



December 16, 2022

Dear Parent/Guardian,

In an effort to provide consistency throughout the district, we would like to notify you of a change in our elementary attendance policy. Attendance has a huge impact on a student's learning experience.

We understand that there are times when attendance in school is not possible and we are here to work with you through those special conditions. This change in our elementary policy will align with our secondary policies so that attendance is addressed consistently throughout grades K - 12 in all buildings.

Beginning January 4, 2023, parents may excuse a student from school up to five (5) times per semester, after the fifth parent excuse a medical documentation will be required or will otherwise be unexcused. Please see the updated policy language below for exemptions and detailed information that will be added to the elementary student handbook.

## **ATTENDANCE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

### **Attendance**

The Board of School Trustees believes that attendance in school is important to the total learning experience for each student. There are times when attendance in school is not possible, and although valuable educational experiences may be lost, students may be absent under these special conditions. Even though the Board recognizes and accepts these special conditions, it is also aware that accumulated absences from school will hinder the educational process no matter what conditions caused the absences and excessive absenteeism may result in the reduction of a student's grade in a particular class or classes because of the difficulty in making up required work. Every effort will be made to work with parents/guardians and students. We strongly encourage parents/guardians to keep schools informed of the reasons for absences. A full-day absence is defined as the accumulation of two (2) total missed periods, consecutive or nonconsecutive.

#### **1. Parent Excused Policy**

- a. Parents may excuse a student from school up to five (5) times per semester
  - i. Notification will be sent on the fifth parent excuse
  - ii. Any absences after the fifth parent excused will require medical documentation or will otherwise be unexcused.
- b. Exemptions for this are as follows
  - i. Funerals
  - ii. serving as a page or honoree of the General Assembly (IC 20-33-2-14 );

- iii. serving on the precinct election board or as a helper to a political candidate or party on the day of a municipal, primary or general election (IC 20-33-2-15);
- iv. when subpoenaed to testify in court (IC 20-33-2-16);
- v. the student or a member of the student's household exhibits or participates in the Indiana State Fair for educational purposes (IC 20-33-2-17.7)

## 2. Unexcused Absences - Administrative Procedure

### a. 5 Unexcused Full-Day Absences

- i. Letter mailed home
- ii. Probation Department Contacted
- iii. An attendance contract is implemented

### b. 10 Unexcused Full-Day Absences

- i. Letter mailed home
- ii. Personal communication by a school counselor, assistant principal, or principal
- iii. Probation Department contacted

### c. 15 Unexcused Full-Day Absences

- i. Letter mailed home
- ii. Probation Department contacted

## **Attendance Procedure**

A student is allowed five (5) Parent/Guardian Excused (E-PE) absences each semester. An unexcused absence will be assigned instead after the fifth E-PE.

In the case of medically excused absences, a parent/guardian must call the school to report the absence. This will be marked and counted as a Parent Excused (E-PE) absence. Once medical documentation has been received by the school, the absence will be changed to a Medically Excused (E-MD) in Skyward. The Parent Excused will not be counted as one of the five allowed each semester.

Once a student accumulates five (5), ten (10), or fifteen (15) unexcused absences, the Probation Department will be notified. Submission of medical documentation after we have reported to Probation will not change the unexcused absence on record, nor will it eliminate the Probation Department's involvement.

## **Pre-Arranged Absences**

Parents are discouraged from taking students out of school during instructional time. In the event that a parent/guardian chooses to take the child out of school during a regularly scheduled school day, the following procedure should be followed:

1. The parent/guardian is to contact the principal or counselor to explain the reason for the request and to request that the day(s) of absence be excused. This may be done in writing, on the phone, or in person.
2. A Pre-Arranged Absence Form will be prepared for the student. The student should then pick up the Pre-Arranged Absence Form from the office and have each of his/her teachers sign it. This gives the teacher notice of the absence and allows for work to be done ahead of time if necessary.

3. The Pre-Arranged Absence Form should be returned to the office at least two (2) days before the absence.
4. The most frequent reasons for pre-arranged absences are for scheduled medical procedures, family vacations, and religious observances. The day(s) missed will count toward the maximum number of Parent Excused, until documentation is provided to the school.

### **Make-Up Work**

- Make-up work is the student's responsibility to complete. The student must request make-up work on the day that the student returns to school.
- The student is allowed a reasonable number of days (1 day for each day absent or at the teacher's discretion) to make up work after returning to school.
- If the assignment or test was announced prior to an absence, the student is responsible for the assignment or test on the day he/she returns.

### **Absences and Extra-Curricular Participation/Off-Campus Education**

- Students who are absent from school may not attend extra-curricular activities (including athletic practices or contests) that evening. If extenuating school or family circumstances result in a student's failure to be present for these classes, an exception can be made by the school administration. Reasons may include the following: approved medical emergencies, and funerals.
- Students who leave school due to illness are not to attend extra-curricular or athletic events. Medical appointments do not apply.
- A student missing an exceptional amount of instructional school days will not be permitted to participate in extra-curricular school events (i.e. dances, field trips, etc.). Final determination of attendance at an extra-curricular school event will be reviewed by the principal.

### **Vacations During the School Year**

Parents are encouraged not to take their children out of school for vacations. When a family vacation must be scheduled during the school year, parents should discuss the matter with the principal to make necessary arrangements. It may be possible for the student to receive certain assignments that are to be completed during the trip.

We appreciate your partnership in your child's education.

Sincerely,

Dr. Teresa Brown  
Superintendent