

Policy:

Subject: Detroit Public Schools Attendance Policy and Procedures

Supersedes: N/A

Effective: 2013-2014 School Year

Page: 1 of 9

Approved: April 15, 2013

1.0 Preamble and Purpose

The School District of the City of Detroit (the “District”) emphasizes the value of regular attendance in enabling students to benefit from its educational programs. Michigan law places responsibility on students to attend school and on parents or guardians to send their children to school on a daily basis. Regular and punctual attendance is very important to the student’s scholastic achievement and the student’s participation in class contributes to the education of others. Frequent absences and tardiness for any reason adversely affect the student’s schoolwork, diminish a student’s educational experiences and are disruptive to other students, classes, teachers and the entire school community.

This policy focuses on attendance requirements and procedures to be adopted by each school in verifying attendance.

2.0 Definitions

- A. Absent:** Student is not present in class or leaves class early without an excuse and/or consent.
- B. Compulsory Attendance:** Consistent and regular attendance as required by Section 1561 of the Michigan Revised School Code requires all children to attend school until the age of 16, with few exceptions. In addition, the law mandates that a student who turned age eleven on or after December 1, 2009, or who was age eleven before that date and entered grade 6 in 2009 or later, **must attend school until they are 18 years old unless they have earlier graduated or meet the exceptions allowed by Michigan law.** For purposes of illustration, students who are age 14 or under during

the 2012-2013 school year and those who enroll at any time after the 2012-2013 school year must attend school until they are 18 years of age unless they have earlier graduated or meet the exceptions allowed by Michigan law.

C. Educational Neglect: Parent/guardian does not ensure the legal requirement of regular school attendance until the student reaches the appropriate age.

D. Excused Absence: Parent/guardian has notified the school as to the reason and length of time the student will not be attending for the following reasons:

- Student illness
- Medical procedure or doctor/dentist appointment
- Bereavement (death in the immediate family)
- Religious holiday
- School related activities
- Educational opportunities including college visits approved and verified.
- Other situations beyond the control of the student, as determined by the principal¹

Parents/guardians are required to call the school and report the absence of their child within 24 hours of the absence. If not reported by phone within 24 hours of the absence, the parent/guardian must provide written notice not later than 3 days after the child's return to school.

E. Tardy: Student arrives in class after the specified start time without an excuse and/or a pass. Three (3) instances of tardiness without an excuse of more than fifteen (15) minutes after the start of class shall be the equivalent of one unexcused absence.

F. Truancy: More than ten (10) unexcused absences during a school year. Truant students and parents of truant students are subject to prosecution by the Wayne County Prosecutor for Truancy (in the case of the student) and/or Educational Neglect.

¹ Parents may make a decision to remove students from classes. In such situations, where the student does not have a choice, the student will not be penalized for missing class. However, such absences may count as an unexcused absence for purposes of the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services [student attendance policy].

G. Parental Truancy: In the case of students under the age of 12 who have accumulated ten (10) unexcused absences during a school year, the parent shall be held responsible and is subject to prosecution by the Wayne County Prosecutor for Educational Neglect.

H. Unexcused Absence: Student is absent without notice by parent/guardian and the reason for the absences is not listed in the definition of “excused” reasons listed above.

I. McKinney-Vento (“MV”) Eligible Students: Students who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence. The term includes:

- Children and youth who are:
 - sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason (sometimes referred to as *doubled-up*);
 - living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to lack of alternative adequate accommodations;
 - living in emergency or transitional shelters;
 - abandoned in hospitals; or
 - awaiting foster care placement;

- Children and youth who have a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for, or ordinarily used as, a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings;

- Children and youth who are living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings; and

- Migratory children who qualify as homeless because they are living in circumstances described above.

3.0 Policy

It is the policy of the District that every student should be in school on time each day unless such tardy or absence is excused in accordance with this policy.

Except as otherwise noted herein, under no circumstances, should any DPS student have more than ten (10) unexcused absences per school year. Upon the occurrence of the tenth (10th) unexcused absence, or when all reasonable efforts to prevent truancy in accordance with Section 5 below have been exhausted, as determined by the circumstances of each individual case, the investigating Attendance Agent shall

complete and forward a Truant Net or Erase Truancy referral to the Attendance Department. The case will be processed and forwarded to the Wayne County Prosecutor's Office.

Grades K-5

Attendance for grades K-5 will be taken during record room or the first five minutes of homeroom class and tardiness will be noted. Students who are not present when attendance is taken but arrive at any time during the day will be marked tardy provided they have reported to the main office of the school building and receive consent to report to class. Students who arrive without consent to report to class will be marked absent for the remainder of the day.

Grades 6-12

Attendance for grades 6-12 will be taken at the beginning of every class and tardiness will be noted. Students in grades 6-12 will be marked absent for each and every class for which they are absent without excuse and consent to report to class.

4.0 Late Arrival, Early Departure and Departure for Illnesses Procedures

A. CHECK-IN PROCEDURES

Students arriving to school after the start of the school day are required to check in at the main office of the school building/facility with their parent/guardian and to obtain a pass in order to be admitted into class. If a student consistently arrives late for any reason during the school day, the student will face disciplinary action ranging from detention to suspension. Consequences may also include not receiving credit for work assigned, done, or due during the time the student was absent from class. Based on the frequency, the student and/or parent will be referred to Truant Net or Erase Truancy as appropriate.

B. CHECK-OUT PROCEDURES

1. When it becomes necessary for a student to leave the school property during the school day, the student is required to “check out” at the main office of the school building/facility. If a student leaves school property without permission at any time for any reason during the school day, the student will face disciplinary action ranging from detention to suspension. Consequences may also include not receiving credit for work assigned, done, or due during the time the student was absent from class. Based on the

frequency, the student and/or parent will be referred to Truant Net or Erase Truancy as appropriate.

2. For students in grades K-8, parents/guardians are required to come into the appropriate school office to check out their student. (Parents should arrive at least ten minutes before they need to leave the school to allow the student to be called from class and go to their locker.) NO EXCEPTIONS SHOULD BE MADE AT THE SCHOOL LEVEL.
3. Three (3) early departures without an excuse (as defined in Section 2.0(D) above) of more than fifteen (15) minutes prior to the end of the school day shall be the equivalent of one unexcused absence.

C. **ILLNESSES**

If a student becomes ill at school, the student should report to the main office or the nurses' office at school. If necessary, the student will be excused to go home after the school has received instructions from the parent or an authorized person named on the student's emergency contact form.

5.0 **McKinney Vento Eligible Students**

If a student is identified and verified as MV eligible by the DPS MV Liaison and that student does not receive transportation assistance, then prior to any punitive action, the legitimacy of their absences should be first verified by the School Principal and forwarded to the MV Liaison, or designee, on a case by case basis. If it is determined that the attendance infractions or absences are not excused or not related to a MV situation, then the student is subject to the provisions outlined in this Attendance Policy.

In cases in which the MV Liaison finds that the attendance infractions are related to a MV situation, then the MV liaison will contact the school principal and attendance office to establish a corrective action plan which may include transportation assistance. Students must follow the corrective action plan or be subject to the same guidelines/procedures outlined in this Attendance Policy.

MV identified students receiving transportation assistance.

If a student is identified and verified as MV eligible by the DPS MV liaison and the student receives transportation assistance the parent and student must adhere to the following:

1. If transportation is not needed on a school day, the parent/guardian is responsible for cancellation by calling the Detroit Public Schools Transportation

Department no later than one hour before the scheduled pick-up time. If no one answers, messages must be left on the voice mail.

2. The parent must also inform the student's school of the absence or late arrival that day.
3. Absence/No Show for Transportation: When a student is absent/no show, without notification to the school transportation department, ***transportation services will be suspended***. Services will not be resumed until the MV Liaison/designee has contacted the school district transportation department. This procedure will go into effect after two absences/no shows within a 5 day period. (***Continued unexcused absences will result in a suspension of transportation services and be subject to the guidelines of the DPS Attendance Policy.***)

If parents and students do not abide by the above outlined procedures and are consistently absent, DPS reserves the right to implement the disciplinary procedures outlined in this Attendance Policy.

6.0 Truancy Prevention Measures

In an effort to prevent truancy, the District will work collaboratively with state and local agencies. In this collaborative effort, the Department of Human Services (DHS) will work in tandem with DPS to identify truant students and to connect the family to resources that will remove barriers to attendance. If assessment by DHS determines issues that can be addressed by DPS, an individual plan of action will be developed for each student/family. If the student has acquired four to nine unexcused absences, the school principal and/or designee, and/or DHS will notify the assigned DPS Attendance Agent. The DPS Attendance Agent will conduct an investigation to address the attendance issue(s) for each student before a referral for school truancy or parental educational neglect is filed with the Wayne County Prosecutor's Office – Juvenile Division. The State of Michigan Department of Human Services (MDHS) shall also verify the attendance of any student whose family is the recipient of public assistance. MDHS Success Coaches shall be stationed in DPS pilot schools to provide services to families and to monitor student attendance for referrals as needed.

The final agency in this collaboration is the Wayne County Prosecutor's Office (WCPO). The WCPO will utilize various intervention tactics in an effort to resolve student's truancy behavior. This "preemptive-based" protocol acts as an aid to ensure each

responsible entity has directly engaged the student and their families to offer a broad range of supportive services, prior to the family being subjected to more punitive measures. All strategies will be conjoined in an effort and prevent the loss of necessary cash assistance; or having parents being issued a warrant for educational neglect.

The District is adopting a 3-6-9 approach to prevent truancy as follows:

3- Upon the occurrence of three (3) consecutive unexcused absences, or a pattern of unexplained absences, a phone call will be made by the homeroom or record room teacher to inquire as to why the student is absent. Simultaneously with the phone call home, a notification will also be sent to the school Attendance Agent on the MISTAR system.

6 – Upon the occurrence of a 6th unexcused absence in the school year, the student shall be referred to an Attendance Agent for intervention strategies.

9- Upon the occurrence of a 9th unexcused absence, the student/parent will be referred to Truancy Net (K-8) or Erase Truancy (HS), and/or the Wayne County Prosecutor’s Office for additional intervention.

Notwithstanding the 3-6-9 benchmarks for intervention, at any time after the 3rd unexcused absence until the occurrence of the 9th unexcused absence, the District may conduct an investigation to determine whether there are any barriers and issues that have prevented the student from attending school. The investigating DPS Attendance Agent will make a Home Visit, School Visit, Agency Visit, or Phone Call with the student and or parent/guardian. Face to face visits are the preferred method of contact. The investigating DPS Attendance Agent may also formulate a corrective action plan that addresses the needs of the family. The corrective action plan may include, but not limited to: family compliance with the corrective action plan; student returns to regular consistent daily attendance, and ongoing monitoring of the student’s attendance for three intervals of ten days each; and the case is considered successful, unless truancy reoccurs. If truancy reoccurs, then the case is referred to the Wayne County Prosecutor’s Office.

Erase Truancy and Truant Net Defined

Erase Truancy: The parent/guardian is held responsible for a student (age 6 to 16) not having consistent and regular school attendance. The parent is informed by the Assistant Prosecutor and Attendance Agent that if there is no improvement in the student’s

attendance within ten school days, a petition will be filed. The parent is informed of the District's intent to file a complaint with the court and then prosecute the parent for the child's truancy.

Truant Net: The student ((age 12 to 16) is scheduled for a hearing with the Assistant Prosecutor, Attendance Officer, and the parent/ guardian. A student age 12-16 years old is held responsible when their attendance is irregular and inconsistent with /District policy. All parties are informed of the District's intent to file a truancy petition against the student, if there is no improvement in the student's attendance within ten days.

7.0 Academic Penalties/Loss of Credit

K-8 students who accrue thirty (30) or more absences within the semester must attend mandatory summer school.

High School students should expect to lose academic credit in any course once they accrue thirty (30) or more absences within the semester. Both excused and unexcused absences will be counted in determining loss of credit. In the case of a senior, if a loss of credit jeopardizes the fulfillment of graduation requirements, a recommendation will be taken to the teacher for discussion and determination; the Principal will make the final decision.

8.0 Correction of Attendance Errors

A student who has reason to believe that their attendance has been marked incorrectly for a particular class should first work to resolve the matter with the appropriate teacher. Any concerns that cannot be resolved after talking with the teacher should be brought to the attention of the Principal in a timely manner and shall be reviewed the by Assistant Superintendent assigned to the school.

9.0 Verification for Commencement or Reinstatement of Public Assistance Benefits

The District shall work collaboratively with students and parents to verify enrollment and attendance with the MDHS for the commencement and/or reinstatement of public assistance benefits as follows:

1. The District shall verify school enrollment and attendance at application and redetermination beginning at age 6.

2. The District shall verify school enrollment and attendance at application, redetermination and at each birthday beginning at age 16.

3. The District shall verify school enrollment and attendance for minor parents at application, redetermination and at each birthday.

10.0 Distribution of the Policy

At the beginning of the school year, this policy will be distributed to the parents/guardians and students. Parents must return a signed acknowledgement stating that they have read and acknowledged the attendance policy. In addition, the policy, as the same may be amended from time to time, shall be posted on the District's website.