

**ADMINISTRATIVE POLICIES OF THE  
MILWAUKEE PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

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**ADMINISTRATIVE POLICY 8.13  
STUDENT ATTENDANCE / ABSENCES / TARDIES**

**(1) OVERVIEW**

(a) Regular school attendance is expected of all MPS students. Education studies indicate that regular school attendance is a key factor in the successful academic achievement, positive social interactions, high self-esteem of school-age children, and future employment and earning capacity. Children who attend school regularly are less likely to become involved in drugs, alcohol, and youth violence. In this sense, good school attendance has a clear link to the economic vitality of the community.

(b) Chapter 118.15(1)(a), Wisconsin Statutes, requires that any person (parent, guardian, foster parent, or relative placement) having under their control (has responsibility for) a student who is between the ages of six and eighteen years shall cause the student to attend school regularly (religious holidays excepted) during all scheduled hours, full-time until the end of the term, quarter, or semester of the school year in which the student becomes eighteen years of age, graduates, or is relieved of school attendance with a legal excuse.

(c) The Milwaukee Board of School Directors requires all teachers employed in school district to submit to the school attendance officer daily attendance reports on all pupils under their charge [Wis. Stat. § 118.16(4)(a)]. Teachers are required to take attendance by period if the school uses period attendance and by half-day if the school uses daily attendance. General attendance calculations for daily and period attendance are defined as follows:

**1. General Attendance Calculation**

a. Students who receive at least 66% of district-supervised educational services for the day have accrued a full day (1.0) of actual attendance for that day — for example, students in grades 7-12 who attend more than 264 minutes of the school day or students in K-6 who attend more than 254 minutes.

b. Students who receive at least 33%, but less than 66%, of district-supervised educational services for the day have accrued a half day (0.5) of actual attendance for that day — for example, students in grades 7-12 who attend more than 133 minutes of the school day or students in K-6 who attend more than 127 minutes.

c. Students who receive less than 33% of district-supervised educational services for the day have accrued no attendance for that day.

**2. Period Attendance**

a. A student who misses more than 70% of the class period shall be marked as an unexcused absent, but still must be able to gain access to the class or designated area. For example, a student arriving less than 34 minutes late to a 48-minute period shall be marked tardy and allowed into class; however, a student arriving 34 or more minutes late to a 48-minute period shall be marked unexcused absent.

b. The school office must ensure that attendance records accurately reflect suspensions and disciplinary removals. In instances in which the student is reinstated early from a suspension, the school office must correct the attendance record.

**(2) LEGALLY EXCUSED ABSENCES**

**(a) School-excused Absences**

1. An absence by a student may be excused by the school principal when the school has received a report of the absence from the parent or guardian in writing; via electronic format (for

example, by transcribed telephone calls or transcribed voicemail, e-mail, or fax); or by any other method of personal contact of which a written record is kept by the school.

2. The school shall consider the following reasons listed as legally excused absences:
  - a. personal illness
  - b. funerals
  - c. required legal appearances
  - d. designated religious holidays
  - e. medical or dental appointments
  - f. family emergencies — student absences which contribute to the health, safety, or financial wellbeing of the family
  - g. driver's examinations
  - h. educationally beneficial activities approved by the school principal
  - i. district-sponsored activities approved by the school principal
  - j. school suspensions up to 15 days, only during the expulsion process.

All other absences are to be regarded as trancies.

**(b) Personal Illness — Temporary Medical Condition — Wis. Stat. § 118.15(3)(a)**

1. Any student who is excused because the student is temporarily not in proper physical or mental condition to attend school, but who can be expected to return to school upon termination or abatement of the illness or condition, can be legally excused from school attendance.

2. The principal may request that the parent or guardian obtain a written statement from a licensed physician, dentist, chiropractor, optometrist, psychologist, or Christian Science practitioner who is living and residing in this state and who is listed in the *Christian Science Journal* as sufficient proof of the physical or mental condition of the student. The statement, which must be in writing, shall state the time period for which it is valid, said period not to exceed thirty (30) days.

3. When a medical statement is requested, notification of the absence by the parent or guardian in person, in writing, or by phone, to the school is not sufficient to excuse the absence. The absence is considered a truancy until the principal receives the requested statement.

**(c) Parent-excused Absences**

Parents or guardians have the right to excuse a student's absence from school, for any or no reason, by submitting written notification prior to the student's absence from school. A student may be excused for up to ten days per year under this provision [Wis. Stat § 118.15(3)(c)].

**(3) TARDIES**

**(a) Tardy Students**

1. Schools must accept all enrolled students who have not been suspended or expelled who present themselves for daily attendance.

2. Students are not to be sent home or refused admission to school for tardiness.

3. Students who arrive late for any class period must be allowed to proceed to their classes or designated area after obtaining proper documentation of their tardiness. Schools must ensure their admittance to class.

4. Schools may impose disciplinary sanctions pursuant to the District Disciplinary Procedures for persistent tardiness to school or class. Out-of-school suspensions for persistent tardiness are prohibited.

5. Schools may refer students with chronic and persistent tardiness to school-support personnel for intervention.

6. Minutes of absence due to tardiness to school that exceed 33% of the instructional minutes of the day will result in a half-day absence; those minutes that exceed 66% of the instructional minutes of the day will result in a whole-day absence.

**(b) Tardiness of Students Due to Winter Weather Conditions**

1. Winter weather conditions from time to time may negatively affect the level of bus service. The most common problem is buses running late. While bus contractors make every effort to run on schedule, road conditions may make this impossible.

2. Students should not be penalized by the school for a situation over which they have no control; therefore, principals are to comply with the following:

- a. Students who arrive late due to late buses are not to be marked tardy on any school record.
- b. These same students are to be entitled to participate in the breakfast program.
- c. Students who become tired of waiting at their bus stops, return home, and are absent from school are to be marked absent.

**(4) SCHOOL NOTIFICATION**

When students are absent, it is the responsibility of the parents or legal guardians to:

- (a) contact the school as early as possible, by phone or any other means, to inform the school of the absence;
- (b) provide whatever information concerning the absence that is available at the time; and
- (c) provide a report of the absence either in writing; via electronic format (for example, by transcribed telephone calls or transcribed voicemail, e-mail, or fax); or by any other method of personal contact of which a written record is kept by the school.

**(5) PARENTAL NOTIFICATION**

(a) At the start of each school day, the school shall determine which students enrolled in the school are absent from school and whether each absence is excused.

(b) It is the responsibility of each school to attempt to contact the parents or guardians, by phone, within two hours after it has been determined that their children are absent from school without any notification to the school by the parents or guardians.

(c) If there has been no success contacting the parents or guardians by phone, it is the additional responsibility of each school to attempt to contact the parents or guardians by another means before the end of the second day after receiving a report of an unexcused absence [Wis. Stat § 118.16(2)(c)].

**(6) MAKE-UP ASSIGNMENTS AND EXAMINATIONS — WIS. STAT. § 118.15(4)(B)**

(a) In all instances of excused and unexcused absences, including suspensions, students are expected to complete a reasonable amount of make-up classwork without penalty. Students shall be given the opportunity to make up work missed during an absence when they return to school. It is the responsibility of the students and their parents or guardians to contact the teacher(s) to make arrangements for making up work missed during an absence from school.

(b) The respective teachers shall identify make-up work and a reasonable timeframe for its completion. If any question arises as to the appropriateness or feasibility of making up a particular assignment, the teacher shall confer with the building principal to discuss the extent to which make-up work or substitute assignments are possible.

**(7) PART-TIME ATTENDANCE**

Upon the principal’s recommendation, the Board may permit students to attend school part-time during the last school year preceding graduation from high school if the student is in good standing academically.

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