

Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend

Students

Attendance

The Diocesan schools consider the development of good attendance habits as a vital and desirable undertaking for two essential reasons. First, it is difficult for young people to learn if they are not in class: the teaching-learning process builds upon itself. Secondly, research shows that educational achievement is directly related to attendance. A student who misses a day of school misses a day of education that cannot be retrieved in its entirety.

I. Parents/Legal Guardian Responsibility

Parent(s)/legal guardians are responsible for having their children in school. Indiana law prescribes that parents must have their children in public or private school from the age of seven (7) until the date on with the child:

A. Graduates; or

B. Reaches at least sixteen (16) years of age or less than eighteen (18) years of age and:

1. the student and the student's parent or guardian and the principal agree to the withdrawal;
2. at the exit interview the student provides written acknowledgment of the withdrawal which must include a statement that the student and the student's parent/guardian understand that withdrawing from the school is likely to reduce the student's future earnings and increase the likelihood of the student being unemployed in the future, and the student's parent or guardian and the school principal each provide written consent of the student to withdraw from school; and
3. the withdrawal is due to financial hardships requiring the student to be employed to support the student's family or dependent, illness or the order of a court that has jurisdiction over the student, or

C. Reaches the age of eighteen (18) years.

whichever occurs first.

II. Absences from School

Absences from school shall fall into one of the three following categories:

A. Absences which are counted as present.

1. Serving as a page for or honoree of the Indiana General Assembly;
2. For students in Grades 7 through 12, serving on a precinct election board or as a helper to a political candidate or political party on Election Day with prior approval of the principal;
3. Court appearances pursuant to a subpoena;
4. Active duty with the Indiana National Guard for not more than ten (10) days in a school year;
5. Placement in a short-term inpatient treatment program which provides an instructional program;
6. Homebound instruction;
7. Religious observances.

B. Excused Absences

1. Illness of the student (with written statement by parent/ guardian or doctor)
2. Funerals
 - a. for death in the immediate family
 - b. for persons outside of the immediate family with parental permission
3. Out-of-school suspension
4. Medical and legal appointments – Such appointment should be scheduled after school hours when possible.
5. School/college visits (2 days) – Parents/guardians need to check with the individual school’s policy when arranging such visits.

C. Unexcused Absences

1. No parent/guardian contact with the school giving an explanation for the absence on the day of the absence.
2. No physician's note to excuse an absence once more than 5 days of absence have occurred (see Frequent or Prolonged Illness below).
3. Family vacations.
4. Absences other than those defined as excused or absences counted as present.

III. Truancy

A student is truant when he/she is absent from school or class without the permission of his/her parent/guardian and the school. Students who are habitually truant shall be reported to the juvenile authorities in accordance with applicable state law and following diocesan procedures:

The following may be evidence of habitual truancy:

- A. Refusal to attend school in defiance of parental authority.
- B. Accumulating a number of absences without justification over a period of time, such as a grading period. Habitual truancy is not evidenced by a single isolated incident of unexcused absence.
- C. Three (3) or more judicial findings of truancy.

IV. Reporting an Absence

A parent/guardian shall contact the school to report a student's absence. Each school has established procedures for reporting absences. Absences will not be excused and the student may be considered truant if the procedure for reporting an absence is not followed.

A written explanation for any absence signed by a parent/guardian is required upon the return of the student to school. The school is not required to provide credit for makeup of assigned work missed because the student's absence is unexcused or the student is truant.

V. Frequent or Prolonged Illness

If a student is absent for five consecutive days due to illness, or has contracted a contagious disease, a physician's statement may be required in order for the student to return to school.

VI. Response to Irregular Attendance

If an irregular attendance pattern begins to develop, the school may use the following procedure to encourage the student's return to a pattern of regular school attendance.

- A. Call daily from school (secretary, principal, or attendance clerk), to the parent/guardian to verify absence and to determine reason.
- B. After a student is absent for six (6) days per school year, a school administrator, attendance clerk, or counselor will make contact with the student's parent/guardian. The date and content of this contact shall be documented.
- C. After a student is absent over twelve (12) days per school year, a conference shall be held with the parent/guardian and the student. An attendance contract may be established at this time and documentation shall be kept.
- D. After a student is absent over fifteen (15) days per school year, a referral shall be made to the principal. If the principal is unable to successfully resolve the attendance problem, a referral may be made to the intake officer of the local Juvenile Probation Department.

VII. Habitual Truancy Report to BMV

If the student is at least 13 years of age but less than 15 years of age and is truant more than 10 times in one (1) school year, the student shall be designated as a habitual truant and reported to the bureau of motor vehicles as provided by State law.