**Attendance**

Philosophy

Absence from school can seriously hamper success in school both in social development and in academic progress, for this reason we ask that appointments be made before school, after school, or during a study hall when possible.

We ask that parents, having the moral and legal responsibility of their child's attendance, give this their most serious consideration and carefully weigh the possible consequences of allowing their son or daughter to be absent for any but the most serious of reasons.

The Illinois Education Reform Act of 1985 requires that, beginning July 1, 1990, schools make a reasonable effort to notify the parent of a child enrolled in grades K-8 of the child’s absence when the school has not been notified in advance of such absence. The law authorizes school districts to require parents to call the school for notification purposes. State law and board policy on truancy control will be used with chronic and habitual truants.

Absences - Excused

An excused absence is a valid and authorized (by parent and school) absence (105 ILCS 5/26-2a). Examples of excused absences:

* Personal illness and/or physical disablement
* Medical appointments
* Critical illness or death in the immediate family
* Religious observances

Absences - Mental Health

An excused absence due to the mental or behavioral health of a student (105 ILCS 5/26-2a). These are limited to 5 per year without a doctor’s note.

## Absences - Limited Excused

A limited excused absence refers to a special group of absences that are limited in number (5 days), but reported as Excused absences.

Examples of limited excused absences:

* Home/Family emergencies
* Pre-approved vacations (with parents)
* Non-participants attending school functions
* Death of a friend
* Court appearance
* College Visits
* Religious trips/retreats

Limited excused absences should be pre-arranged at least 5 school days before the first day of absence, by completing and returning a Limited Excused Absence form available online under the parent tab on the school website or in the school office. Any limited excused absences over 5 days will be considered unexcused. Requirements for completing missed assignments should be pre-arranged with the teacher. If the teacher and the parent agree for assignments to be prepared in advance of the absence, the student should return the assignments on the first day back to school in order to receive full credit.

## Absences - Unexcused

Unexcused/Truancy is an absence from school without a valid cause for a school day or a portion of a school day (105 ILCS 5/26-2a). In accordance with procedures stipulated by the Compulsory Attendance Law (Article 26 of the Illinois School Code), students must attend school until they are 17 years of age. Students are expected and required to make-up all work that is missed during an unexcused absence.

Examples of unexcused absence:

* Baby-sitting
* Beauty shop or barber appointments
* Leaving class or school grounds without permission
* Missing a ride or the school bus
* Oversleeping
* Shopping
* Working at home on school projects

## Absences - Chronic

Chronically truant students are defined by the state to be students that have been absent 5% or more of the school days per year that are unexcused.

Chronic absenteeism is when a student has missed 10% or more of the school days per year either excused or unexcused.

Once a student has accumulated 3 days or 3 partial days of absences per month, a doctor’s verification in order for successive absences to be considered excused may be required. If a student’s absenteeism becomes excessive (more than 9 days per semester) the Administration may also request a doctor’s verification before absences are excused.

When a doctor’s verification is requested, the student’s parent or legal guardian will have five school days to provide the school with the documentation. The verification document will need to include the diagnosis, any type of restrictions that the illness/medical condition places on the student, and the anticipated duration of those restrictions. If the verification is not received within the five day period, the absence(s) may be considered unexcused/truant.

Absences - Make Up Work

When students are absent, either excused, limited excused, or unexcused, it is important that they make up the work they missed in a timely manner. Students should work with teachers to determine the best way to make up the work they miss. In general, students are given two days to make up work for the first day absent and one day for each subsequent day of absences.

Attendance Letters

The principal will send an attendance letter to the parents of students who have been absent (excused or unexcused) for:

* 5 or more days by the end of the 1st quarter
* 10 or more days by the end of the 2nd quarter
* 15 or more days by the end of the 3rd quarter
* 20 or more days by the end of the 4th quarter

Principals have the discretion to provide consideration for individual situations. The parents of students who are in violation of the district’s attendance policies may be referred to a school social worker or the Tazewell County Truancy Officer.

After School/Evening Events

A student who has not been in attendance during the school day or needed to leave during the day due to illness should not be in attendance at any after school or evening event sponsored by the school district. Any deviation from this must be pre-approved by the administration.

Reporting Absences

If a student feels ill during the school day, the student needs to come to the main office. Medical or office personnel will decide if the student should go home and will notify parents/guardians.

Each building has an attendance office phone line. The phone line is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. When leaving a message on the attendance line, please include the student’s name and specific reason for the absence. If work should be prepared for the absent student, please communicate that with the office.

Absences should be reported prior to 9:00 am, or the school is required to contact the parents of the absent student. The board of education has determined that two attempts to notify the parent constitute a reasonable effort on the part of the school. If the school is unable to reach the parents of an absent student, the student’s absence will be considered unexcused.

Lettie Brown: 284-1000

Ward Grundy: 284-2000

Jefferson: 263-2650 option 1

Lincoln: 284-4000

MJHS: 284-5000

MHS: 263-0611

Morton Academy: 284-8033

Tardies

Elementary: Students will be given consequences for tardies on a case by case basis, which may include a parent phone call, conference with the student, writing assignment, etc. Typically, students will be given a warning for the first tardy and a reflection sheet/consequence for any subsequent tardies.

MJHS: Students are considered tardy if they are not in their assigned location when the bell rings. Tardies will be tracked by the classroom teachers and/or teams, and a discipline referral will be submitted for a 3rd tardy (and each subsequent tardy). Students over 5 minutes tardy to class are considered late and will need to report to the Attendance Office for a pass to class. Students that are late without a valid reason are subject to disciplinary consequences.

MHS: Students are considered tardy if they are not in their assigned location when the bell rings. Tardies will be tracked by the classroom teacher and a discipline referral will be submitted for a 3rd tardy (and each subsequent tardy) to the same class. Students over 5 minutes tardy to class are considered late and will need to report to the Attendance Office for a pass to class. Students that are late without a valid reason are subject to disciplinary consequences.