarter or semester of the school year in which the student becomes 18 years of age, unless they have an acceptable excuse, meet attendance exceptions outlined in state law, or have graduated from high school. Although not required by state law, students in 4-year-old kindergarten are expected to attend 4K programming on a regular basis and excused and unexcused absences will be determined based on the procedures described in this policy. It is the responsibility of each school's attendance officer to determine if an absence is excused, unexcused, or truant.

A student will be considered excused for school attendance if the student is considered temporarily not in proper physical or mental condition to attend school, but can be expected to return upon termination or abatement of the illness or condition. The school attendance officer may request that the parent/guardian obtain a written statement documenting the existing condition.

A student may be excused in writing by the parent/guardian prior to an absence occurring. Under this provision, absences through prior parent request cannot exceed 10 days in a school year.

A student who has reached the age of 16 years and meets criteria established in Wisconsin statutes may also be excused from school attendance to participate in programs leading to high school graduation or high school equivalency.

No student shall be denied credit in a course or subject solely because of an excused or unexcused absence.

Cross References: **At-Risk Plan 342.2**
Graduation Requirements 345.6
Student Records 347
Student Nondiscrimination 411.2
Communicable Diseases 453.3

Legal References: **Wisconsin Statutes 115.76, 118.125, 118.13, 118.14, 118.15, 118.153, 118.155, 118.16, 118.162, and 118.33**

Adoption Date: **June 26, 1993**

Amended Dates: **November 28, 2005, January 25, 2010, June 10, 2013, September 23, 2013, February 9, 2015, January 25, 2016, and September 9, 2019**

STUDENT ATTENDANCE

Procedures

SCHOOL ATTENDANCE OFFICER

The building principal or designee shall serve as the school attendance officer for each school in the District. The school attendance officer shall be responsible for all matters relating to school attendance and truancy. The school attendance officer of each school shall determine daily which students enrolled in the school are absent from school and whether their absences are excused.

The school attendance officer or designee in each school shall inform the parent/guardian of a student's truancy and direct the parent/guardian 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. A parent/guardian may contact the student attendance officer to review the student's attendance record.

The school attendance officer or designee shall furnish student attendance information to designated agencies for purposes authorized by State law and in accordance with the Board of Education's (BOE) Student Records Policy. Building principals shall annually determine how many students enrolled in their schools were absent in the previous year and whether the absences were excused. This information will be submitted to the District administrator and subsequently submitted to the Department of Public Instruction (DPI).

STUDENT ABSENCES

The primary responsibility for regular school attendance of a student rests with the student's parent/guardian.

Excused Absences

All excused absences require that parent/guardian verification be provided to the school attendance officer or designee in advance of the absence or prior to re-admittance to school.

A parent/guardian may request that a student be excused from school attendance prior to an absence occurring. The request shall be made in writing or via phone contact with the school followed by a written request to the school. The student may be excused by the parent/guardian under this provision for not more than 10 days in the school year (the 10 days includes excused absences due to intermittent illness). A student will be considered absent for a full day if they are gone more than two-thirds of a school day or combination of excused absences cumulating to more than two-thirds of a day. Absences include but are not limited to the following:

- Appointments that cannot be scheduled outside of the school day.
- A court appearance or other legal procedure that requires the student's presence.
- A death in the immediate family or funerals for relatives or close friends.
- Attendance at special events of educational value such as college visits, job fairs, etc.

430-Rule (cont.)

The Board of Education delegates discretion to administration to grant excusals for an emergency in the family or unique circumstances that require the absence of the student because of family responsibilities not to exceed 20 school days.

The school attendance officer or designee is authorized to approve an excused absence for any student for the following reasons:

- Evidence that the student is not in proper physical or mental condition to attend school. The District may request the parent/guardian to obtain a written statement from a physician, dentist, chiropractor, optometrist, or psychologist, or Christian Science practitioner residing in the State and listed in the Christian Science Journal as proof of the physical or mental condition of the student. Such excuse shall be in writing and shall state the period of time, which shall not exceed 30 school days. Absences beyond 30 school days require another written statement. It is suggested that a parent/guardian use the District document titled Medical Excuse Form.
- An emergency in the family, unique circumstance or other crisis that requires the absence of the student because of family responsibilities not to exceed 20 school days.
- Religious holidays.
- A quarantine imposed by a public health officer or the Board of Education's Communicable Disease Policy.
- A suspension from school (in-school or out-of-school suspensions).
- Approved school activities during class time.
- A student who serves as an election official if the student has a grade point average of 3.0 or higher.
- Special circumstances that show good cause and which are approved by the school attendance officer or designee.

A student's truancy, discipline or school achievement problems, or disabilities as described in Wisconsin statute 115.76, may not be reason for the school attendance officer or designee to excuse a student from attending school.

Truancy

Truancy means any absence of part or all of one or more days from school 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 Wisconsin State Statute 118.15.

Habitual Truancy

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

Truancy Plan

Following are the procedures to be followed for notifying the parents or guardians of the unexcused absences of habitual truants under Wisconsin State Statute 118.16(2)(cr) and for meeting and conferring with such parents or guardians.

430-Rule (cont.)

A. The school attendance officer:

Shall notify the parent or guardian of a student who is a habitual truant, by first class, registered or certified mail, when the student initially becomes a habitual truant. The notice shall include all of the following:

1. A statement of the parent's or guardian's responsibility, under Wisconsin State Statute 118.15(1)(a), to cause the student to attend regularly.
2. A statement that the parent, guardian, or student may request program or curriculum modifications for the student under Wisconsin State Statute 118(1)(d) and that the student may be eligible for enrollment in a program for student at risk under Wisconsin State Statute 118.153(3).
3. A request that the parent or guardian meet with appropriate school personnel to discuss the student'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.

A notice statement regarding any other rights and/or potential obligations as required by Wis. Stats. Sec. 118.15.

The letter of notice, with explanation of rights, which is to be used is **430-Exhibit (1)** (attached).

After the notice required above has been given, the parent or guardian of the habitual truant shall be notified of the habitual truant's unexcused absences {as provided in the plan under Wisconsin State Statute 118.162(4)(a)}.

B. Plans and procedures for identifying truant students of all ages and returning them to school, including the identity of school personnel to whom a truant student shall be returned.

1. A parent, a guardian, or an adult student may request an excused absence from the principal or his/her designee.
2. Truant students shall be returned to the school principal or his/her designee.
3. The school principal or his/her designee shall be responsible for the administration of this Truancy Plan.

C. Methods to increase and maintain public awareness of and involvement in responding to truancy within the District.

- Publishing policies, procedures, articles, etc. on truancy in the school handbook and in the District newsletter.
- Promoting active public relations campaigns stressing the importance of school attendance.
- Encouraging positive reinforcers for good attendance.

430-Rule (cont.)

- Meeting with representatives of the business community to promote hiring policies, which require graduation from high school.
 - Collaborating with families, community partners, and agencies.
- D. The immediate response to be made by school personnel when a truant student is returned to school.
1. A meeting be held with the parent or guardian or adult student to comply with 118.16 (5) (a).

Consider options that may support the student's needs such as:
 - Attendance in another District school
 - Children At-Risk Program (i.e., alternative programs)
 - Modification of academic program (i.e., mentoring, check-in/out, social/academic intervention groups)
 - Work-study or work-training
 - Student Assistance Program (SAP)
 - Homebound instruction when student qualifies
 - Contracting with education services providers
 2. Ensure compliance with 118.16 (5) (d) has occurred or make appropriate referral for such evaluation.
 3. Document the above in the student's record.
- E. Methods to involve the truant student's parents or guardian in dealing with and solving the student's truancy problem.

The District will comply fully with 118.16(2)(c)(cg), (4)(d), (5)(a). The District and Human Services agencies will consider offering the following services to solve the student's truancy problem:

- Parent education programs for parents and truants
- Family support groups
- Family-based services
- Consider other community resources

Open Enrolled Student – Habitual Truancy

Before the District may prohibit a student open enrolled from another school district from attending the District in a succeeding semester or school year under 118.51(11), Stats., the District shall do all of the following:

1. Provide the following notifications to the parent and the student when the student enrolls in the District:
 - a. The Board of Education's Student Attendance policy.
 - b. The open enrollment consequences of habitual truancy.
 - c. A clear explanation of what constitutes truancy, including what constitutes "part of a school day."

430-Rule (cont.)

- d. A description of the notifications, including the manner of delivery, a parent will receive when a student is absent, is truant, or is habitually truant. Each notification shall inform the parent/guardian that the student's open enrollment may be terminated if the student is habitually truant.
 - e. How and where the parent/guardian can view the student's attendance record.
2. Each notification provided under 118.16(2), Stats. shall notify the parent/guardian or student of the consequences of habitual truancy on open enrollment.
 3. Provide the parent/guardian and student with a list of all unexcused absences and trancies that resulted in the Board's proposed action to prohibit the student's attendance in a succeeding semester or school year.
 4. Allow the parent/guardian or student to explain why they believe there was any error in marking an absence as truancy, using the process described in the Board's policy.

Virtual School Attendance

Wisconsin Compulsory School Attendance statutes and the Student Attendance Policy apply to students enrolled part-or full-time in the District's virtual schools and/or classes. Attendance is monitored and recorded by the attendance officer or designee. The student handbook for each respective virtual school further delineates attendance and participation requirements.

Appeals to Open Enrollment Decisions Made Based on Habitual Truancy or Virtual Charter Student's Failure to Participate

A nonresident student's parent/guardian may appeal to the DPI a rejection of the student's full-time open enrollment in the District based on the student's habitual truancy or a transfer back to the resident school district based upon the failure to participate.

Tardiness

Guidelines and criteria previously described for determining if an absence is excused or unexcused apply to students who are tardy. A determination as to the classification of a tardy is the responsibility of the school attendance officer or designee. A pattern of tardiness on the part of any student shall be brought to the attention of the student's parent/guardian. If it appears that the student is negligent with being at school/class on time, appropriate disciplinary action shall be taken.

Depending upon the frequency and amount of school missed, tardiness may be classified as an unexcused absence and therefore reportable as truancy or habitual truancy. Guidelines regarding tardiness are established for each level in the District and communicated with students and parents/guardians through publications such as the Student Handbook.

Suspensions from School

Suspensions from school are excused absences. During a period of suspension, a student shall not be on the school campus or at any school activity. When a parent/guardian/legal custodian has a meeting with an administrator, the student may be present.

Students will be afforded opportunities to complete missed assignments and examinations. Guidelines for these opportunities are provided in the section titled "Make-up Assignments, Examinations, Grading and Credit."

MAKE-UP ASSIGNMENTS, EXAMINATIONS, GRADING, AND CREDIT

All students with excused and unexcused 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 excused or unexcused absence from school. Districts are required to specify the conditions under which a student may be permitted to take examinations missed during absences. They are also required to specify conditions under which a suspended student will be permitted to complete course work, and take any quarter, semester or grading period examinations. These District guidelines follow:

Excused Absences

- Students who are absent from school for reasons that are determined to be excused by the school attendance officer or designee shall be given the opportunity to make up work missed when they return to school. It is the student's or parent's/guardian's responsibility to contact the teacher to make arrangements for making up work missed during an absence from school. The respective teacher shall identify make-up work.

If any question arises as to the appropriateness, feasibility of making up a particular assignment or timelines, the teacher shall discuss with the building principal the extent to which make-up work or substitute assignments are possible.

- Students who are absent from school with the prior written permission of their parent/guardian are also required to make up work missed during the absence. The arrangements for making up course work and examinations shall be the same as for other excused absences.
- Examinations missed during an excused absence shall be taken within a reasonable time from the date of the absence. Students can be expected to complete an examination upon the day of their return, especially if it was a one or two day absence.

Unexcused Absences and Suspensions

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

- Credit in a course or subject shall not be denied solely because of a student's unexcused absence or suspension from school.

430-Rule (cont.)

- Students with unexcused absences or suspensions occurring during the time of major examinations (quarter, semester, or grading period) shall be permitted to take such examinations if course credit is at risk. The examination make-up date shall be determined by the teacher with approval of the principal. Students in this circumstance may be expected to make up the exam on the day of return.
- Students with unexcused absences or suspensions will be given one day to complete class work missed, examinations excepted, for each day or period of absence. If the work is not turned into the teacher within this established timeline, then the student may not receive credit for the work. Extensions to this timeline may be granted by the principal.
- Students with unexcused absences or suspensions may be assigned a supervised, directed study program to make up assignments and take examinations.

CONTAGIOUS DISEASE AND IMMUNIZATIONS

Students who have communicable diseases as defined by the Department of Public Health, and students who do not have their required immunizations or waivers for same may be excluded from school in accordance with state law and Board of Education policies. Students will not be permitted to return to school until medical clearance is provided.

Communicable Diseases that commonly are associated with school exclusion include rubeola (red measles), parotitis (mumps), varicella (chicken pox), pertussis (whooping cough), rubella (German measles) or Hepatitis. The presence of head lice, although not a communicable disease, may also result in exclusion from school.

RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION

With the written permission of the parent/guardian, students may be absent from school for at least 60 minutes but not more than 180 minutes per week to obtain religious instruction outside the school during required school attendance. Permission to be absent may be withdrawn if the student does not attend the religious instruction.

EIGHTEEN YEAR OLD STUDENTS

When a student attains the age of eighteen years, the rights accorded to the parent/guardian transfer from the parent/guardian to the student. Students are no longer required by law to attend school. However, all students who choose to continue in school must follow all attendance policies. All written and verbal communication regarding attendance policy violations will continue to include the parent/guardian unless the adult student specifically requests their exclusion in writing to the principal.

STUDENT PARTICIPATION IN PROGRAM LEADING TO HIGH SCHOOL DIPLOMA (118.153)

Upon the student's request of the school board and with the written approval of the student's parent/guardian, any student who is 16 years of age or over and a student at-risk as defined by s. 118.153 may attend, in lieu of high school or on a part-time basis, a technical college that provides a program leading to the student's high school graduation.

430-Rule (cont.)

Upon the student's request of the BOE and with the written approval of the student's parent/guardian, any student who is 17 years of age or over shall be excused from regular school attendance to attend a program leading to a high school equivalency diploma if the student began the program while placed in a secured correctional facility, a secured student caring institution, a secured detention facility, or a juvenile portion of a county jail.

MEDICAL EXCUSE FROM ATTENDING CLASSES

Students who have a medical reason to be excused from specific classes shall obtain a written statement from their physician. The statement shall include the reason for the request and the period of time the student is to be excused. It is suggested that the parent/guardian use the District document titled Medical Excuse Form. The statement shall include restricted activities, as well as any appropriate accommodations or alternative activities.

Attendance by the student through partial participation will be expected and encouraged. However, if the teacher, in consultation with the principal, believes that another educational setting in the school would be more appropriate during the class period, then the student may be reassigned.

The medical statement will be maintained in the student's behavioral file with a copy provided to the teacher.

Students in Grades 6 through 12 - Students who are excused by a physician for more than 10 school days in a quarter grading period may receive a Withdrawal, Incomplete, or grade that will be computed as part of the student's grade point average. Students who receive a Withdrawal will be required to retake the class if required for graduation. Students who receive an Incomplete will be required to complete the coursework within the designated timeline and subsequently receive a grade. The principal and teacher will determine which option will apply.

Principals have the authority to waive courses for seniors who have a medical condition and excuse that may prevent them from graduating. Other means to obtain the necessary credit(s) will be pursued prior to a waiver being granted.

HOMEBOUND INSTRUCTION FOR ABSENT STUDENTS

Students who are unable to attend school due to a persistent health condition that will result in 30 consecutive school days of absence, or frequent absences of a shorter duration that cumulatively will extend beyond 30 school days in a school semester may qualify for homebound instruction. Written verification by a physician using the District document titled Medical Excuse Form will be required but does not guarantee homebound instruction. The homebound decision for a student with a disability shall be made by the IEP team and, for students without a disability, by the building principal in consultation with the school nurse and assistant superintendent of Student Services.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION AND STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Students with a disability, as defined by IDEA or Section 504, that precludes them from participating in a regular physical education program may qualify for and receive a specially designed program. This decision will be made by the Individual Education Plan (IEP) or Building 504 Team.

PARENT/GUARDIAN RESPONSIBILITIES

It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to ensure the student's regular school attendance. The parent/guardian is expected to provide a written explanation of a student's absence in advance of the absence or upon the student's return to school.

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES

Students are required to attend all classes unless they have obtained approval by the building principal or designee, or have parental permission as approved by the school attendance officer/designee.

It is the student's or parent's/guardian's responsibility to make appropriate arrangements with the teacher to make up all assignments, including examinations, in accordance with the previously noted guidelines.

TEACHER RESPONSIBILITIES

Teachers are responsible to submit attendance reports as required by each school attendance officer or designee.

Teachers are required to emphasize the importance of good attendance. They are to develop classroom procedures and grading requirements that reflect this policy. They also are not permitted to deny credit in a course or subject solely because of a student's absence from school.

APPEALS TO THIS POLICY

Appeals to administrative decisions pertaining to this policy shall initially be reviewed at the school by the principal. If the parent/guardian or student disagrees, the appropriate assistant superintendent of School Services should be contacted.

Cross References: **At-Risk Plan 342.2**
Graduation Requirements 345.6
Student Records 347
Student Nondiscrimination 411.2
Communicable Diseases 453.3

Legal References: **Wisconsin Statutes 115. 76, 118.125, 118.13, 118.14, 118.15, 118.153, 118.155, 118.16, 118.162, and 118.33**

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HABITUAL TRUANCY

Sample Procedure and Notice Statement

When a student becomes a “habitual truant” (absent without an acceptable excuse for part or all of 5 or more days on which school is held during a semester), the attendance officer or designee shall send, by first class, registered or certified mail, the following notice to the student’s parent or guardian.

Notice of Habitual Truancy

Date:

Student’s Name:

Date of Birth:

Wisconsin State Law, Section 118.15 (1) (a), requires you have to have your student attend school regularly until graduation from high school, or until the end of the semester in which he/she turns 18 years of age, or until he/she is excused from attendance by the School Board. Your student, (student name), has been determined by the school to be habitually truant according to Wisconsin State Law. Habitual truancy is absence without an acceptable excuse for part or all of 5 or more days on which school is held during a semester.

Wisconsin State Law, Section 118.15 (1) (d), allows you to request certain changes in your student’s school program or curriculum. In addition, your student may be eligible for inclusion in the District’s Children At-Risk Program under Section 118.153 (3).

To address the habitual truancy, you will need to meet with an administrator. **A meeting is set for (insert meeting date) at (insert meeting time) with (insert truancy meeting participants).** If you can’t make this meeting, you must contact (insert contact information).

Enclosed are the following documents:

- Truancy meeting agenda
- Attendance summary for your student

Please bring these documents to the meeting on **(insert meeting date) at (insert meeting time).**

Please contact me if you have any questions.

Respectfully,

Signature

Title

cc: Behavior File (Green)
School Counselor

Enclosures: Truancy Meeting Agenda
Attendance Summary