

P4085 STUDENT ATTENDANCE

Revision of current policy

Manchester Community Schools considers the development of good attendance habits as a vital and desirable undertaking for two essential reasons. First, it is difficult for young people to learn if they are not in class: the teaching-learning process builds upon itself. Secondly, research shows that educational achievement is directly related to attendance. A student who misses a day of school misses a day of education that cannot be retrieved in its entirety. Each school is expected to implement policies and practices that encourage its students to develop and demonstrate good attendance habits.

Attendance/Instructional Time:

In-Person Instruction:

Attendance shall mean to be physically present in a school or at another location where the school's educational program is being conducted during regular school hours on a day the educational program in which the student is enrolled is being offered.

Virtual Instruction:

Attendance shall mean student engagement in the virtual classroom. Engagement in the virtual classroom shall be measured by daily log-ins and log times, completed daily work, completed weekly work, completed projects, communications with teachers on a daily or weekly basis, and any other requirements as determined by the virtual instruction teacher. Students attending virtual instruction are subject to the same instructional time requirements as students attending in-person, which is 5 hours for students in grades 1 through 6 and 6 hours for grades 7 through 12 per day.

Hybrid Instruction:

Student attendance for hybrid instruction will be counted for the in-person days as outlined for In-Person Instruction and for the virtual instruction days as outlined for Virtual Instruction.

All provisions of this policy apply to all students enrolled and receiving instruction in-person, virtually, or in a hybrid format.

Parents' Responsibility

Parents are responsible for having their children in school. Indiana law prescribes that parents must have their children in public or private school from the age of seven (7) until the date on which the child:

1. Graduates;
2. Reaches at least sixteen (16) years of age, but less than eighteen (18) years of age and:
 - a. The student and the student's parent or guardian and the principal agree to the withdrawal, and
 - b. At the exit interview the student provides written acknowledgment of the withdrawal and the student's parent or guardian and the school principal each provide written consent for the student to withdraw from school; or
3. Reaches the age of eighteen (18) years.

Absences from School

Absences from school shall fall into one of the four following categories:

1. Absences which are counted as present:
 - a. Serving as a page in the Indiana General Assembly.
 - b. For students in grades 7 through 12, serving at the polls on Election Day with prior approval of principal.
 - c. Court appearances which are documented by a probation officer or officer of the court.
 - d. Active duty with the Indiana National Guard for not more than ten (10) days in a school year.
 - e. Placement in a short-term inpatient treatment program which provides an instructional program.
 - f. Homebound instruction.
 - g. Religious observances.
2. Excused Absences:
 - a. Parent/guardian may excuse up to ten absences per school year (e.g. illness, medical and legal appointment, family vacations, college visits).
 - b. Illnesses that are excused by a written note from a physician will not be counted as part of the ten parent/guardian excused absences. Absences beyond the ten parent/guardian excused absences in a school year that are not accompanied by a written note from a physician will be considered truancies. A note must be provided to the school upon the student's return to school.
 - c. Exceptions to the ten parent/guardian excused absences will be made only in the following situations:

i. Funerals:

1. Death in the immediate family.
2. Death of a person outside the immediate family with parental permission.
3. The building principal may excuse an absence in an emergency situation.

3. Unexcused Absences:

- a. No parent/guardian contact with the school giving an explanation for the absence on the day of the absence or prior to the absence.

4. Truancy:

- a. A “habitual truant” is defined as a student who has ten (10) or more days of unexcused absences.
- b. All students who are at least thirteen (13) years of age but less than the age of fifteen (15) years, and who are determined to be a habitual truant per the definition above, are subject to Indiana Code 20-33-2-11, which provides that any person who is determined to be a habitual truant as defined by school board policy cannot be issued an operator’s license or learner’s permit until the age of 18 years, or until the student’s attendance record has improved as determined by the principal upon review of the student’s record of at least once per school year.
- c. Procedures developed for the administration of this policy, shall include provisions for periodic review of all students determined to be habitual truants and their reclassification when warranted. These procedures will be developed by the Superintendent or his/her designee.
- d. The student’s principal (is required to) (may) report to the Indiana Bureau of Motor Vehicles of the student’s status as a habitual truant.
- e. The student upon initial designation of being a habitual truant is entitled to the same statutory procedures as a student who is being expelled.

Legal Reference: I.C. 20-33-2-11

Make-Up Work

Upon request of the student, make-up work will be offered for all student absences, but credit shall be allowed only for absences that are excused or counted as present. The type of make-up work shall be at the discretion of the teacher and may be equivalent, but not necessarily identical, to the instruction presented in class. A student shall be given one calendar day for each missed day to complete the make-up work, plus an additional calendar day, if needed, up to a maximum of seven days. Extended illness shall be handled on an individual basis.

Reporting an Absence

In order to report an excused absence, a student's parent/guardian must contact the school. Each school has an established procedure for reporting absences. Absences shall not be excused unless the contact is made according to the school's procedure. If the parent or guardian does not call, the school will attempt to call the parent or guardian that day to document the absence.

Tardies

A student is tardy when the student is late for the beginning of the school day or late for any class during the school day. Policies to handle tardies shall be established in each school's handbook. Each policy should give consideration to steps that involve the school social worker.

Work Permits

This section applies to work permits issued to students during the school year and will not affect work permits issued for summer employment.

1. Denial of a work permit:

- a. A work permit will be denied to a student who has been absent from school 18 or more days in the previous two semesters.
- b. A student who has been denied a work permit may request a review of his/her attendance record after six weeks of regular school attendance.
- c. Upon review, the issuing officer may issue a work permit if a student's attendance has substantially improved.
- d. A student may appeal the denial of a work permit to the school principal.

2. Revocation of a work permit:

- a. A work permit issued to a student may be revoked if a student has been absent from school 18 or more days of one school year.
- b. A student whose work permit has been revoked may request a review of his/her attendance record after six weeks of regular school attendance.
- c. Upon review, the issuing officer may reissue the work permit if a student's attendance has substantially improved.
- d. A student may appeal the revocation of a work permit to the school principal.

Attendance Procedures

If a pattern of irregular attendance develops, the school shall take the following actions to encourage a student's return to regular school attendance:

1. After a student accumulates six parent/guardian excused absences in a school year, a school administrator, attendance clerk, or counselor shall make a contact with the student's parent or guardian. The date and content of this contact shall be documented.
2. After a student accumulates ten parent/guardian excused absences in a school year, a referral shall be made to the school counselor. If the school counselor is unable to successfully resolve the attendance problem, a referral may be made to the proper authorities in Wabash County.
3. When a student accumulates more than ten parent/guardian excused absences in a school year and fails to provide the school with a physician's note to excuse the absences, these absences are considered trancies and are subject to disciplinary action as established in each school's handbook.

Adopted: 08/01/13

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