

ATTENDANCE

School Attendance Policy

It is imperative that students be in attendance each school day in order not to miss a significant portion of their education. Many important learning opportunities result from active participation in classroom and other school activities which cannot be replaced by individual study. Attendance is important in the development of a high quality work ethic which will be a significant factor in a student's success with future employers. One of the most important work habits that employers look for in hiring and promoting a worker is his/her dependability in coming to work every day and on time. This is a habit the School wants to help students develop as early as possible in their school careers.

ELEMENTARY

Excused Absences

Students may be excused from school for one or more of the following reasons and will be provided an opportunity to make-up missed school work and/or tests. The District accepts only the following as excusable reasons for absence from school. In the case of an absence, the parent shall contact the school office by telephone, email, or handwritten note (signed by parent) explaining the reason for the student absence. All parent requests to excuse student absences may be approved for one (1) or more of the following reasons or conditions:

A. Personal Illness

If there is a pattern of frequent absence for "illness", the parents will be required to provide a statement from a physician describing the health condition that is causing the frequent illness and the treatment that is being provided to rectify the condition. The principal may require a doctor's confirmation if s/he deems it advisable.

B. Illness in the Family

C. Quarantine of the Home

This is limited to the length of the quarantine as fixed by the proper health officials.

D. Death of a Relative

E. Observance of Religious Holidays

Any student shall be excused for the purpose of observing a religious holiday consistent with his/her creed or belief.

F. Absence During the School Day for Professional Appointments

Parents are encouraged to schedule medical, dental, legal, and other necessary appointments other than during the school day. Since this is not always possible, when a student is to be absent for part of the day:

- 1) The student **must** have a statement to that effect from his/her parents (*verbal or written*);
- 2) The student **must** bring a signed statement from the doctor, dentist, lawyer, counselor, etc. to the effect that s/he reported promptly for the appointment;
- 3) The student may report back to school immediately after his/her appointment if school is still in session.

Important Note: In the event that a student's absences become excessive or discrepancies arise with phone or email requests, the building principal may require that only written requests from a parent be considered to excuse absences.

Absences that do not accumulate against this guideline include: school-sponsored field trips.

Parents **must** provide a request (via phone, email or written explanation) to excuse their child's absence by no later than the start of school on the 2nd day after the absence. For safety reasons, parents are asked to please call the building and notify the office of absence. In the event that extended absences are foreseen, parents must notify the principal, the parent should arrange to discuss the matter before the absences occur so that arrangements can be made to assist the student in making up the missed school work.

Elementary-- Excessive Absence Policy

Excessive absence from school has a significant and negative impact on learning and achievement. Patterns of absenteeism will be monitored at both full and half day increments at the elementary level while the middle school will regularly review full and hourly absenteeism. Despite written excuses and explanations from the parent(s), frequent or excessive absenteeism is a concern that the school administrator has an obligation to address with parents.

- 1st letter will be sent home when a student has accumulated (8) absences during the course of any semester.
- 2nd letter will be sent home when a student has accumulated (11) absences during a given semester. A mandatory parent/guardian meeting will be scheduled. Parent/guardian will be required to provide medical documentation from a physician stating why the student has been absent from school if the student has been frequently ill.
- 3rd letter will be sent home when a student is absent (15) days in a school year. Parent/guardian will be notified that any further absences may result in a referral being filed with the Courts [at the discretion of the building administrator].
- When a student accumulates 20 or more absences in a school year the building administrator will file a referral with the Courts.

Unexcused Absences

Any student who is absent from school for all or any part of the day without a legitimate excuse shall be considered truant and the student and his/her parents shall be subject to the truancy laws of the State. Unexcused absences are in violation of State law, are regarded as truancy, and, are not acceptable. School officials have a legal obligation to take action when a student develops a pattern of unexcused absences.

Elementary - Unexcused absences

- 1st letter will be sent home and followed-up with a phone call when a student has accumulated three days of unexcused absences in a marking period.
- 2nd letter will be sent home, when a student has accumulated five or more days in a marking period. A follow-up phone call will be made to the parent regarding the requirement for medical documentation from a physician stating why the student has been absent from school if the student has been frequently ill.
- 3rd letter will be sent home when a student accumulates 10 unexcused absences. A mandatory parent/guardian meeting will be conducted to offer support of outside agencies. Parent/guardian will also be notified that any further absences may result in a referral being filed with the Courts.
- When a student accumulates more than 10 unexcused absences in a school year, the building administrator will contact the GISD Attendance Liaison Officer to arrange a school-based mediation that students and parents will be required to attend.

- Any additional unexcused absences beyond the scheduled school-based mediation will result in the building administrator filing a referral with the Courts. The accumulation of (15) or more unexcused will launch an immediate filing of a referral to the Courts.

Tardiness

Elementary Level

A student who is not in his/her classroom by 8:40 a.m. is considered tardy. Any student arriving late to school is to report to the school office before proceeding to class.

Frequent tardiness adversely impacts a student's education. For attendance purposes four (4) tardies will equal one (1) unexcused absence.

If a pattern of excessive tardiness develops, the school administrator will send a letter to the parent explaining the problem and inviting the parent to the school for a conference in an effort to remedy the situation. If the problem continues thereafter, the school administrator will consult with Genesee Intermediate School District School Attendance Officer, who will consider and advise whether the attendance problem should be referred to the Genesee County Family Court for further action.

Vacations During the School Year

Parents are encouraged not to take their child out of school for vacations. When a family vacation must be scheduled during the school year, the parents should discuss the matter with the principal and the student's teacher(s) to make necessary arrangements. It may be possible for the student to receive certain assignments that are to be completed during the trip.

Family vacations will be excused when they are accounted for by prior contact between the home and building administrator. The student needs to ask for a "Vacation Request Form" in the Student Office when requesting homework for a prearranged vacation.

- Arrangements for the absence must be made in advance of the student's leaving one (1) week prior to the starting date for the absence.
- The student will be required to see each of their teachers to make arrangements for making up the class work missed.
- A vacation that is not prearranged will result in an unexcused absence or absences.
- It should be acknowledged that such absences beyond five (5) days would be difficult to make up and may severely compromise the student's academic progress. **No more than ten (10) vacation days, (five) 5 days per semester, will be granted per school year.**