

SCHOOL DISTRICT OF WAUZEKA-STEUBEN
COMPULSORY DISTRICT ATTENDANCE

State Stat. 118.16 (1)(a) has provided a legal definition of "habitual truant" as a "pupil" who 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." Subsequent Crawford County Ordinance 9.05 directs school boards and their agents to identify habitual truants and initiate legal procedures prescribed in the Statute and the Ordinance.

The School District of Wauzeka-Steuben staff and parents/legal guardians bear mutual responsibility for the accountability of minor children during an official school day.

The School District follows the Crawford County Truancy procedures for dealing with truancy in the District. This plan shall be reviewed at least once every two (2) years by the District, and if appropriate, revised according to State Statute 118.162. The Crawford County Truancy Task Force - organized by the Crawford County Truancy Officer, shall convene at least once every four (4) years according to Statute 118.162 (1). The plan includes: procedures to be followed for notifying the parent(s)/legal guardian(s) of unexcused absences of habitual truants, plans and procedures for identifying truant students of all ages and returning them to school, methods to increase and maintain public awareness of and involvement in responding to truancy within the District, types of truancy cases to be referred to the district attorney, the immediate responses to be made by District personnel when a truant student is returned to school, plans and procedures to coordinate the responses to the problems of habitual truants with public and private social service agencies, and methods to involve the truant student's parent(s)/legal guardian(s) in dealing with and solving the student's truancy problems. A student is considered to be "truant" if absent from school without an acceptable excuse for part or all of a single school day. According to statute, a student may be cited by law enforcement for truancy. The principal will determine whether or not to refer a student from 12 years of age until s/he reaches 18 years of age to the County Sheriff's Department for truancy. The administration shall notify parent(s)/legal guardian(s) as soon as practicable if a law enforcement agency has requested a copy of a student's attendance record for purposes of a truancy investigation.

According to State Statute 118.15 (3) (c), "any child excused in writing by his or her parent or guardian before the absence" is excused from school attendance. "The school board shall require a child excused under this paragraph to complete any course work missed during the absence. A child may not be excused for more than 10 days in a school year under this paragraph." The Board requires parent(s)/legal guardian(s) to state a specific reason for absence in the written excuse.

If a student is late in arriving to school during the first ten (10) minutes at the beginning of the school day the late arrival will be recorded as a Class 1 Tardy. After the first ten (10) minutes, the late arrival will be recorded as an unexcused absence without an acceptable reason, for a minimum of a half day.

If a student is late arriving to school after lunch, the first ten (10) minutes shall be recorded as a Class 1 Tardy. After ten (10) minutes, the late arrival after lunch will be recorded as an unexcused absence for a minimum of a half day. (Tardiness from class to class is classified as a Class 2 Tardy and will be dealt with by individual teachers and the District discipline plans.) Consequences may include after school detentions, suspensions, and citations.

In addition to the truancy law, tardiness is subject to the District discipline plan. A truancy citation may be issued for unexcused absences. All unexcused absences will affect co-curricular participation. The administration and

Dean of Students will develop guidelines, printed in student handbooks, assigning consequences for tardiness and unexcused absences.

The interpretation of illness and crisis, and the degree of verification are at the discretion of the District Attendance Officer, but must be within the guidelines of statute and Board policy. The Wauzeka-Steuben School District Attendance Policy includes the following elements:

1. In accordance with Wis. Stat. § 118.16(2)(cg) parent(s)/legal guardian(s) of minor students of compulsory attendance age/grade level (age 6-17, 18, or grade 1 to grade 12) who have accumulated five (5) or more unexcused absences in a semester, shall be notified by registered or certified mail or by 1st class mail, when the child initially becomes a habitual truant. The school attendance officer may simultaneously notify the parent or guardian of the habitually truant child by an electronic communication. The notice shall include all of the following:
 - a. A statement of the parent's or guardian's responsibility to cause the child to attend school regularly.
 - b. A statement that the parent, guardian, or child may request program or curriculum modifications for the child and that the child may be eligible for enrollment in a program for children at risk.
 - c. A request that the parent or guardian meet with appropriate school personnel to discuss the child's truancy.
 - i. 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.
 - ii. The date for the meeting shall be within 5 school days after the date that the notice is sent, except that with the consent of the child's parent or guardian the date for the meeting may be extended for an additional 5 school days.
 - iii. The meeting will address the possible need for curriculum modification, ability assessment, social adjustment, counseling, attention of the court, and reasons for absences.
 - d. A statement of the penalties that may be imposed on the parent or guardian if he or she fails to cause the child to attend school regularly as required.
2. The Board's definition of excusable absence is verified illness, family crisis, or medical appointments and is subject to the following guidelines:
 - a. Medical condition and illness must be verified by a telephone call or e-mail to the attendance clerk the morning of an absence, no later than 9:00 a.m. If the District has not received contact about a student's absence by 9:00 a.m., the District will contact a parent/legal guardian by 10:00 a.m. that day. Medical conditions and illness in excess of three (3) consecutive (partial or full) days may require written verification from a health care provider. This requirement shall be at the discretion of the administration and only if the absence is in question.
 - b. A child is allowed ten (10) excused absences. Any absences for which medical documentation is provided do not count towards the ten (10) excused absences. Any absence after ten (10) excused days will require medical documentation or will be considered unexcused. Parents/Legal guardians are encouraged to contact the attendance clerk prior to a nonemergency medical appointment.
 - c. A death or serious illness in the family may result in an excusable absence since a student might be incapable of attending to his/her scholastic duties. A request for funeral or serious illness in the family

leave must be presented in writing in advance (except in the case of emergency) to the principal or attendance clerk. If a student needs to be absent for a funeral or serious illness in the family, such absence(s) will be excused for a reasonable length of time. The principal may require verification if the absence is in question.

- d. Per Wis. Stat. § 118.16(1m), the period during which a pupil is absent from school due to a suspension or expulsion is neither an absence without an acceptable excuse for the purposes of determining habitual truancy nor an absence without legal cause for the purpose of determining truancy.
- e. Students must be in attendance the entire school day to participate in a contest(s) or event(s) scheduled for that day. Students may not have a Class 1 or Class 2 tardy (unexcused) for any class on a contest or event day. Students are allowed to keep medical and/or dental appointments, college visits, or attend funerals on a contest or event day. Written verification from the medical or dental office must be turned in to the attendance office before the student may participate. The appointment excuse is only for length of appointment and traveling time unless otherwise indicated. (*See Certificate of Appointment Form). Parent/Legal guardian excuses are not an excuse that allows a student to play. The Principal or Dean of Students may approve individual exceptions prior to a student's absence. It is not an approved exception for students to leave school to retrieve forgotten uniforms, equipment, or other items. If a student leaves school "ill" they are not allowed to return for practice that night.

*Note: the time = (T) (under ordinary circumstances) to be gone for any appointment should be no longer than: double the time it takes to drive there and back + the length of the appointment. **Example:** to PdC 20 miles = 25 minutes x 2 = 50 minutes (round trip) x 2 (double time) = 100 minutes + 45 minute appointment = **145 Minutes Excused***

- 3. Attendance expectations for students whose age/grade level is above or below compulsory attendance age:
 - a. Parents/Legal guardians of a student(s) younger than compulsory attendance age/grade level have an ethical obligation to send their children to school regularly and to follow notification procedures for absences if enrolled in early childhood, prekindergarten, or kindergarten programs.
 - b. Students who reach their 18th birthday no longer have a legal obligation to attend school but continue to have an obligation to obey school rules on attendance procedures, follow attendance procedures, and are responsible for any consequences and/or disciplinary actions (detentions) administered by the school.
 - c. Students of 18 years of age, as legal adults, must meet all criteria put forth by the school before one graduates, including disciplinary actions.
- 4. Summer School
 - a. Any student who attends summer school at any time will be added to the summer school attendance roster.
 - b. If a student is absent for more than five (5) consecutive school days s/he will be withdrawn from the class.

Legal References: Wisconsin Statutes Sections 118.15, 118.16, 118.162, 118.163, 118.18, 118.33(1)(b), 948.45

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