

WEST COUNTY HIGH SCHOOL ATTENDANCE POLICY 2016/2017

I. PHILOSOPHY OF ATTENDANCE

The West County R-IV School District believes that every individual should have the opportunity to develop his/her intellect to the limits of their capabilities. This development can best be fostered and achieved when the individual is in regular sustained attendance in school.

Research clearly indicates that students who attend school on a regular basis tend to complete their education and become successful citizens.

II. ABSENCE DEFINED

A student is considered absent when it is determined that they are not in attendance in one or more of their assigned class periods. A record of the students' attendance is maintained on a class hour basis and is entered into the students' attendance record file.

EXCUSED ABSENCES

The following absences from school will be automatically waived from the attendance policy providing proper documentation is presented to the school:

- Absence from school due to a death in the family.
- Absence created by family emergency. Students must have made prior arrangements with the principal, and verify with documentation.
- Absence created by required religious observations.
- Absence created by a school sanctioned activity.
- Absence created when a student has a doctor's excuse or cannot attend school upon the advice of a physician. All doctor's notes must state the dates to be excused.
- Absence created by taking the Missouri state drivers test. This will allow for one-half days of excused absence time.
- Absence created by a subpoena to appear in court.
- Absence created by a trip to visit a college or to take care of military business. Two (2) days of excused absences (maximum) for seniors only.
- Absences created due to a Special Condition. This is defined as absence due to a one time family situation per school year. The student may be excused with the following provisions:
 1. The school must be given 72 hours written notice.
 2. All assignments must be turned in the day the student returns to school.
 3. Assignments not turned in the day the student returns to school will receive a score of "0".
 4. Special Conditions must be a minimum of (2) days, maximum of (5) days.
 5. Special Conditions Absences will not be granted if the student is in violation of the 35 hours of general absence policy and has been placed on attendance probation.

IN ALL CASES CONCERNING EXCUSED ABSENCES DOCUMENTATION ON MISSED DAYS MUST BE PRESENTED TO THE OFFICE NO LATER THAN TWO (2) SCHOOL DAYS AFTER THE DATES IN QUESTION.

DISCIPLINARY ABSENCES

Disciplinary absences will not count against the attendance policy unless the student has refused some other type of disciplinary action and requested out-of-school (OSS) suspension. Students will not, under any circumstances, be allowed to make up work missed while serving their OSS suspension or determined truant from school.

GENERAL ABSENCES

A general absence is defined as any absence that does not fall in the category of excused absences and the parent/guardian followed proper procedures in contacting the school concerning the student's absence. The student is allowed to make up missed work under this type of absence. This absence does however, count toward the attendance policy in regards to absences.

Parents/Guardians are required to call in between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 10:00 a.m. on the day their child is out of school to confirm the absence. Parents who do not have a phone or who leave for work early in the morning may send a note, provided a signature card is on file in the office. The signature card must be completed at the beginning of each new school year. It is the responsibility of the parent to see that the signature card is completed. If a student brings a note and does not have signature card or the parent does not call, it will be considered an unexcused absence.

UNEXCUSED ABSENCES

Unexcused absences fall into the following two categories:

- Absence wherein parent/guardian did not follow proper procedures in contacting the school.
- Absence due to disciplinary reasons.

Missed work cannot be made up in the case of unexcused absences.

It is important to note that both unexcused and general absences count toward the possible violation of the attendance policy by the student.

The following steps will be taken by the school district in the handling of unexcused/general absences:

-----When a student reaches 21 school hours of unexcused/general absences (the equivalent of three school days) in a semester, a letter will be sent to the parents informing them of their child's status and what events will take place in the event that the child would continue to have attendance problems.

-----When a student reaches 28 school hours of unexcused/general absences (the equivalent of five school days) in a semester, a letter will be sent to the parents informing them of their child's attendance status and a mandatory principal and student/parent conference must be held within five school days. This conference may be conducted over the phone. Phone conferences will be documented by a letter sent to the parent including the date of the conference and a summary of the conference. The purpose of this conference is to determine methods by which the parent/guardian and the school may cooperate in assisting the student to achieve maximum attendance during the remaining portion of the semester.

-----When documentation is such that it is determined that a student has missed more than 35 hours (the equivalent of five school days) of unexcused/general absences in a semester, a letter will be mailed to the parent/guardian informing them that the student is in violation of the attendance policy and thus suspended from school.

III. EXCESSIVE ABSENCES IN A SINGLE CLASS PERIOD

It is important that students attend each class period throughout the school day to ensure their success in that subject. Each time a student misses a class it takes away from their ability to obtain success in that class.

The following policy has been adopted to help ensure that a student's attendance will not be a detriment to their success in a particular class:

- When a student is absent for three (3) class periods in a single class, a letter will be sent to the parents informing the parent of their child's absences in that class.
- When a student is absent for five (5) class periods in a single class a mandatory conference will be held with the parents. The same rules will apply to this conference that applies to a conference of a student who is in violation of the attendance policy.

-----When a student is absent for more than six (6) class periods in a single class the student will be assigned to two (2) days of ISS for each class period in excess of the maximum six (6) absences allowed per class per semester.

This policy is for unexcused absences only and the appeals process is the same as for students that are in violation of the attendance policy.

IV. VIOLATION OF THE ATTENDANCE POLICY

When a student is in violation of the attendance policy the following action will be taken:

DUE PROCESS

1. As stated above, after it is determined that the student has missed 36 hours (the equivalent of 5 days plus one hour) of unexcused/general hours of school, a letter will be mailed to the parent/guardian that the student is in violation of the attendance policy and thus suspended from school. The suspension will be in the form of a recommendation to the superintendent and the board of education. They will have the final authority in such matters, if the suspension is longer than ninety school days.

2. The principal will inform the parent/guardian of the date, time, and location of a hearing before the attendance appeals committee. The committee will be made up of one administrator, the school counselor, and one high school teacher. It is at this time that the parent/guardian will be responsible to show just cause why the student should not be suspended from school for violating the attendance policy. Failure on the part of the parent/guardian to appear for the hearing will be construed as acceptance of the decision to suspend.

3. If the parent/guardian is not in agreement with the recommendation of the attendance appeals committee, they may appeal the decision to the superintendent. Once the parent has contacted the superintendent to appeal the committee decision the superintendent will set the date, time, and location of the conference with him. Failure on the part of the parent/guardian to appear will be construed as acceptance of the committee's decision.

4. If the parent is not in agreement with the Superintendent's recommendation the West St. Francois County Board of Education would be the final step in the appeals process. A parent would contact the Superintendent who would inform the parent of their rights in appealing the decision to the Board.

5. If following all appeals the student is considered in violation of the attendance policy, the following action can be taken:

A. If the student is less than 17 years of age, he/she will be assigned two days of ISS for each absence exceeding 35 hours (equivalent of five school days) for the semester. All suspensions to ISS shall count toward the maximum number of days allowed in ISS for the school year as per the discipline code. The proper agencies and authorities will also be called by the principal to allow them to determine if everything is being done to ensure the student's attendance.

B. If the student is 17 years of age or older, he/she may be suspended for the rest of the semester.

C. If the student is assigned to ISS as a result of his/her violation of the attendance policy and fails to attend ISS, he/she may be suspended for the remainder of the semester.

D. Assignment to the alternative school may be used in lieu of out-of-school Suspension (OSS).

V. STUDENT ATTENDANCE DURING APPEALS PROCESS

Students that are in the process of appealing the decision regarding their violation of the attendance policy may be permitted to attend school until such time as the appeal process has been fully completed. Exception to this may be made if it is determined that the students presence poses a continuing danger to person or property.

VI. LEAVING DURING THE SCHOOL DAY

When it becomes necessary that a student leave the school premises after having arrived at

school, it is the student's responsibility to do the following.

1. Report to the building principal's office and obtain permission from school personnel in that office prior to leaving school premises. In the case of accident or injury the school nurse shall have authority to grant permission. Students will only be released upon communication with a parent / guardian.

VII. TRUANCY

Truancy is defined as:

1. Leaving school without following proper check-out procedures.
2. Absence from school without parent permission.
3. Absent from class without permission but remaining on campus.
4. Students who ride the bus or walk to school in the morning and leave school property.

Example—Riding the bus to school and then leaving campus to cross the street is considered an act of truancy.

This would also apply to students leaving school premises after school and then coming back on the school grounds to ride a bus.

5. Students that drive to school and then without approval leave school property.

Truancy as defined above will be dealt with by the principal according to the discipline code and also will count toward maximum days students' may miss per semester.

VIII. MAKE-UP WORK ASSIGNMENTS

Research indicates that students learn most through practice and repetition. The amount of time spent on a task is directly related to the learning that takes place. For this reason, homework should be assigned nightly, in all subjects where homework is appropriate.

Students who leave early for vacations, etc., will take the grade earned at the time of their departure, minus any work missed unless covered by the one time exception as stated above.

Students who are confirmed truant, suspended, or expelled from school will not be permitted to make up work for credit.

Students who have an excused absence from school will be permitted to make up their regular assignments on a day to day basis. Regular assignments are those normally due the next day or within the next few days. Advanced assignments are those which are assigned at least five (5) school days in advance. If a student is absent the period the advanced assignment is due, the assignment will be due at the time the student returns to school. It is clearly the student's responsibility to find out, from the teacher, what he/she missed when absent and make arrangements for turning work in to a teacher.

If a student has an excused absence and misses a major test, it may be made up on the day that the student returns to school, if the student so chooses, or the student may have additional time equal to the time he/she was excused absent from school to make up the test. Alternative forms of the test may be given. However, if a test date was designated by the teacher prior to the absence, and no preparatory work, class discussion, or lecture material was missed by the student, he/she will be expected to take the test on the day of return. Short, unannounced "pop" tests of fifteen (15) points or less may not be made up if the student is absent. If a student is absent for the quarter or semester exam in a course, permission to make up the exam must be secured from the building principal. In this case, absences will be checked very carefully and a doctor's excuse may be required before the student may make up the exam.

IX. ABSENCES ON DAYS OF SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

In accordance with the rules and regulations of the Missouri State High School Activities Association and the policies of the West County R-IV School District, a student who is absent from school any part of the day of a school sponsored activity, shall not be considered eligible to participate in the activity unless the absence is excused by the building principal, prior to the start of the activity. Absence on the day after a school sponsored activity will result in discipline to be determined by the sponsor/coach of that activity in question.

X. LATE TO CLASS OR SCHOOL

Students who arrive late to school in the morning will be sent to class and given a tardy. All late arrivals must report directly to the principal's office for an admit slip.

