

**ADMINISTRATIVE RULES FOR POLICY 506**

Regular, punctual attendance is one of the most critical habits pupils can develop, for success in school as well as in future employment are strongly related to punctuality and regular attendance. Absences of pupils from classroom learning experiences disrupt the instructional process and the benefit of classroom instruction cannot be entirely regained. Consequently, absent pupils frequently experience great difficulty in achieving the maximum benefits of school. The process of education requires a continuity of instruction, classroom participation, learning experiences, and study to attain maximum educational benefits for each individual. Interaction of pupils with one another in the classroom and their participation in well-planned instructional activity under the direction of competent teachers are vital to this purpose. Therefore, it is critical that absences and tardiness be kept to minimum, for schools cannot successfully teach pupils who are not present and employers are reluctant to hire or retain employees with poor attendance patterns.

- A. Excused Absence: A child may be excused from school for a physical or mental condition that is certified in writing by a proper certifying agent. However, all absences must be explained in writing by the parents or guardian in advance or at the time the student returns to school. Reasons for excused absences in this district are:
1. Illness, hospitalization, or medical care (evidence of doctor's care may be required);
  2. medical, eye, or dental appointments (proof may be required);
  3. death or serious illness in the immediate family;
  4. approved school activities during class time;
  5. absence resulting from parent's request for their child(ren) to participate in a family vacation, with the request submitted and approved in advance (see rule B);
  6. Absences resulting from confidential problems or emergency situations, with the request submitted and approved in advance (see rule B); and
  7. varsity team members attending state tournament in the sport in which they participated, with request submitted and approved in advance (see rule B).

Exceptions: Parents have the right to petition the building principal to recognize absences not covered in the above list. The principal, at his/her discretion, may grant such petition if he/she determines that it established exceptional and worthwhile circumstances meriting classification as an excused absence.

- B. Advance Permission for Absence: Advance absence forms may be obtained in the main office of each school. These are to be signed by the student's parent (or guardian) and teacher(s) and returned to the office for administrative approval in advance, unless circumstances render advance notification impossible.
- C. Guidelines for Makeup Work: It is recognized that absences will occur, but to reduce the negative effect it is the student's responsibility to seek and make up, within the established time limits, all work missed during the absence. Building principals shall determine if absences are excused, unexcused or truancy.
- I. At elementary and junior high schools

- a. Excused Absences: (as defined in section A, #1-7 of this policy). Students who have excused absences will receive one day more than they were absent to complete their missing work (e.g., an absence of two days means three days to complete all makeup work). Tests are the exception to this; they are to be arranged with the teacher as soon as possible.

For absences due to suspension or assignment to a supervised, directed study program, full credit shall be received for work completed while assigned to such a program and students shall be permitted to take any tests missed during that time.

- b. Unexcused Absence and Truancy: (absences for reasons other than those defined in Section A, #1-7, of this policy)
1. For unexcused absences, students have one day to make up all work. Makeup work completed on time shall be recorded as earned. Tests are the exception to this; they are to be arranged with the teachers as soon as possible.
  2. For truancy, all makeup work is due on the day the student returns. Tests are the exception to this; they are to be arranged with the teacher as soon as possible. However, students truant during a test shall receive only 70% of their score on the test as their grade

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- II. At the senior high school:
  - a. It is the responsibility of the student to get all make-up work from the teacher following an absence. In general, students should complete missing work as soon as possible. When an incomplete is given at the time grades are submitted, the student has two weeks from the end of the term to turn in missing assignments, quizzes and tests. After two weeks, the final grade will be recorded.
  - b. For absences due to suspension or assignment to ALAC, full credit shall be received for work completed while assigned to such a program and students shall be permitted to take any tests missed during that time.
  
- D. Consequences of absences, unexcused absences, truancies, and tardiness:
  - 1. At the discretion of principals and teachers, unexcused absence and truancy may result in detention time, suspension, and/or assignment to a supervised, directed study program.
  - 2. Group truancy may result in doubled detention time, to be served at a time and date established by the building administrator, as well as the penalties from #D1, above, (for students in all grades).
  - 3. Tardiness disrupts both the orderly progress of the class and the daily progress of the tardy student. Therefore, tardiness may result in detention time, suspension, and/or assignment to a supervised, directed study program.
  - 4. Parents or guardians will be notified of attendance related problems which incur any consequences beyond detentions.
  
- E. Program modifications and withdrawal from school: Eligible students may have their programs modified or be excused from attendance in accordance with Wisconsin statutes. Students excused from school attendance under this rule may be readmitted only at the start of any subsequent semester.

### ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES FOR SECTION 506

- A. Student Attendance Officer
  - 1. The principal or his/her designee will serve as the school attendance officer for each school in the district and deal with all matters relating to school attendance and truancy.
  - 2. Each school shall determine daily which students enrolled in the school are absent from school and whether that absence is excused in accordance with Board policy and established procedures.
  - 3. The school attendance officer, or designee, shall notify the parent or guardian of a child who has been truant of the child's truancy and direct the parent or guardian to return the child to school no later than on the next day on which the school is in session or to provide an excuse. The notice under this paragraph must be given before the end of the second day after receiving a report of an unexcused absence and may be made by personal service, mail or telephone call on which a written record is kept. "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 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.
  - 4. The school attendance officer shall notify the parent or guardian of a student who is a habitual truant in accordance with procedures outlined in the section titled Procedure Toward Legal Referral. "Habitual truant" means a student who is absent from school without an acceptable excuse for either of the following:
    - a. Part of all or five or more days out of ten consecutive days on which school is held during a school semester.
    - b. Part or all of ten or more days on which school is held during a school semester.
  - 5. The district administrator, in cooperation with each school attendance officer, will visit any place of employment in the school district to ascertain whether any minors are employed there contrary to state law. The district administrator will provide the State Superintendent of Public Instruction with information regarding the attendance of any child between the ages of six (6) and eighteen (18) years who is a resident of the school district or who claims or is claimed to be in attendance at a private school or home-based private educational program located in the district.
  - 6. The school attendance officer may contact home-based private educational programs to attempt to discover whether such programs meet the program criteria established by law. All such contacts shall be documented.

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7. The school attendance officer shall furnish student attendance information to the county welfare agency as requested for implementation of Wisconsin's Learnfare Program. Student attendance information shall only be released if appropriate "release of confidentiality" forms have been filed with the district in accordance with provisions of state law and the district's student records policy.

### B. Student Absences and Excuses

1. The responsibility for regular school attendance of a student rests upon the student's parent(s) or guardian(s).
2. All excused absences require parent/guardian/legal custodian written verification, which is to be submitted to the school attendance officer, or designee, in advance of the absence or prior to re-admittance to school.

## ATTENDANCE RESPONSIBILITIES UNDER SECTION 506

### A. Parent/Guardian Responsibility

1. When a student is absent, his/her parent(s) or guardian shall contact the school during the day by the time established at each school. Failure to contact the school may result in a telephone call to the home or work place of the parent or guardian.
2. Parents or guardians are required to provide a written explanation of absences at the time the student returns to school, or in the case of anticipated absences, prior to the absence. Anticipated absences shall receive prior approval of the school attendance officer, or designee.

### B. Student Responsibility

1. Students are required to attend all of their scheduled classes, study halls and lunch periods, unless they have obtained parental permission and are excused by the student attendance officer, or designee.
2. Students should always check in and out at the school building office when they leave and return to school.

### C. Teacher Responsibility

1. Teachers are required to emphasize the importance and necessity of good attendance. Classroom procedures and grading requirements will be developed which reflect the importance of daily assignments, classroom discussion and examinations in grading students.
2. Teachers are required by law to take daily attendance (period by period) in their classes and maintain a record of absences.

### D. Principal Responsibility

1. Principals shall request from each teacher the procedures used for grading students. All grading systems throughout the school district should reflect the importance of daily assignments and classroom discussion in grading students.
2. Principals shall maintain office records for all excused and unexcused absences that occur in their school building.

### E. District Administrator Responsibility

1. The district administrator shall present high school equivalency program proposals, high school graduation program proposals, and student withdrawal requests to the School Board.

### F. School District Responsibility

1. The school district has a responsibility to stress, on a routine basis, the importance of regular school attendance to students, parents, employers and the community.
2. The school district shall promote activities within the school that enhance attendance. This will be done by:
  - a. Displaying the attendance policy, state compulsory attendance law, and county ordinances within each classroom.
  - b. Recognizing students for good attendance.
  - c. Reviewing the truancy plan and procedures during faculty inservice and student assemblies or homerooms at the beginning of the year.
3. The school district shall promote activities that increase the community awareness of school attendance issues and regulations. This will be done by:
  - a. Annually publishing the district's attendance policy and state attendance law in the local

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newspaper prior to the start of the school year.

- b. Providing speaking opportunities for local service club programs and public service radio programming.
- c. Encouraging employers to establish work schedules which reduce interference with school attendance and schedule detentions.

### TIMELINES FOR SCHOOL DISTRICT ACTION UNDER SECTION 506

- A. After each occurrence of truancy, personal contact in the form of a phone call or letter will be made with the student's parent(s)/guardian(s) in compliance with Wisconsin Statute 118.16. Upon the student's return to school, he/she will meet with the school attendance officer to discuss the truancy and its consequences. Each student's counselor will be expected to actively intervene and counsel the student.
- B. When a student has been truant often enough to be classified as a habitual truant, a letter will be sent to his/her parent(s)/guardian(s) to inform them of the situation; copies of the letter may be filed with Portage Police Department, the District Attorney, and the student's school file. The school may also file a written referral with Human Services, requesting legal action on the habitual truant.

### PROCEDURE TOWARD LEGAL REFERRAL UNDER SECTION 506

A legal referral may be initiated if a poor attendance pattern has continued and if the school attendance officer has completed the following:

- A. Met with the student's parent(s) or guardian to discuss the student's truancy, or has attempted to meet with the student's parent or guardian and has been refused.
  1. The school attendance officer should be specific when scheduling a meeting with the student's parent or guardian. For example, a specific date, time and place should be identified in this letter.
  2. Flexibility should be allowed in changing the meeting time if the student's parent or guardian is unable to attend at the specified time due to work or another commitment. This should be done early in the process so that another meeting time can be set without circumventing and lengthening the process.
- B. Provided an opportunity for educational counseling to the student to determine whether a change in the student's curriculum would resolve the student's truancy, and has considered curriculum modifications.
  1. The school attendance officer should specifically review the compulsory school attendance and truancy laws regarding curriculum modification options.
  2. Educational counseling may be done by regular counselors, principals, teachers, etc. A multi disciplinary team (M-Team) evaluation is not required unless there is a suspected exceptional educational need (EEN).
  3. The educational placement of the student should be reviewed in the school year of the problem. A review conducted outside the school year (August to May) should not be used.
  4. Data previously acquired during the school year may be used to determine educational counseling in situations involving EEN students. It is not necessary to restaff an EEN student or rewrite his/her individual education plan (IEP). The IEP should be reviewed and adjusted if necessary. It is suggested that the school psychologist be the person who reviews the educational placement of EEN students, even though it is not mandatory. The reviewer must talk to the student, parent or guardian and the teachers if they will agree. If they do not, the refusal should be documented.
- C. Evaluated the student to determine whether learning problems may be a cause of the student's truancy and, if so, has taken appropriate action or made appropriate referrals.
  1. If there is a suspected EEN, a referral should be made to the M-team.
  2. The evaluation must include a review of the records; communication with the student, the student's teacher(s) and the student's parent(s) or guardian; and observation if appropriate.
  3. Learning problems should be looked at carefully for classic EEN, or lack thereof, as well as other types of contributing problems (e.g., physical).
- D. Conducted an evaluation to determine whether social problems may be a cause of the student's truancy and, if so, has taken appropriate action or made appropriate referrals.
  1. A "Social Problem Report" may be completed; or
  2. Assistance from Columbia County Human Services may be requested.

LEGAL REFERRAL UNDER SECTION 506

Each and every time a student has been truant often enough to be classified as a habitual truant, either or both of the following may be done:

- A. A copy of his/her attendance, accompanied by a copy of the letter sent to his/her parent will be delivered to the school's police liaison officer. The police liaison officer will write a citation for a city ordinance violation, issue it to the student, and give a copy to the student's parents, either in person or via the U.S. Postal Service. The school police liaison officer will exercise his/her discretion in making referrals to Human Services.
- B. Human Services will be provided with a copy of the student's attendance and a copy of the letter given to the parents to document the habitual truancy. Human Services referral forms will also be submitted, as required.

RETURN OF A TRUANT STUDENT TO SCHOOL UNDER SECTION 506

- A. When a truant student returns or is returned to school, school personnel should immediately welcome him/her back. All truants, whether occasional or habitual, need attention. The degree of attention may vary, however, depending upon the age of the student and the pattern of truancy.
- B. Additional responses to be made by school personnel regarding truant students returning to school may include, but are not necessarily limited to , the following:
  - assessment of factors contributing to truancy;
  - discussion of alternative educational options and limitations;
  - referral considerations;
  - development of a plan for consequences to truancy;
  - counseling guided reentry to classes/programs;
  - tailor-made options for programming student to Madison Area Technical College;
  - high school exploratory classes at Madison Area Technical College;
  - structured work experience programs;
  - discussion of student's commitment and responsibility to assist in returning to regular programming;
  - follow-up on obligations of students and parents/guardians regarding attendance (commitment to joint cooperation);
  - promotion of staff awareness of the problem(s) the student is encountering; and review of requirements necessary for students 17 years of age or older to earn a general equivalency or high school equivalency diploma.

STUDENT WITHDRAWAL FROM SCHOOL UNDER SECTION 506

- A. A student who has reached the age of 16 may be excused from school if the student and his/her parent or guardian agree, in writing, that the student will participate in a program or curriculum modification leading to the student's graduation. Program or curriculum modifications include the following:
  1. Attendance at a vocational, technical or adult education school in lieu of high school or on a part-time basis;
  2. Modifications within the student's current academic program;
  3. A school/work training or work program;
  4. Enrollment in any alternative public school or program located in the school district which complies with federal nondiscrimination requirement (Title VI of Civil Rights Act);
  5. Homebound study, including nonsectarian correspondence courses or other courses of study approved by the Board of nonsectarian tutoring provided by the school district; or
  6. Enrollment in any public educational program outside the school district.
- B. A student who is 17 years of age or over may be excused from school if the student and his/her parent or guardian agree, in writing, that the student will participate in a program or curriculum modification leading to the student's high school graduation or leading to a high school equivalency diploma (program or curriculum modifications include those identified in sect A, part 2 above).

C. Program Modification

1. Prior to withdrawal from school, the student attendance officer will discuss the program or curriculum modification options with the student and his/her parent or guardian
2. The student attendance officer will inform the district administrator, in writing, of the program or curriculum modification(s), if any, leading to high school graduation or a high school equivalency diploma tentatively agreed upon by the student and his/her parent or guardian.
3. The district administrator will report the request and high school equivalency or high school graduation program proposal, if any, to the School Board.
4. If the student is under 18, a written agreement must be signed by the student and his/her parent or guardian, the Board and a representative of the high school equivalency program or program leading to the student' s high school graduation. This agreement must be signed prior to the student's admission to such program.
  - a. At least once each semester, the school attendance officer will review compliance with each student's agreement. If it is determined that a student is not complying with the agreement, the student and his/her parent or guardian and the high school equivalency program or program leading to high school graduation will be notified that the agreement may be modified or suspended in thirty (30) days.
  - b. After agreement is suspended, the student will be expected to attend school on a regular basis in accordance with state law, Board policy and established procedures. Failure to attend school will result in referral for truancy in accordance with established county ordinances.

OPEN ENROLLMENT PROGRAM UNDER SECTION 506

Pursuant to 2009 Wisconsin Act 304 AN ACT **to amend** 118.51 (9); and **to create** 118.51 (1) (am), 118.51 (5) (a) 3. and 118.51 (11) of the statutes; **relating to:** pupils attending a school district under the Open Enrollment Program who are habitually truant.

- A Beginning with the 2010-2011 school year if a nonresident school board determines that a pupil attending the nonresident school district under this section is habitually truant from the nonresident school district under this section during either semester in the current school year, the nonresident school board may prohibit the pupil from attending the nonresident school district under this section in the succeeding semester or school year.

GUIDELINES FOR ATTENDANCE AREAS/IN DISTRICT TRANSFER UNDER SECTION 506

- A. Please refer to policy 602.

Adopted - August 1980  
Revised - August 1981, 1982, 1984, 1987, 1989  
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Revised - January 4, 2000  
Revised - August 9, 2010