

ROE8 Regional Alternative Program Attendance and Truancy Policy

Attendance

Illinois law requires that whoever has custody or control of any child between six (by September 15¹) and seventeen years of age shall assure that the child attends school in the district in which he or she resides, during the entire time school is in session (unless the child has already graduated from high school). Illinois law also requires that whoever has custody or control of a child who is enrolled in the school, regardless of the child's age, shall assure that the child attends school during the entire time school is in session.

There are certain exceptions to the attendance requirement for children who: attend private school, are physically or mentally unable to attend school (including a pregnant student suffering medical complications as certified by her physician), are lawfully and necessarily employed, are between the ages of 12 and 14 while in confirmation classes, have a religious reason requiring absence, or are 16 or older and employed and enrolled in a graduation incentive program.

Cross-reference:

PRESS 7:70, *Attendance and Truancy*

Student Absences

Subject to specific requirements in State Law, the following children are not required to attend public school:

(1) any child attending a private school (including a home school) or parochial school, (2) any child who is physically or mentally unable to attend school (including a pregnant student suffering medical complications as certified by her physician), (3) any child lawfully and necessarily employed, (4) any child over 12 and under 14 years of age while in confirmation classes, (5) any child absent because of religious reasons, including to observe a religious holiday, for religious instruction, or because his or her religion forbids secular activity on a particular day(s) or time of day, and (6) any child 16 years of age or older who is employed and is enrolled in a graduation incentives program.

For students who are required to attend school, there are two types of absences: excused and unexcused. Excused absences include: illness (including mental or behavioral health of the student), observance of a religious holiday, death in the immediate family, family emergency, situations beyond the control of the student as determined by the school board, circumstances that cause reasonable concern to the parent/guardian for the student's safety or health, attending a military honors funeral to sound TAPS, or other reason as approved by the program coordinator. Students eligible to vote are also excused for up to two hours to vote in a primary, special, or general election. Students are allowed 10 absences per semester with a parent contact made to the school. Parents must make contact with the school, by 9:00 a.m. or it will be considered unexcused. After 10 absences students must have a doctor's excuse or make arrangements with the office in case of bereavement for an excused day. After the 10th absence, the Truants' Alternative Program may be notified and involved with the student moving forward.

Additionally, a student will be excused for up to 5 days in cases where the student's parent/guardian is an active duty member of the uniformed services and has been called to duty for, is on leave from, or has immediately returned from deployment to a combat zone or combat-support postings. The Board of Education, in its discretion, may excuse a student for additional days relative to such leave or deployment. A student and the student's parent/guardian are responsible for obtaining assignments from the student's teachers prior to any excused absences and for ensuring that such assignments are completed by the student prior to his or her return to school.

Students who are excused from school will be given a reasonable timeframe to makeup missed homework and classwork assignments.

All other absences are considered unexcused. Pre-arranged excused absences must be approved by the program coordinator.

The school may require documentation explaining the reason for the student's absence.

Diagnostic Procedures for Identifying Student Absences and Support Services to Truant or Chronically Truant Students

State law requires every school district to collect and review its chronic absence data and determine what systems of support and resources are needed to engage chronically absent students and their families to encourage the habit of daily attendance and promote success. This review must include an analysis of chronic absence data from each attendance center.

Furthermore, State law provides that school districts are encouraged to provide a system of support to students who are at risk of reaching or exceeding chronic absence levels with strategies and are also encouraged to make resources available to families such as those available through the State Board of Education's Family Engagement Framework to support and engage students and their families to encourage heightened school engagement and improved daily school attendance.

"Chronic absence" means absences that total 10% or more of school days of the most recent academic school year, including absences with and without valid cause, and out-of-school suspensions.

The School and District use the following diagnostic procedures for identifying the causes of unexcused student absences: Interviews with the student, his or her parent/guardian and any school officials who may have information about the reasons for the student's attendance problems.

Supportive services to truant or chronically truant students include: parent conferences, student counseling, family counseling, and information about existing community services.

Mental/ Behavioral Health Days

A student may be absent for mental or behavior health for up to five days. The mental health days are considered to be part of the 10 absences a student is allowed. The student will be given the opportunity to make up any missed school work. These absences will be considered excused absences. When a student takes a mental health day, upon return to school, the student may meet with a school guidance counselor or mental health provider.

Make-Up Work

If a student's absence is excused, he/she will be permitted to make up any missed work, including homework and tests. The student will be permitted the same number of days as he/she was absent to turn in the make-up work. The student is responsible for obtaining assignments from his/her teachers. Students who are unexcused from school will not be allowed to make up missed work and receive zeroes for the day.

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