

West St. Francois County

Middle School

2016-17

Attendance Policy

2016-17 ATTENDANCE POLICY

I. Philosophy of Attendance

In accordance with the belief that regular and sustained attendance in school is essential for the fullest possible development of a student's intellectual abilities, the attendance policy of the West County R-IV School District requires that a student be in attendance every day that school is in session, unless a situation arises which meets one of the five types of absences below.

The Administration and Board of Education realizes that situations arise during a semester, whereby it is necessary for a student to be absent from school. However, these absences must be kept to a minimum number.

II. Absence Defined

A student is considered absent when it is determined that he or she is not in attendance in one or more of his or her assigned class periods. A record of the student's attendance is maintained on a class's hourly basis and is entered into the student's 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 required religious observations.
- Absence created when a student has a doctor's note. All doctor's notes must state the dates to be excused and have a doctor's (or designee's) signature.
- Absence created by a subpoena to appear in court.
- Absence created due to a special condition. This is defined as absence due to a one-time family situation per year. The student may be excused with the following revisions:
 1. The school must be given 3 school days' notice.
 2. All assignments must be turned in on the day the student returns to school.
 3. Assignments not turned in the day the student returns to school will receive a score of zero.
 4. Special conditions must be a minimum of (2) days and maximum of (5) days.
 5. Special conditions absences will not be granted if the student is in violation of the 42 hours of general absence policy and has been placed on attendance probation.
 6. The student must be currently passing all core area subjects.

**IN ALL CASES CONCERNING EXCUSED ABSENCES,
DOCUMENTATION ON MISSED DAYS MUST BE PRESENTED TO
THE OFFICE UPON ARRIVAL.**

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 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.

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

Steps for general absences

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

Three Days of 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.

Five Days of Absences

When documentation is such that is determined that a student has missed more than 35 hours (the equivalent of five school days) of 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. The student may be enrolled in the Attendance Support Group offered by the school counselor. Students involved in the group must attend on a regular basis. In the group, students' attendance will be closely monitored. At the end of each quarter, those students who have an average of at least 95% attendance may be released from the group. The group is intended to offer students an opportunity to improve attendance before being referred to outside agencies.

Severe Absence

After being referred to the counselor, those students who continue to have excessive absences will be referred to the Division of Family Services, juvenile office, and/or the prosecuting attorney's office. If a student is absent from school for ten consecutive days, the school counselor will follow these procedures:

- Call or visit the student's home and/or neighbors, relatives, and friends to verify what has happened to the student.
- If they cannot get any information about where the student is, school personnel will call DFS and juvenile authorities and report concerns about the student.
- The student's records should show the student dropped as of the last day of attendance.
- If the student should return to the district, he or she should be enrolled just like any other student who wants to enroll.

Only in cases of severe illness or an emergency situation will assistance not be sought.

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 to 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/guardian 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 parent/guardian. 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.

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 37 hours (the equivalent of 5 days plus one hour) of general hours of school, a letter will be mailed to the parent/guardian that the student is in violation of the attendance policy.
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 the school counselor and principal. It is at this time that the parent/guardian will be responsible to show just cause why the student has violated 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 place the student in ISS.
3. If the parent/guardian is not in agreement with the recommendation of the attendance appeals committee, he or she may appeal the decision to the superintendent. Once the parent/guardian 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/guardian 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/guardian would contact the superintendent who would inform the parent/guardian of his or her rights in appealing the decision to the board.

5. If following all appeals, the student is considered in violation of the attendance policy and the following action can be taken:
 - 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 or school counselor to allow them to determine if everything is being done to ensure the student's attendance.
 - 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 receive OSS for that period of time.
 - Assignment to the alternative school may be used in lieu of out-of school suspension (OSS).

V. 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:

- Report to the building principal's office and obtain permission from the school personnel in that office prior to leaving school premises. In the case of accident, illness, or injury, the school nurse shall have authority to grant this permission.

VI. Truancy

Truancy is defined as the following:

1. absence from school without parental permission.
2. leaving school without following proper check-out procedures. (No student may leave campus after arriving at school without first checking out through the middle school office.)
3. absence from class without permission, but still remaining on campus.
4. excessive unjustifiable absences even with the consent of the parent/guardian.

Any student found to be truant will be punished by following the disciplinary policy. The student will not be allowed to make up assignments, homework, or tests if found to be truant.

VII. Tardy Policy

Tardies are disruptive to the learning process. Students will be recorded tardy to class if they fail to meet the guidelines established by their individual teachers. Upon receiving a fifth (5) tardy for the quarter, students will receive one (1) day of in-school suspension (ISS). Six (6) tardies for the quarter will receive two (2) days of ISS, and seven (7) tardies for the quarter will receive three (3) days of ISS. Students who are tardy to class more than seven (7) times in a quarter is a chronic offender and administration will determine consequences.

VIII. Make-Up Work Assignments

Research shows 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 vacation, etc., will take the grade earned at the time of their departure, minus any work 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 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 the teacher. Parents of students missing more than one day and wishing to pick up their students' assignments may do so after 1:00 p.m. in the office.

If a student has an excused absence and misses a major test, it will be made up on the day that the student returns to school, unless the student has missed more than one sequential day. In this case the teacher will schedule the makeup exam (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.

IX. Absences on the Day of School Activities

In accordance with the rules and regulations of the Missouri State Middle School Activities Association and the policies of the West County R-IV School District, a student who is absent **from school during any part of the day** shall not be considered eligible to participate in the school-sponsored 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 may 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 must report to the office and will be given a tardy (unless it is an excused absence).