

# Howard-Suamico School District

## Bylaws & Policies

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### **5200 - ATTENDANCE**

State law requires the District to enforce the regular attendance of students. Further, the Board recognizes that the District's educational program is predicated upon the presence of the student and requires continuity of instruction and classroom participation. The regular contact of students with one another in the classroom and their participation in a well-planned instructional activity under the tutelage of a competent teacher are vital to this purpose.

All children between six (6) and eighteen (18) years of age shall attend school regularly during the full period and hours, religious holidays excepted, that the school in which the child is enrolled is in session until the end of the term, quarter, or semester of the school year in which the child becomes eighteen (18) years of age, unless they fall under an exception under State law, this policy, or administrative guideline issued under this policy. A child who is enrolled in five (5) year-old kindergarten shall attend school regularly, religious holidays excepted, during the full period and hours that kindergarten is in session until the end of the school term.

#### **Written Excuse Required**

The Superintendent shall require, from the parent or guardian of each student or from an adult student, who has been absent for any reason a statement stating the reason for the absence and the time period covered by the absence. The District reserves the right to verify such statements and to investigate the cause of each absence.

#### **School Attendance Officer**

The Superintendent shall designate an administrator at each school to be the School Attendance Officer. The School Attendance Officer shall perform any duties and responsibilities s/he is required to perform by State law, this policy, and any administrative guidelines issued by the school. The duties of the School Attendance Officer shall include, but not be limited to, the following.

- A. Determining daily from attendance reports submitted by teachers which students enrolled in the school are absent from school and whether the absence is excused.
- B. Submitting to the Superintendent, on or before August 1st of each year, a report of the number of students enrolled in the school who were absent in the previous year and whether the absences were excused. The Superintendent shall then submit this information to the State Superintendent.
- C. Providing student attendance information to individuals and agencies for purposes authorized by State law and Administrative Policy [8330](#) - Student Records.

#### **Excused Absences**

As required under State law, a student shall be excused from school for the following reasons:

**A. Physical or Mental Condition**

The student is temporarily not in proper physical or mental condition to attend a school program.

**B. Obtaining Religious Instruction**

To enable the student to obtain religious instruction outside the school during the required school period (see Policy [5223](#) - Absences for Religious Instruction).

**C. Permission of Parent or Guardian**

The student has been excused by his/her parent or guardian before the absence for any or no reason. A student may not be excused for more than ten (10) days per school year under this paragraph and must complete any course work missed during the absence.

**D. Religious Holiday**

For observance of a religious holiday consistent with the student's creed or belief.

**E. Suspension or Expulsion**

The student has been suspended or expelled.

**F. Program or Curriculum Modification**

The District has excused the student from regular school attendance to participate in a program or curriculum modification leading to high school graduation or a high school equivalency diploma as provided by State law.

**G. High School Equivalency - Secured Facilities**

The District has excused a student from regular school attendance to participate in a program leading to a high school equivalency diploma in a secured correctional facility, a secured child caring institution, a secure detention facility, or a juvenile portion of a county jail, and the student and his/her parent or guardian agree that the student will continue to participate in such a program.

**H. Child at Risk**

The student is a "child at risk" as defined under State law and is participating in a program at a technical college on either a part-time or full-time basis leading to high school graduation, as provided under State law.

## **Unexcused Absences**

Unexcused absences demonstrate a deliberate disregard for the educational program and are considered a serious matter. The Superintendent shall develop administrative guidelines to address unexcused absences.

## **Truancy Plan**

The District will issue a Truancy Plan based upon the recommendations of the County Truancy Committee convened under State law, the District's policies and procedures, and applicable provisions of State law. The District will review and, if appropriate, revise the Truancy Plan at least once every two (2) years.

**The Truancy Plan will include, at a minimum, the following:**

- A. procedures to be followed for notifying the parents or guardians of the unexcused absences of a student who is truant or a habitual truant and for meeting and conferring with such parents or guardians
- B. plans and procedures for identifying truant children of all ages and returning them to school, including the identity of school personnel to whom a truant child shall be returned
- C. methods to increase and maintain public awareness of and involvement in responding to truancy within the school district
- D. a provision addressing the immediate response to be made by school personnel when a truant child is returned to school
- E. the types of truancy cases to be referred to the District Attorney and the time periods within which the District Attorney will respond to and take action on the referrals
- F. plans and procedures to coordinate the responses to the problems of habitual truants, as defined under Sec. 118.16(1)(a), Wis. Stats., with public and private social services agencies
- G. methods to involve the truant child's parent or guardian in dealing with and solving the child's truancy problem

A student will be considered truant if s/he is absent part or all of one (1) or more days from school during which the School Attendance Officer, principal, or a teacher has not been notified of the legal cause of such absence by the parent or guardian of the absent student. A student who is absent intermittently for the purpose of defeating the intent of the Wisconsin Compulsory Attendance Statute Sec. 118.15, Wis. Stats., will also be considered truant.

A student will be considered a habitual truant if s/he is absent from school without an acceptable excuse for part or all of five (5) or more days on which school is held during a school semester.

### **Notice of Truancy**

The School Attendance Officer shall notify a truant student's parent or guardian of the student's truancy and direct the parent or 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 absence. The notice under this paragraph shall be given before the end of the second school day after receiving a report of an unexcused absence. Notice shall be made by personal contact or telephone call, if possible, and a written record of this notice shall be kept. If such notice is not effective, notice shall be made by mail. This notice must be given every time a student is truant until the student becomes a habitual truant.

### **Notice of Habitual Truancy**

When a student initially becomes a habitual truant, the School Attendance Officer shall provide a notice to the student's parent or guardian, by registered or certified mail, which contains the following:

- A. a statement of the parent's or guardian's responsibility under State law to cause the student to attend school regularly
- B. a statement that the parent, guardian, or student may request program or curriculum modifications for the student under State law and that the student may be eligible for enrollment in a program for children at risk
- C. a request that the parent or guardian meet with the 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. The date for the meeting shall be within five (5) school days after the date that the notice is sent, except that with the consent of the student's parent or guardian the date for the meeting may be extended for an additional five (5) school days.

- D. a statement of the penalties, under State law or local ordinances that may be imposed on the parent or guardian if s/he fails to cause the child to attend school regularly as required by State law.

The School Attendance Officer will also continue to notify the parent or guardian of a habitual truant's subsequent unexcused absences.

### **Referral to the District Attorney**

Truancy cases will be referred to the District Attorney as provided in the County Truancy Committee Plan. The School Attendance or Municipal Court Officer will ensure that appropriate school personnel have done the following before any case is referred to the District Attorney:

- A. met with the student's parent or guardian to discuss the student's truancy or attempted to meet with the student's parent or guardian and received no response or were refused
- 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 have curriculum modifications under State law
- C. evaluated the student to determine whether learning problems may be a cause of the student's truancy and, if so, have taken steps to overcome the learning problems, except that the student need not be evaluated if tests administered to the student within the previous year indicate that the student is performing at his/her grade level
- D. conducted an evaluation to determine whether social problems may be a cause of the student's truancy and, if so, have taken appropriate action or made appropriate referrals

Note that paragraph A. is not required if the meeting between school personnel, the student, and the student's parent or guardian, which was requested in the Notice of Habitual Truancy to the parent or guardian, did not occur within ten (10) school days after the Notice was sent. Paragraphs B., C., and D. are not required if appropriate school personnel were unable to carry out the activity due to the student's absences from school.

115, 118.15, 118.125(2), 118.153, 118.16, 118.162, Wis. Stats.

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