STUDENTS

Attendance and Truancy

Staff member shall interpret rules and regulations relating to student attendance.

Students in Macomb School District No. 185 are expected to adhere to all existing laws regarding school attendance.

Parents and guardians of Macomb School District No. 185 students are expected to adhere to all existing laws regarding their role in getting their children to school. Parents are expected to inform the school by 9:00 a.m. the day of the child’s absence. If three days pass and the absence is not cleared up, then the absence stays, the consequences remain, and the grades earned remain.

Teachers shall assist students in any way possible to maintain punctuality and excellent attendance. They shall inform parents of truant and tardy behavior.

Administrators shall assist students in any way possible to maintain punctuality and proper attendance and shall take appropriate legal action against truants and/or their parents.

Supportive services shall be provided to students who are truant. No punitive action against a truant will be taken prior to these services being offered. Any dropout whose age is 16 or greater, but less than 18 years of age, may apply to Macomb School District No. 185 for status as a truant, and Macomb School District No. 185 shall permit such person to participate in the District’s various programs and resources for truants.

Students in grades 7-12 arriving to a class after (10) minutes shall be considered truant for the time missed, and work distributed and completed while the student was not present will be graded as zero. Work distributed and completed while the student is present will be graded in the normal manner. Students in grades 7-12 who are truant the entire period will receive a zero for all work for the period. The zero shall be averaged with other grades received in that class for the semester.*

*Note: The zero (0) for a truancy is to count for no more than the work equal to a general day, or that specific day’s work. In no case should a general day’s work count for any more than 3% of the entire grading period’s work. An exception would be a specific day when a test or project was due. That zero would count for no more or less than that test or project’s share of the grading period grades.

Unexcused Absences

District #185 educational programs are built on the premise that regular attendance is vital to a student’s success in school. Regular school attendance is one of the most important habits that a student should develop. Research has shown that attendance and academic performance are closely related. Seeing that a student maintains regular attendance requires a cooperative effort by the student, parent(s)/legal guardian(s), and school personnel. A student who is frequently absent misses class instruction and discussion, even though written work is made up, and social interaction. Therefore, all students are expected to attend school regularly and to be on time for their classes in order to benefit fully from the instructional programs.

When students are unable to attend due to illness or emergency reasons, parents are to notify the school at the time of initial absence. Without this notification, upon student's return, the student's absence will be unexcused.

VALID CAUSES OF ABSENTEEISM (Grades 7-12)

1. Administrators may excuse students for up to 9 days annually (includes single periods).

College visits (juniors and seniors only), other "pre-arranged" absences, non-medically verified absences, etc., are included in the 9 days.
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Written notification will be mailed to parents after the 7th absence. Medical verification is then due on the 10th absence.

2. Situations not included within the 9 days are as follows:
   
   A. Medically verified absences
   B. Religious holidays
   C. Death in the immediate family

3. Exceptions must be approved by the building administrator(s).

Parental Notification of Unauthorized Absences

In grades kindergarten through eight prior to enrollment of a student, the District shall notify the parent, legal guardian, or person having legal custody of the child of his responsibility to authorize any absence and to notify the school in advance or at the time of any absence of the child. At the time of enrollment, the parent, legal guardian, or person having legal custody of the child shall provide at least one and not more than two telephone numbers to be used for the purpose of notification of the child's unauthorized absence. The numbers may be changed upon notification of the school.

If any student enrolled in grades kindergarten through eight is absent from school, and there is no record that the absence is for a valid cause, nor notification that the absence has been authorized by the parent, legal guardian, or other person having legal custody of the child, a District employee or other District designated agent shall make a reasonable effort to notify the parent, legal guardian, or person having legal custody of the child's absence from school within two hours after the first class in which the child is enrolled by telephoning the one or two numbers given the school.

The requirements of this policy shall have been met if notification of an absence has been attempted by telephoning the one or two numbers given the school by the parent, legal guardian, or other person having legal custody of a child, whether or not there is any answer at such telephone number or numbers.

Truancy

The District considers a student who is absent without valid cause for a school day or portion thereof, as defined in 5 ILCS 5/26-2a of the Illinois School Code, to be truant.

This District considers a student who is absent without valid cause for 5% or more of the previous 180 regular attendance days, as per Chapter 122, par. 26-2a of the Illinois School Code, to be a chronic or habitual truant.

This District, in keeping with Chapter 122, par. 26-2a of the Illinois School Code, considers a truant minor to be a chronic truant to whom the above resources and supportive services have been provided and have failed to result in the remediation of the chronic truancy, or have been offered and refused.

RESOURCES AND SUPPORTIVE SERVICES

The following resources and supportive services are available to students with attendance problems and their parents or guardians. District #185 encourages the use of supportive services to prevent or correct a truancy problem.

1. Conferences with school personnel
2. Counseling services of school counselors, social workers, and psychologists
3. Testing by school psychologists and special education personnel
4. Schedule or program changes
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5. Placement in alternative educational programs (if they exist)
6. Special education assessment
7. Referral to community agencies for appropriate services
8. Home visits

REFERRAL OF CHRONIC TRUANTS

After the District has exhausted all appropriate supportive services, the schools in this District will refer chronic truants to the Hancock-McDonough County Regional Office of Education #26 in accordance with current procedures established by the McDonough County Truant officer.

The School Board supports the principle that local school districts must have the responsibility for matters pertaining to student attendance. Further, the Board recognizes the following definitions:

**Truant** - A child subject to compulsory school attendance and who is absent without valid cause from such attendance for a school day or portion thereof.

**Valid cause** - A child may be absent from school because of illness, observance of a religious holiday, death in the immediate family, family emergency, situations beyond the control of the student as determined by the Building Principal, or such other circumstances that cause reasonable concern to the parent/guardian for the student’s safety or health.

**Chronic or habitual truant** - A child who is subject to compulsory school attendance and who is absent without valid cause from such attendance for five percent or more of the previous 180 regular attendance days.

**Truant minor** - A child to whom supportive services, including prevention, diagnostic, intervention and remedial services, alternative programs and other school and community resources have been provided and have failed to result in the cessation of chronic truancy or have been offered and refused.

Compulsory School Attendance

This policy applies to individuals who have custody or control of a child: (a) between the ages of six (on or before September 1) and 17 years (unless the child has graduated from high school) or (b) who is enrolled in any of grades, kindergarten through 12, in the public school regardless of age.

Subject to specific requirements in State law, the following children are not required to attend public school: (1) any child attending a private school (including home school) or parochial school, (2) any child who is physically or mentally unable to attend school (including a pregnant student suffering medical complications as certified by her physician), (3) any child lawfully and necessarily employed, (4) any child over 12 and under 14 years of age while in confirmation classes, (5) any child absent because his or her religion forbids secular activity on a particular day, and (6) any child 16 years of age or older who is employed and is enrolled in a graduation incentives program.

The Superintendent or designee shall develop diagnostic procedures for identifying the cause(s) of unexcused student absenteeism. The diagnostic procedures include but are not limited to, interviews with the student, his or her parent(s)/guardian(s), and any school officials (s) or other people who may have information.

The following supportive services may be offered to a student who is experiencing an attendance problem:

parent-teacher conferences
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- counseling services by social workers
- counseling services by psychologists
- psychological testing
- alternative educational programs
- alternative school placement
- community agency services

Any 16- or 17-year-old resident may, upon providing documentation of dropout status for the previous 6 months, participate in the District’s various programs and resources for truants. A request from an individual 19 years of age or older to re-enroll after having dropped out of school is handled according to provisions in 7:50, Students School Admissions and Student Transfers To and From Non-District Schools.

The Superintendent or designee will determine if a student is a truant, chronic or habitual truant, or a truant minor. If truancy continues after supportive services have been offered, the Superintendent or designee may request the resources of outside agencies, such as the juvenile officer of the local police department or the truant office of the appropriate Regional Office of Education.

In accordance with The School Code of Illinois, no punitive action, including out-of-school suspensions, expulsions, or court action shall be taken against a truant minor for his or her truancy unless available supportive services and other school resources have been provided to the student.

Student Employment

The Superintendent shall develop procedures for excusing from attendance those students necessarily and lawfully employed.

LEGAL REF.: 105 ILCS 5/26-1 through 16.
705 ILCS 405/3-33.5
23 Ill.Admin.Code §§1.242 and 1.290

CROSS REF.: 6:110 (Programs for Students at risk of Academic Failure and/or Dropping Out of School and Graduation Incentives Program), 6:150 (Home and Hospital Instruction), 7:10 (Equal Educational Opportunities), 7:50 (School Admissions and Student Transfers To and from Non-District Schools), 7:60 (Residence), 7:80 (Release Time for Religious Instruction/Observance), 7:190 (Student Discipline), 7:340 (Student Records)