

## EXCESSIVE ABSENTEEISM

Regular attendance by the students at school is essential for students to obtain the maximum opportunities from the education program. Parents and students alike are encouraged to ensure an absence from school is a necessary absence. Students shall attend school unless excused by the principal of their attendance center. This policy, developed in collaboration with the county attorney for the district's principal office location, is an attempt to address the problem of excessive absenteeism.

Excessive absenteeism is the failure to attend school for the minimum number of days established in the school calendar by the board, with or without a reasonable cause.

The superintendent shall designate an attendance officer. The attendance officer will investigate the report of any child who may be in violation of the state's compulsory attendance statutes.

Circumstances of Absences – Definitions. The circumstances for all absences from school will be identified as School or Not School Excused. Absences should be cleared through the Principal's office in advance whenever possible. All absences, except for illness and/or death in family, recognized religious observances, require advance approval.

- a. School Excused. Any of the following circumstances that lead to an absence will be identified as a *School Excused* absence, provided the required attendance procedures have been followed.
  - (1) Impossible or impracticable barriers outside the control of the parent or child prevent a student from attending school. The parent must provide the school with documentation to demonstrate the absence was beyond the control of the parent or child. This could include, but is not limited to documented illness, court, death of a family member, or suspension.
  - (2) Other absences as determined by the principal or the principal's designee.
- b. Not School Excused. Absences that are not school excused may result in a report to the county attorney and may be classified as follows:
  - (1) Parent acknowledged absences are those in which the parent communicated with the school in the prescribed manner that the child is absent and is the parent's responsibility for the extent of the school day. This includes, but is not limited to, non-documented illness, vacations, and medical appointments.
  - (2) Other absences are those in which the parent has not communicated a reason for the student's absence.

A student will not be allowed to enter class after an absence until an admit slip, based upon a written or verbal parental excuse, is issued by the Principal's office.

Two school days will be allowed to make up work for each day missed, with a maximum of 10 days allowed to make up work.

If any student has accumulated a total of five not school excused absences per quarter or the hourly equivalent of five absences, the school shall render all services in its power to compel the student's attendance. These services shall include the following:

A meeting or meetings between the school attendance officer, school social worker (or school principal or a member of the school administrative staff, if the school has no social worker), the student's parent/guardian and the student (if necessary) to solve the excessive absenteeism problem.

The result of the meeting or meetings shall be to develop a collaborative plan to reduce barriers identified to improve regular attendance. The plan shall consider, but is not limited to illness related to physical or behavioral health of the child which is contributing to excessive absenteeism.

If the parent/guardian refuses to participate in such meeting, the principal shall place documentation of such refusal in the child's attendance records.

Educational counseling to explore curriculum changes such as alternative educational programs to solve the excessive absenteeism problem.

Educational evaluation to assist in determining the specific condition(s) contributing to the excessive absenteeism problem, supplemented by specific efforts by the school to help remedy any condition diagnosed.

Investigation of the problem by a school social worker (or principal or administrative staff member) to identify conditions contributing to the excessive absenteeism problem. If services for the student and student's family are determined to be needed, the investigator shall meet with the parent/guardian and child to discuss any referral to appropriate agencies to remedy the conditions.

If the student is absent more than twenty days per year, or the hourly equivalent, the attendance officer shall file a report with the county attorney of the county in which such person resides.

Students are subject to disciplinary action for excessive absenteeism including suspension and expulsion. It shall be within the discretion of the principal to determine, in light of the circumstances, whether a student may make up work missed because of excessive absenteeism.

Disciplinary action for students receiving special education services will be assigned in accordance with the goals and objectives of the student's Individualized Education Program.

The superintendent shall report on a monthly basis to the Commissioner of Education as directed by the commissioner regarding the number of and reason for any long-term suspension, expulsion, or excessive absenteeism of a student; referral of a student to the office of the county attorney for excessive absenteeism; or contacting of law enforcement officials other than school resource officers by the district relative to a student enrolled in the district. The superintendent shall report annually to the Commissioner the required data for the number of students who have dropped out of school.

It shall be the responsibility of the superintendent to implement this policy. The implementation may include regulations indicating the disciplinary action to be taken for excessive absenteeism.

Legal Reference:     Neb. Statute 79-208 and 209  
                           NDE Rule 10.012.01B

Cross Reference:    411.03 Truancy Officer  
                           503     Student Attendance  
                           505     Student Discipline  
                           506     Student Activities  
                           507     Student Records

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