



Milford Area Public Schools #124

Attendance and Truancy Policy

Policy Adopted September 18, 2024

Our attendance policy is based upon the firm belief that students are most successful when they are present in class and in school:

In accordance with Illinois compulsory attendance requirements, it is the policy of MAPS 124 that students shall attend school on a regular basis. We believe that daily attendance, timeliness to class, and preparedness and participation in class will increase the student's probability for successful performance and fosters the development of self-discipline and responsibility. It is the intention of the instructor of each course to not only teach the subject matter, but also to encourage the positive attribute of regular attendance, punctuality, and participation.

Parents/Guardians and students should be aware of the follow information and procedures.

Compulsory School Attendance: Illinois law requires that whoever has custody or control of any child between six (by September 1st) and seventeen years of age shall assure that the child attends school in the district in which he or she resides, during the entire time school is in session (unless the child has already graduated from high school). Illinois law also requires that whoever has custody or control of a child who is enrolled in the school, regardless of the child's age, shall assure that the child attends school during the entire time school is in session.

Cross Reference: PRESS 7:70, Attendance and Truancy

Student Absences: 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 a 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 of religious reasons, including to observe a religious holiday, for religious instruction, or because his or her religion forbids secular activity on a particular day(s) or time of day, and (6) any child 16 years of age or older who is employed and is enrolled in a graduation incentives program.

For students who are required to attend school, there are two types of absences: excused and unexcused. Excused absences include: illness (including up to 5 days per school year for mental or behavioral health of the student), observance of a religious holiday or event, death in the immediate family, family emergency, situations beyond the control of the student as determined by the school board, circumstances that cause reasonable concern to the parent/guardian for the student's mental, emotional, or physical health or safety, attending a military honors funeral to sound TAPS, or other reason as approved by the building principal. Students eligible to vote are also excused for up to two hours to vote in a primary, special, or general election.

Additionally, a student will be excused for up to 5 days in cases where the student's parent/guardian is an active-duty member of the uniformed services and has been called to duty for, is on leave from, or has

immediately returned from deployment to a combat zone or combat-support postings. The Board of Education, in its discretion, may excuse a student for additional days relative to such leave or deployment. A student and the student's parent/guardian are responsible for obtaining assignments from the student's teachers prior to any excused absences and for ensuring that such assignments are completed by the student prior to his or her return to school.

Students who are excused from school will be given a reasonable timeframe to make up missed homework and classwork assignments. All other absences are considered unexcused. Pre-arranged excused absences must be approved by the building principal.

The school may require documentation explaining the reason for the student's absence. In the event of any absence, the student's parent/guardian is required to call their student's school [Milford Grade School (815)889-4174, Milford High School (815) 889-4184] before 8:00 a.m. to explain the reason for the absence. If a call has not been made to the school by 10:00 a.m. on the day of a student's absence, a school official will call home to inquire why the student is not at school. If the parent/guardian cannot be contacted, the student will be required to submit a signed note from the parent/ guardian explaining the reason for the absence. Failure to do so shall result in an unexcused absence. Upon the request of the parent/guardian, the reason for an absence will be kept confidential.

ABSENCES

A student's primary job or occupation for this school year is that of doing a good job in the classroom. This requires a good attendance record, just as an employer would expect his employees to be on the job every day. Being in school every day and doing a good job will also earn dividends in the future. Many employers call the school to ask about the attendance records of job applicants. Those with the best records usually get the jobs. Students at Milford High School are allowed 6 days of absence during a semester. However, any absence from school that is due to any doctor appointment, being under a doctor's care, summons to appear in court, or family bereavement will not count as part of the 6-day limit. Doctor notes must be brought in to verify sickness or appointment and/or a copy of the court summons must be given to the school for verification of the court summons. If a student suffers from a known chronic illness that a doctor can document to the school, that student will receive special consideration in regard to the 6 day limit of absences. (This would refer to but not be limited to illnesses such as seizures, asthma, migraine headaches, diabetes, and the like.) Students with serious medical problems will receive special consideration; homebound instruction programs may be established. If you find it necessary to leave school between the time of your arrival in the morning and the close of school in the afternoon, you must be excused by the Office before leaving the building. You must report to the office and obtain permission to leave before leaving the building. If a student leaves without permission, it will be considered an unexcused absence.

Notes for early dismissals must be handed into the office first thing in the morning. Repeated absences will result in the student being defined as a "chronic or habitual chronic truant". Chronic truants will be referred to the county attendance assistance program. Milford Area Public Schools will follow the I-KAN policy for reporting unexcused absences. Once a student has unexcused absences for 5% of the school year, he/she may be reported to the IKAN attendance assistance program. Once a student has exceeded the 6-day limit, the absence will be considered unexcused. Therefore, he/she will not be able to be given credit for any work assigned on that day. With the aforementioned in mind, it is the goal of Milford Area Public Schools to have each of its students reach the 95% attendance mark therefore, students at Milford Area Public Schools shouldn't miss over 9 days of school during the school year. Any student who is

absent for fifteen (15) consecutive days without authorization will be dropped from Milford Area Public Schools.

Absentee Policies: Definitions:

Truant – A “truant” is 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 for absence – 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 student’s control 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 “chronic or habitual truant” is a child who is subject to compulsory school attendance and who is absent without valid cause from such attendance for 5 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 failed to result in the cessation of chronic truancy or have been offered and refused.

Truancy: Student attendance is critical to the learning process. Truancy is therefore a serious issue and will be dealt with in a serious manner by the school district.

Students who miss more than 1% but less than 5% of the prior 180 regular school days without a valid cause (or recognized excuse) are truant. Students who miss 5% or more of the prior 180 regular school days without valid cause are chronic truants. Students who are chronic truants will be offered support services and resources aimed at correcting the truancy issue.

If chronic truancy persists after support services and other resources are made available, the school and district will take further action, including:

- Referral to the truancy officer
- Reporting to officials under the Juvenile Court Act
- Referral to the State’s Attorney
- Appropriate school discipline

A student who misses 15 consecutive days of school without valid cause and who cannot be located or, after exhausting all available supports services, cannot be compelled to return to school is subject to expulsion from school.

A parent or guardian who knowingly and willfully permits a child to be truant is in violation of State law. Cross Reference: PRESS 7:70, Attendance and Truancy

Diagnostic Procedures for Identifying Student Absences and Support Services to Truant or Chronically Truant Students: State law requires every school district to collect and review its chronic absence data and determine what systems of support and resources are needed to engage chronically absent students and their families to encourage the habit of daily attendance and promote success. This review must include an analysis of chronic absence data from each attendance center. Furthermore, State law provides that school districts are encouraged to provide a system of support to students who are at risk of reaching or exceeding chronic absence levels with strategies and are also encouraged to make resources available to families such as those available through the State Board of Education's Family

Engagement Framework to support and engage students and their families to encourage heightened school engagement and improved daily school attendance. "Chronic absence" means absences that total 10% or more of school days of the most recent academic school year, including absences with and without valid cause, and out-of-school suspensions. The School and District use the following diagnostic procedures for identifying the causes of unexcused student absences: Interviews with the student, his or her parent/guardian and any school officials who may have information about the reasons for the student's attendance problems.

Supportive services to truant or chronically truant students include parent conferences, student counseling, family counseling, and information about existing community services.

Cross-reference: PRESS 7:70, Attendance and Truancy

A student's parent(s)/guardian(s) must authorize all absences and notify the school in advance or at the time of the child's absence. If a student is absent without prior authorization by the parent(s)/guardian(s), the Building Principal or designee shall make a reasonable effort to notify the parent(s)/guardian(s) of the child's absence within 2 hours after the first class by telephoning the numbers provided. Regular attendance is essential for promotion and success in your schoolwork. When an absence is necessary, it is your responsibility to see that your work is made up. Students will be allowed one (1) day make-up time for each day of excused absence, not including anticipated absences. Any parents who can call the School Office (889-4184) should do so before 8:00 a.m. on the day of the absence. If you are absent from the building any period of the school day, you must report to the Office as soon as you return to school. If your parent or guardian was unable to contact the Office, you must present a written excuse for your absence signed by your parent or guardian, stating when the absence occurred and the reason for the absence. This applies even for 18-year-olds if you still live at home. The administration will determine whether the absence is excused or unexcused.

Attendance Requirement for Participation in Extracurricular Activities

Students accumulating 4 unexcused absences beyond the 6-day absent limit in a semester will be ineligible to participate in any extracurricular activity and/or event for the remainder of the semester. Suspension of participation based on attendance will begin the Sunday immediately following the student's 4th (fourth) unexcused absence beyond the 6-day limit. Exception: Suspensions for students participating in Theater productions will begin the Monday immediately following the student's 4th (fourth) unexcused absence beyond the 6-day limit. This suspension of participation also includes dances, 26 drama, Prom, field trips, Homecoming activities, etc. (See list of activities listed in handbook.) Administration reserves the right to place a student on social probation as a consequence.

Family Vacations/Trips: Students will be allowed a total of five (5) school days for family vacations or trips other than the regular school vacation days. These vacation days will count as part of the 6-day limit. After five (5) days students will be given zeros and not allowed to make up work.

Doctor and Dentist Appointments: Except in cases of emergency, appointments should be made before or after school hours. You must present an appointment card or parent request at the Office before you may be excused. When you know and could make up assignments in advance, you shall obtain the proper anticipated absence form three (3) school days in advance. Avoid scheduling appointments at the same time of day.

Acceptable Reasons for Excused Absences:

1. Personal Illness

2. Death or serious illness in the family, or funeral of a close friend
3. Professional Appointments-Anticipated Absence required three school days in advance.
4. Out-of-town trip if arranged with the school in advance and if, in the judgment of the school administration, this absence is justified.
5. College/Career Visits
6. Students cleared by the Administration.
7. Playing taps at military service
8. Observance of a religious holiday or event, family emergency, situations beyond the control of the student, circumstances that cause reasonable concern to the parent/guardian for the student's mental, emotional, or physical health or safety, or other reason as approved by the building principal.
9. Additionally, a student will be excused for up to 5 days in cases where the student's parent/guardian is an active-duty member of the uniformed services and has been called to duty for, is on leave from, or has immediately returned from deployment to a combat zone or combat-support postings. The Board of Education, in its discretion, may excuse a student for additional days relative to such leave or deployment.

PRESS 7:70, Attendance and Truancy

Unacceptable Reasons for Absences: Credit for assignments, tests, and other graded work will be withheld, and a zero (0) will be assigned for each period missed for an unexcused absence and one hour of detention for each hour of unexcused absence and can also be assigned a day of in-school suspension.

1. Truancy
2. Leaving School without proper clearance for the Office
3. Forgery of signature on excuses
4. Work, unless arrangements have been made in advance.
5. Missed the bus - car trouble.
6. Shopping
7. Oversleeping
8. Beauty Shop - Barber Shop
9. Failure to complete an anticipated absence form.
10. Absent from school but seen without parental supervision.
11. Personal Business unless approved by Office.
12. Removal from class for dress code violation.
13. Anything else the administration deems unacceptable

Anticipated Absences: An anticipated absence **request must be filled out by a parent/guardian in Skyward** and completed no less than three (3) school days in advance of the planned absence. This includes any time a student knows he/she will be absent. Examples are doctor appointments, college visits, family vacations/trips, etc. The reason for this procedure is that students will be responsible for turning in all homework prior to being absent or upon returning from an absence. This decision will be determined by 27 individual teachers. Teachers will provide in writing student's obligations before the student leaves. This will include expectations prior to student leaving and upon their return. **Students or parents should communicate with their teachers in anticipation of these absences in order to complete and/or collect assignments as directed by their teachers ahead of time. Parent/s/guardians should call their students office with any questions regarding anticipated absences procedures.**

College/Career/Workplace Visits: Juniors and seniors may obtain excused absences for the purpose of visiting colleges, technical schools, or postsecondary employment opportunities as follows:

1. Present a written note from your parents indicating that you will be using this day for a specified purpose. This should be at least three school days in advance of the planned activity.
2. Obtain an Anticipated Absence form and present it to your teachers for approval.
3. Make up your work, if possible, in advance of the activity.
4. Seniors may be granted up to three (3) visits for this purpose, and juniors may be granted two (2) visits.
5. The Guidance Counselor will make all the necessary arrangements.
6. The Administration must approve all college/career visits.
7. The College/Career visit for juniors must be taken prior to the first of April. The College/Career visits for seniors must be taken prior to the first of May.
8. Absences due to college visits do not affect eligibility for extracurricular events.

Tardiness: Just as regular attendance is training for future "real world" behavior, so is punctuality. You are to be in your assigned classroom and in your proper seat before the final bell rings. Failure to do so is considered tardy. Teachers shall mark students tardy and inform the students they have been marked tardy.

For Milford Grade School: After a K-8 student is tardy for the 3rd time, he/she will not have recess (each time they are tardy) for the remainder of the semester. These accumulated tardies are eliminated and start at zero for the 2nd semester. The (Jr. High) classroom teacher will handle tardiness to each period; three tardies to class will be a detention. Student's that are tardy to school must be signed in by a parent/guardian in the MGS office upon arriving at school.

For Milford High School: Discipline for tardiness will be handled by the office. Students will be considered tardy to first hour if they arrive at school no more than twenty (20) minutes late. After that point it will be considered an unexcused absence. Students who are tardy will be dealt as follows on a cumulative basis per nine weeks.

- 1st and 2nd – Warning, No Punishment
- 3rd – one day lunch detention
- 4th – three days lunch detention
- 5th – one day after school detention
- 6th – one day after school detention
- 7th – two days after school detention
- 8th – two days after school detention
- 9th – 1 day in-school suspension
- 10th + - 1 day in-school suspension + possible loss of privileges "Social Probation"

Release Time for Religious Instruction/Observance: A student will be released from school, as an excused absence, to observe a religious holiday or religious instruction. The student's parent/guardian must give written notice to the building principal at least 5 calendar days before the student's anticipated absence(s). Students excused for religious reasons will be given an opportunity to make up any examination, study, or work requirement.

Cross Reference: PRESS 7:80, Release Time for Religious Instruction/Observation

Exemption from Physical Education Requirement: In order to be excused from participation in physical education, a student must present an appropriate excuse from his or her parent/guardian or from a

person licensed under the Medical Practice Act. The excuse may be based on medical or religious prohibitions. An excuse because of medical reasons must include a signed statement from a person licensed under the Medical Practice Act that corroborates the medical reason for the request. An excuse based on religious reasons must include a signed statement from a member of the clergy that corroborates the religious reason for the request. **Upon written notice from a student's parent/guardian, a student will be excused from engaging in the physical activity components of physical education during a period of religious fasting.**

Special activities in physical education will be provided for a student whose physical or emotional condition, as determined by a person licensed under the Medical Practices Act, prevents his or her participation in the physical education course.

State law prohibits the School District from honoring parental excuses based upon a student's participation in athletic training, activities, or competitions conducted outside the auspices of the School District.

Students who have been excused from physical education shall return to the course as soon as practical. The following considerations will be used to determine when a student shall return to a physical education course:

1. The time of year when the student's participation ceases.
2. The student's class schedule; and
3. The student's future or planned additional participation in activities qualifying for substitutions for physical education.

For Milford Grade School: A student in grades 7-8 may submit a written request to the building principal requesting to be excused from physical education courses because of the student's ongoing participation in an interscholastic or extracurricular athletic program. The building principal will evaluate requests on a case-by-case basis.

For Milford High School: Students enrolled in grades 11 and 12 may be excused from engaging in physical education after submitting a written request to the Building Principal for the following reasons:

1. Ongoing participation in an interscholastic or extracurricular athletic program. Students may be excused from physical education during the semester in which his/her program takes place (fall=football, football cheerleading, volleyball, golf, soccer, girls swimming: fall or spring but not both=basketball, basketball cheerleading, soccer, boys swimming; spring=softball, baseball, track). The student is expected to attend school for the regular school day.
2. To enroll in academic classes which are required for admission to an institution of higher learning, provided that failure to take such classes will result in the pupil being denied admission to the institution of his or her choice.
3. To enroll in academic classes which are required for graduation from high school, provided that failure to take such classes will result in the pupil being unable to graduate.

Approved exemptions shall be on the basis of one semester. A student who is exempt from physical education is expected to fulfill a schedule which meets the minimum standards for school attendance. Cross Reference: PRESS 6:30, Credit for Alternative Courses and Programs, and Course Substitutions and PRESS 7:260, Exemption from Physical Education

Home and Hospital Instruction: A student who is absent from school, or whose physician, physician assistant or licensed advanced practice registered nurse anticipates his or her absence from school, because of a medical condition may be eligible for instruction in the student's home or hospital. Appropriate education services from qualified staff will begin no later than five school days after receiving a written statement from a physician, physician assistant, or licensed advanced practice registered nurse. Instructional or related services for a student receiving special education services will be determined by the student's individualized education program. A student who is unable to attend school because of pregnancy will be provided home instruction, correspondence courses, or other courses of instruction before (1) the birth of the child when the student's physician, physician assistant, or licensed advance practice nurse indicates, in writing, that she is medically unable to attend regular classroom instruction, and (2) for up to 3 months after the child's birth or a miscarriage.

For information on home or hospital instruction, contact your building principal.
Cross Reference: PRESS 6:150, Home and Hospital Instruction