

# SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

## A shared responsibility

All children who reside within the boundaries of Kenosha Unified School District (city of Kenosha, village of Pleasant Prairie and town of Somers) who are between the ages of 6 and 18 must attend school regularly unless:

1. They are excused for physical or psychological reasons upon written recommendation of persons designated under state law.
2. They are excused because of a School Board-approved program, curriculum modification or reasons outlined in the District's attendance procedures.
3. They have graduated high school or are enrolled in an approved private, parochial or registered home-based program.

According to Wis. S.S. 118.15, legal responsibility for school attendance rests with the parent, guardian or emancipated minor. A child may not be excused for more than 10 days in a school year.

# WISCONSIN LAW

According to Wisconsin state law and municipal ordinances in both the city of Kenosha and the village of Pleasant Prairie, students who have been found to be habitually truant shall be subject to any of the following dispositions, which are deemed available to the courts:

- Suspension of person's driving privileges
- Order to attend school
- Counseling, work program or community service work
- Forfeiture of not more than \$500
- Order to remain at home
- Curfew
- Order to attend an educational program (Sec. 938.34(d))
- Placed under formal or informal supervision
- Revocation of work permit
- Order person's parent/guardian to counsel
- Order to be placed in a teen court program
- Order to report to youth report center

# TYPES OF ABSENCES

## Excused absence

A student's absence may be excused by the principal for acceptable reasons such as personal illness, illness in the immediate family, death of a family member or relative, other reasons of legitimate health, or educational benefit to the student. Under state statute 118.15(3)(c) students are allowed 10 days of excused absences. For the absence to be excused, parents/guardians are required to notify the school about the absence. The school may require a doctor's note for four or more consecutive days of absence due to an illness or for excessive absences, which are 10 or more cumulative days of absence, consecutive or non-consecutive, within the school year. Principals may require medical documentation for any excessive absence to be excused. If appropriate medical documentation is not provided, the absence will be unexcused. Unexcused absences will be considered truancy.

## Prearranged excused absences

A request for a prearranged excused absence may be made by a parent/guardian on the prearranged absence form obtained from office staff. The form must be approved by the school principal. The approval will be based on a number of factors, including how well a student is doing in classes and prior attendance pattern. Under Kenosha Unified School Board Policy 5310, a child can complete any course work missed during the absence. A child may not be excused for more than 10 days in a school year under this paragraph.

## Building the habit of good attendance

Having good attendance habits will help children be successful during their academic career and beyond. When students miss too many days of school, they fall behind and struggle to keep up with their classmates. Whether the days missed are due to illness, truancy, or for any other reason, the end result for the student is the same — learning time is lost. Children and adolescents will get sick at times and may need to stay at home, but we want to work with you to help minimize the number of days your student misses school.

## Missed days add up quickly

Just a few missed days a month add up to several school weeks missed in a year. Both excused and unexcused absences can make it more difficult for your child to keep up with other students.

Kindergarten and first grade are critical for your child. Missing school during these early years makes it more difficult for children to learn in later years, and they often have trouble reading by the end of third grade.



## Work with your child and your school

As the parent/guardian, be strong with your child and don't let your child stay home when it is not necessary. This will help your child succeed.

If your child has a chronic disease, make sure the school staff is aware of the disease so the staff can assist your child if he/she becomes ill. Information about your child's chronic disease should be noted on the school emergency or health information card.

Keep an open line of communication with school staff and teachers. The more the school knows about your child's health, the better prepared everyone will be to work together for your child.

Good attendance will help children do well in school, college and at work.



# HELPFUL IDEAS

- Set a regular bedtime and morning routine.
- Lay out clothes and pack backpacks the night before.
- Find out what day and time school starts.
- Introduce your child to teachers and classmates before school starts to help transition.
- Don't let your child stay home unless they are truly sick. Keep in mind complaints of a stomach ache or headache can be a sign of anxiety and not a reason to stay home. If your child seems anxious about going to school, talk to teachers, school counselors or other parents/guardians for advice on how to make him/her feel comfortable and excited about learning.
- Develop backup plans for getting to school if you are unable to drop off or pick up your child. Call on a family member, a neighbor or another parent.
- Avoid medical appointments and extended trips when school is in session. Make appointments with the doctor or dentist in the late afternoon so your child misses as little school as possible.
- If your child must miss school, make sure you get his/her homework assignments and follow up to see if the work is completed and turned in.
- If your child is going to miss school, please contact the school and communicate the reason for the absence.
- Be prepared to get a doctor's note when requested by school personnel.

## Truancy

Truancy means any absence of part or all of one or more school days during which the school attendance officer, principal or teacher has not been notified of the legal cause of such absence by the parent/guardian of the absent student. If the parent/guardian does not notify the school during the morning on a day when his/her student is absent, it shall be assumed that the student is truant.

Such truancy may be reclassified as an excused absence following investigation of the circumstances. The notice shall be given before the end of the second school day after receiving a report of an unexcused absence. The notice may be made by personal contact, email or telephone call.

Frequent absences may result in the school requiring a doctor's excuse; failure to provide appropriate medical excuse will result in the absence being considered truant.

Students who are found to be truant will be permitted to make up school work and receive full credit.

## Habitual truancy

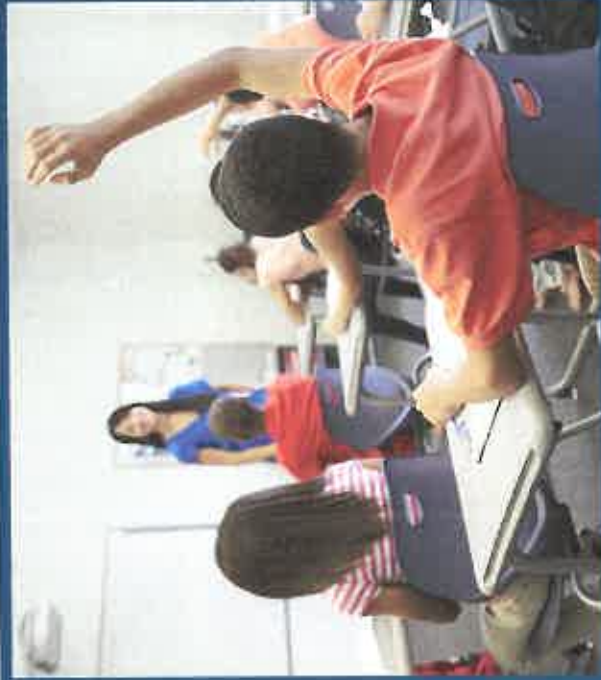
Students who miss part or all of five or more days within a semester, without an acceptable excuse, will be considered habitually truant. School officials will initiate District truancy procedures for those students identified as habitually truant. School officials will meet with parents/guardians, develop an intervention plan, evaluate the educational learning status of the student and recommend appropriate interventions. Legal action, including referral to Kenosha County Juvenile Court and/or city of Kenosha or village of Pleasant Prairie municipal courts, may be considered.

## Tardy to school

The principal/designee will decide if the reason for being tardy is valid. If the reason is judged to be invalid, appropriate remedial action will be taken. After repeated offenses, the student's parent/guardian will be notified by phone and/or in writing to alert them to the problem. Habitual chronic tardiness, as determined by school attendance officer/principal, may be handled according to the same procedure as habitual truancy.

## Changing residence and truancy

If a parent/guardian has moved or is planning to move, they must inform their student's school. This allows the student records to be transferred to the school the child will attend. This will prevent truantries from being recorded on the student's permanent record.



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## Questions of assistance?

If you have questions about District policy, check with your child's school principal or main office staff, and they will get you the contact information for the school's attendance officer.



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