

THE Riveredge School

Attendance Policy

State law requires the Governance Board to enforce the regular attendance of students. Further, the Board recognizes that the Riveredge Outdoor Learning Elementary School (ROLES) educational program is predicated upon the presence of the student and requires continuity of instruction and classroom participation. The regular contact of students with one another in the classroom and their participation in a well-planned instructional activity under the tutelage of a competent teacher are vital to this purpose.

All children between six (6) and eighteen (18) years of age shall attend school regularly during the full period and hours, religious holidays excepted, that the school in which the child is enrolled is in session until the end of the term, quarter, or semester of the school year in which the child becomes eighteen (18) years of age, unless they fall under an exception under State law, this policy, or administrative guideline issued under this policy. A child who is enrolled in five (5) year-old kindergarten shall attend school regularly, religious holidays excepted, during the full period and hours that kindergarten is in session until the end of the school term.

Parental Notification Required

The Administrator shall require, from the parent or guardian of each student, who has been absent for any reason either written or oral notification stating the reason for the absence and the time period covered by the absence. The Governance Council reserves the right to verify such statements and to investigate the cause of each single absence.

School Attendance Officer

The Administrator shall designate the Administrative Assistant to serve as the School Attendance Officer for ROLES. The School Attendance Officer shall perform any duties and responsibilities s/he is required to perform by State law, this policy, and any administrative guidelines issued by the school. The duties of the School Attendance Officer shall include, but not be limited to, the following.

- A. Determining daily from attendance reports submitted by teachers which students enrolled in the school are absent from school and whether the absence is excused.
- B. Submitting to the Northern Ozaukee School District (NOSD) District Administrator, on or before August 1st of each year, a report of the number of students enrolled in the school who were

absent in the previous year and whether the absences were excused. The NOSD District Administrator shall then submit this information to the State Superintendent.

- C. Providing student attendance information to individuals and agencies for purposes authorized by State law and the ROLES policy- See Student confidentiality section.

Excused Absences

As required under State law, a student shall be excused from school for the following reasons:

A. Physical or Mental Condition

The student is temporarily not in proper physical or mental condition to attend a school program.

B. Obtaining Religious Instruction

To enable the student to obtain religious instruction outside the school during the required school period.

ABSENCES FOR RELIGIOUS INSTRUCTION

The Governance Council desires to cooperate with those parents who wish to provide for religious instruction for the children but also recognizes its responsibility to enforce the attendance requirements of the State.

The Council shall permit students, with written parental permission to be absent from school during required school periods at least sixty (60) minutes but not more than 180 minutes per week to obtain religious instruction outside of school.

A student must be properly registered and a copy of such registration must be filed with the principal. The supervisor of the religious instruction must report monthly to the District the names of the students who are attending the weekly instruction.

ROLES will assume no liability for a student while attending religious instruction nor will it provide transportation for such instruction.

No solicitation for attendance at religious instruction shall be permitted on District premises. No member of the staff shall encourage nor discourage participation in any religious instruction program.

C. Permission of Parent or Guardian

The student has been excused by his/her parent or guardian before the absence for any or no reason. A student may not be excused for more than ten (10) days per school year under this paragraph and must complete any course work missed during the absence. Examples of reasons for being absent that should be counted under this paragraph include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. professional and other necessary appointments (e.g., medical, dental, and legal) that cannot be scheduled outside of the school day
2. to attend a funeral
3. legal proceedings that require the student's presence
4. vacations

D. Religious Holiday

For observance of a religious holiday consistent with the student's creed or belief.

E. Suspension or Expulsion

The student has been suspended or expelled

A student may be excused from school, as determined by the School Attendance Officer, or his/her designee, for the following reasons:

A. Quarantine

Quarantine of the student's home by a public health officer.

B. Illness of an Immediate Family Member

The illness of an immediate family member.

C. Emergency

An emergency that requires the student to be absent because of familial responsibilities or other appropriate reasons.

Unexcused Absences

Unexcused absences demonstrate a deliberate disregard for the educational program and are considered a serious matter. The Administrator shall develop administrative guidelines to address unexcused absences.

Unexcused Absences Guidelines

Unexcused absences demonstrate a deliberate disregard for the educational program and are considered a serious matter. The Administrator, will determine on a case-by-case basis the appropriate methods to deal with unexcused absences. The following methods may be considered:

- A. counseling the student
- B. requiring the student to make-up lost time
- C. requiring the student to make-up course work and/or examinations, as permitted under this guideline
- D. conferring with the student's parents
- E. referring the student to an appropriate agency for assistance

Administrative action to address unexcused absences shall be in accord with due process, as defined in the Student Code of Conduct, and other applicable Governance Council policies.

Late Arrival and Early Dismissal

It is necessary that a student be in attendance throughout the school day in order to benefit fully from the educational program of ROLES.

The Governance Council recognizes, however, that from time to time compelling circumstances require that a student be late to school or dismissed before the end of the school day.

As agent responsible for the education of the children of this school, the Governance Council shall require that the school be notified in advance of such absences by request of the student's parent, who shall state the reason for tardiness or early dismissal. Justifiable reasons shall be determined by the Administrator.

No student who has a medical disability which may be incapacitating may be released without a person to accompany him/her. No student shall be released to anyone who is not authorized such custody by the parents.

Truancy Plan

The Governance Council will issue a Truancy Plan based upon the recommendations of the County Truancy Committee convened under State law, the Board's policies and procedures, and applicable provisions of State law. The Governance Council will review and, if appropriate, revise the Truancy Plan at least once every two (2) years.

The Truancy Plan will include, at a minimum, the following:

- A. procedures to be followed for notifying the parents or guardians of the unexcused absences of a student who is truant or a habitual truant and for meeting and conferring with such parents or guardians
- B. plans and procedures for identifying truant children of all ages and returning them to school, including the identity of school personnel to whom a truant child shall be returned
- C. methods to increase and maintain public awareness of and involvement in responding to truancy within the school district
- D. a provision addressing the immediate response to be made by school personnel when a truant child is returned to school
- E. the types of truancy cases to be referred to the District Attorney and the time periods within which the District Attorney will respond to and take action on the referrals
- F. plans and procedures to coordinate the responses to the problems of habitual truants, as defined under Sec. 118.16(1)(a), Wis. Stats., with public and private social services agencies
- G. methods to involve the truant child's parent or guardian in dealing with and solving the child's truancy problem

A student will be considered truant if s/he is absent part or all of one (1) or more days from school during which the School Attendance Officer or a teacher has not been notified of the legal cause of such absence by the parent or guardian of the absent student. A student who is absent intermittently for the purpose of defeating the intent of the Wisconsin Compulsory Attendance Statute Sec. 118.15, Wis. Stats., will also be considered truant.

A student will be considered a habitual truant if s/he is absent from school without an acceptable excuse for part or all of five (5) or more days on which school is held during a school semester.

Notice of Truancy

The School Attendance Assistant shall notify a truant student's parent or guardian of the student's truancy and direct the parent or guardian to return the student to school no later than the next day on which school is in session or to provide an excuse for the absence. The notice under this paragraph 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 electronic communication, personal contact, telephone call, or 1st class mail, and a written record of this notice shall be kept. The School Attendance Officer shall attempt to give notice by personal contact, telephone call, or, unless the parent has refused to receive electronic communication, notice by 1st class mail may be given. This notice must be given every time a student is truant until the student becomes a habitual truant.

Notice of Habitual Truancy

When a student initially becomes a habitual truant, the School Attendance Officer shall provide a notice to the student's parent or guardian, by registered or certified mail, or by 1st Class mail. The notice must contain the following:

- A. a statement of the parent's or guardian's responsibility under State law to cause the student to attend school regularly
- B. a statement that the parent, guardian, or student may request program or curriculum modifications for the student under State law and that the student may be eligible for enrollment in a program for children at risk
- C. a request that the parent or guardian meet with the appropriate school personnel to discuss the student's truancy

The notice shall include the name of the school personnel with whom the parent or guardian should meet, a date, time, and place for the meeting and the name, address, and telephone number of a person to contact to arrange a different date, time, or place. The date for the meeting shall be within five (5) school days after the date that the notice is sent, except with the consent of the student's parent or guardian the date for the meeting may be extended for an additional five (5) school days.

- D. a statement of the penalties, under State law or local ordinances that may be imposed on the parent or guardian if s/he fails to cause the child to attend school regularly as required by State law

The School Attendance Officer will also continue to notify the parent or guardian of a habitual truant's subsequent unexcused absences.

Referral to the District Attorney

Truancy cases will be referred to the District Attorney as provided in the County Truancy Committee Plan. The School Attendance Officer will ensure that appropriate school personnel have done the following before any case is referred to the District Attorney:

- A. met with the student's parent or guardian to discuss the student's truancy or attempted to meet with the student's parent or guardian and received no response or were refused
- B. provided an opportunity for educational counseling to the student to determine whether a change in the student's curriculum would resolve the student's truancy and have curriculum modifications under State law
- C. evaluated the student to determine whether learning problems may be a cause of the student's truancy and, if so, have taken steps to overcome the learning problems, except that the student need not be evaluated if tests administered to the student within the previous year indicate that the student is performing at his/her grade level
- D. conducted an evaluation to determine whether social problems may be a cause of the student's truancy and, if so, have taken appropriate action or made appropriate referrals

Note that paragraph A. is not required if the meeting between school personnel, the student, and the student's parent or guardian, which was requested in the Notice of Habitual Truancy to the parent or guardian, did not occur within ten (10) school days after the Notice was sent. Paragraphs B., C., and D. are not required if appropriate school personnel were unable to carry out the activity due to the student's absences from school.

Make-up Course Work and Examinations

Students who are absent from school, whether the absence was excused or unexcused, shall be permitted to make-up course work and examinations missed during the absence when they return to school. It is the student or parent responsibility to contact his/her teachers to determine what coursework and examinations must be made-up. Teachers shall have the discretion to assign substitute coursework and examinations. Teachers shall also have the discretion to specify where and when examinations and course work shall be completed, including outside regular school hours. The time for completing the work shall be commensurate with the length of the absence, unless extended by the building administrator based upon extenuating circumstances.

School Leader Guidelines

The Administrator shall develop administrative guidelines concerning the attendance of students.

Legal References:

© Neola 2018

Legal

118.15, 118.153, 118.16, 118.162, Wis. Stats.

Adopted by ROLES Governance Council:

12/18/2019

Revised by ROLES Governance Council:

7/22/2021