

POPE COUNTY CUSD #1

Absenteeism and Truancy

ADOPTED: January 19, 2023



ATTENDANCE:

To call in a student absence:

Pope County Elementary Secretary- Charlee Poole 618-683-4011

Pope County High School Secretary- Tresa Hargrove 618-683-3071

Attendance Procedures are in the Parent/Student Handbooks on the school's website for families to access. The school's website is popek12.org.

SCHOOL ATTENDANCE:

Good school work depends, to a large extent, on punctual attendance. Make-up work cannot completely take the place of regular classroom work. Parents must assume their share of the responsibility for the regular and punctual attendance of their children. Pope County CUSD 1 recognizes that many factors such as family needs, medical conditions and others contribute to a student's ability to make it to school each day. Our procedures described below reflect our efforts to establish a system that takes these factors into account while also striving to achieve the desired outcome. Students are expected to attend each class daily. Parents are obligated to contact the school when their student is absent. Parents and Guardians are legally responsible for their child's attendance during the entire time school is in session.

If a parent/guardian is leaving their student in the care of another adult for a short period of time, they must contact the Elementary or High School Secretary ahead of time to provide the name and contact information of that adult.

Attendance Awareness and Communications:

It is imperative parents/guardians are aware of their student's attendance status at all times, both for safety reasons and because students are only allowed a certain number of absences before risking loss of credit and/or be promoted to the next grade level. We strongly recommend monitoring attendance on the Pope County School App using "Teacher Ease" daily. Parents/guardians can also expect to receive a daily phone call from the school when their child is marked absent. The purpose of this daily communication is to ensure student safety and make sure parents/guardians are aware of the attendance that is recorded for their student. It also serves as a reminder in case a student has been marked absent unexcused for the day and the parent/guardian forgot to call to excuse the absence. The parent can then give a reason for the absence before the cut-off time of 9 a.m. Parent/guardians should contact the attendance office if they notice an error on the attendance record that was made after contacting the office secretary or attendance aide to excuse an absence.

Reporting an Absence:

Excused Full Day Absences

A phone call from the parent/guardian is required. School begins at 8:00 a.m. When a student is absent from school, parents must call the office before 9:00 a.m. of the day of their child's absence as per IL School Code, Section 122: 26-36.

If a call has not been made to the school by 9:00 a.m. on the day of the student's absence, a school official will call the 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 request of the parent/guardian, the reason for an absence will be kept confidential.

1. On the day following the absence, the student must bring a signed note from their parent or guardian explaining the absence or a phone call to 618-683-4011 (Elementary) or 618-683-3071 (High School) must be received from the parent/guardian by 9:00 a.m. to give a reason for the absence. Failure to bring a note or phone call will result in an unexcused absence. Students with an unexcused absence in a high school class will be required to take the final exams.

2. If a student has any medical appointments or is absent 3 or more consecutive days due to illness, a doctor's excuse may be required.

3. If a student wishes to participate in or attend an extracurricular event on a day when school is in session, he/she must be in attendance at least one-half of the school day.

Attendance of school sponsored activities and trips will not be counted as an absence. Also, seniors may take two (2) days for pre-approved college visits and not be counted as absent. More college visitations days may be granted on approval by the principal.

If a student is absent for more than ten (10) school days and has not notified the office, they will be dropped from class rolls. *This applies only to students who are of the age of 17 or older.*

****The Pope County School recognizes three types of absences. The type, some examples, and the corresponding school action to be taken are indicated as follows:**

TYPE I – LEGAL as per II School Code, Section 122: 26-36:

Any absence allowed by the laws of the State of Illinois. The following is a list of acceptable reasons for absences to be excused (appropriate documentation required)

- Illness/Hospitalization (including up to 5 days per school year for mental or behavioral health of student)
- Pre-arranged doctor or dental appointment
- Death in the family
- Family emergency
- Situations beyond the control of the parent/student
- Circumstances that cause reasonable concern to the parent/guardian for the student's mental, emotional, or physical health or safety.
- Required court appearance
- Observation of a bona fide religious holiday
- Attending a military honors funeral to sound TAPS

- Pre-arranged absences
- Any other reason as approved by the Administration
- Excusal up to five (5) days when student's parent is active military and has been called to duty, returns to duty or is on leave. The Board of Education, in its discretion, may excuse a student for additional days related to such leave or deployment.

TYPE II - SCHOOL ACCEPTED

Any absence due to sickness, 5 days per school year for mental or behavioral health of the student, death in family, prearranged absences, school-sponsored trips, and family emergency and includes other situations beyond the control of the student as evaluated by school officials, or circumstances which concern parents such as but not limited to mental, emotional, physical health or the safety of the student. Emergency situations may be evaluated by school officials. (See Type 1 Legal absences per School Code, Section 122:26-36)

Prearranged absences are those anticipated prior to the actual day or period of absence (i.e. doctor appointments, necessary family trips, and funerals). In order for the prearranged absences to be excused the parent must inform the office as soon as possible prior to the last day of the student's attendance (see Prearranged Absences page 4).

Home and Hospital Instruction:

A student who is absent from school, or whose physician, physician assistant or 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. Instruction 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, online Software courses, or other courses of instruction before (1) the birth of the child when the student's physical 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 instructions, contact the building principal at 618-683-3071 or 618-683-4011.

Active Duty Parent or Guardian:

A student will be excused for up to five (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. Make-up work must be completed and given to the individual teachers. Students may be granted up to one day missed to complete make-up work. It is the student's responsibility to obtain the make-up assignment from the teachers. It is the classroom teacher's responsibility to hold each student accountable for missed class time.

Excused Partial Day Absences:

For the safety of all students, advance notice from or contact with a parent/guardian is required to excuse any absence related to an early dismissal or late arrival.

1. Students who return to school before the end of the day must report to the Office when reentering the building. The secretary will supply students with an excused admit pass to their next class.
2. Students who need to leave school due to illness or injury MUST be excused by the School Office. Students who are ill or have an injury must report to the building secretary or nurse and are not to leave the building on their own. The school nurse will contact a parent/guardian to authorize the early dismissal. For safety reasons, students authorized by the school nurse to go home on their own must be approved by a parent/guardian before the student is allowed to leave.
3. Absences for students who leave school without proper authorization as outlined above will be unexcused and are subject to the school's procedures for unexcused absences and truancy.

Students are allowed full make-up privileges for absences. Students must speak to their teacher for guidelines for makeup work. The following is a list of acceptable reasons for partial day absences to be excused.

- Observance of a religious holiday
- Illness
- Appointments (doctor, dentist, therapy, etc.)
- Hospitalizations
- Mental Wellness Day
- Death in the immediate family
- Family emergency/personal reasons
- Pre-arranged absence (explained below)
- School-sponsored field trip
- Visits to school nurse
- In-school meetings with school staff (counselor/social worker, wellness center appointment)
- In-school and out of school suspensions

- College visits
- Quarantine

Extended Pre-Arranged Absences:

Extended absences from school can have a negative impact on a student's learning and are, therefore, discouraged. In unavoidable cases, parents/guardians should notify their student's teachers and counselor of an extended pre-arranged absence. This allows the teachers to provide work to be done during the student's absence, if appropriate. *There cannot be any pre-arranged absences for the semester exam days.*

A pre-arranged absence may be granted where the student has an authorized reason for not attending school, i.e. family trips. The following procedure must be followed for an excused, prearranged absence of 3 or more consecutive days:

1. A completed request for absence form must be submitted in writing to the office at least 5 days prior to the absence. The forms may be obtained in the school office.
2. The form must be submitted to each of the student's teachers. The teacher will give the student the assignments that will be missed.
3. The form must be signed by the following:
 - The parent/guardian stating the purpose for the absence.
 - The teachers verifying the student is passing all academic subjects.
 - The principal verifying the student has not been absent more than 10% of current accumulated school days
4. Parents are responsible for making sure all assignments are completed upon arrival back to school.

TYPE III – UNEXCUSED ABSENCES:

Any absence that is not considered legal or reasonable, but which is not typical of truancy, or reasons characterized by careless planning such as but not limited to:

Unexcused Absences/Tardies/Early Departures

- Not having received an absence call from the parent/guardian (call later than 24 hours from day of Absence)
- Car trouble
- Oversleeping or missing the bus
- Personal business or taking/doing parent or guardians personal business
- Truancy from school or class
- Running Errands

- Applying for Jobs
- Working
- Excessive absences without formal documentation

Identification of Student Absences: The school district will collect and review absences and chronic absentee data and determine what system of support and resources are needed to engage chronically absent students and their families to encourage the habit of daily attendance and to promote success.

Absence Procedure:

- 3 consecutive days absent will require a note from a medical provider.

Once a student has been absent 5 school days within the school year:

- A note from the physician may be required for each additional absence as determined by the principal.
- A note from the physician may be required for each additional absence
- A referral will be sent to the Regional Office of Education’s TAOEP at the next unexcused absence.

Resources:

For those students who are at risk of reaching or exceeding chronic absence levels the district will make resources available to the families to try to improve daily school attendance.

- Provide Alarm Clocks
- Assign an administrator, teacher or family member to Phone Student each morning “wake up call”

TARDINESS:

A student is tardy to class when the second bell rings, the student must be in his/her seat ready to start working, or he/she is tardy to that class. Individual teachers will address tardiness.

Passing times are three minutes in length -- sufficient time to move to any other area of the building without undue difficulty. The following procedures should be followed when you are late to class:

1. If you are late in arriving at school, report directly to the office for an admit slip to be marked present. Your admit slip will be marked excused or unexcused, depending upon the reason for your tardiness. There are few reasons for being tardy which are excusable; however, many are understandable and will result in little or no difficulty to the student or parent. Habitual tardiness is another matter and will not be tolerated. Students habitually tardy or late arriving to school five times within a quarter to 1st period classes are subject to having their driving pass revoked for (5) school days; student passengers may also be disciplined. If habitual tardiness continues the student's driving pass will be revoked for the remainder of the quarter. Every effort necessary to correct habitual tardiness will be made.
2. If you are detained by a teacher, secure an admit slip from that teacher and report to class. If you are tardy for any reason, report directly to class. Do not come to the office since admit slips will not be

issued. Each teacher shall determine the validity of the excuse and advise the student of such. Classroom teachers will assign reasonable punishment for being tardy for class.

Teachers will also keep a record of all students who are tardy and will report habitually tardy students to the office where corrective measures will be taken. The principal shall make the determination if tardiness is becoming a pattern and will assign appropriate corrective measures such as:

1. The principal or classroom teacher will assign reasonable punishment.
2. The student may be assigned unexcused absences for one or more periods.
3. If the principal determines that a pattern of tardiness is established, the student may be suspended, barred from extracurricular activities, and/or a parent conference arranged.

TRUANCY: TRUANT'S ALTERNATIVE AND OPTIONAL EDUCATION PROGRAM:

A student who is absent from school without parental approval or knowledge shall be deemed truant. A chronic or habitual truant, as defined by the Illinois School Code, is "a child subject to compulsory school attendance who is absent without valid cause from attendance for 5 percent or more of the previous 180 regular attendance days." The parent or guardian will be notified that a doctor's excuse will be required after the 9th absence.

Chronic truancy will be referred to the Regional Office of Education's Truancy Officer. The Truancy Alternative Program may then refer the case to the State's Attorney for possible legal action and reporting to officials under the Juvenile Court Act. If chronic truancy persists students will be referred to the district's credit recovery classroom or the ROE 20 Learning Alternative Branch. Truancy can be considered and referrals will be made to the Truant's Alternative and Optional Education Program (TAOEP) through the Regional Office of Education for the following:

- Students who are absent "without valid cause" (unexcused) for 5% or more of attendance days
- Students who have 6 unexcused absences within the school year
- Students who have 6 or more unexcused tardies or early departures in one quarter
- Failure to sign in or sign out at the main office door when returning to or leaving school
- Skipping school
- Persistent morning tardies
- Persistent early departures
- The principal or his/her representative will decide and issue unexcused absences. Parental permission to be absent from school does not necessarily mean an excused absence.

The following actions or consideration may result from unexcused absence:

1. The student will be barred from any or all extracurricular activities scheduled for that date.
2. The student may have make-up time for credit in the class missed.

3. After nine (9) unexcused absences, discipline will result, a parent conference arranged and a referral submitted to the Regional Office 20 Truancy Officer (the Pope County State's Attorney will receive notice of the truant issue of the student).

4. Skip and related type absences may also result in some type of detention or suspension.

SUPPORTIVE SERVICES:

Support services to truant or chronically truant students will include but are not limited to:

- Parent conferences
- Conference with administration and social worker
- Student counseling
- Family counseling
- Information regarding community services and other services that meet the student's individual needs.