

## **5001 Compulsory Attendance and Excessive Absenteeism**

*"School success is 90 percent showing up; the other half is mental." Yogi Berra*

Research on policies and practices that effectively encourage regular student attendance share some key components:

1. Education of parents regarding school attendance requirements.
2. Effective policies and practices to monitor attendance.
3. Clear definition of excessive absenteeism and a two-stage response to excessive absences.

The board has considered this educational research and used it to create the following policy on Compulsory Attendance and Excessive Absenteeism.

### **Required Attendance**

Every person residing in the school district who has legal or actual charge or control of any child who is of mandatory attendance age shall cause that child to attend a public or private school regularly unless the child has graduated from high school or has been allowed to disenroll pursuant to this policy.

### **Mandatory Attendance Age**

All children who are or will turn six years old before January 1 of the current school year are of mandatory attendance age. Children who have not turned eighteen years of age are of mandatory attendance age.

A child who will not reach age 7 before January 1 of the current school year may be excused from mandatory attendance if the child's parent or guardian completes an affidavit affirming that alternative educational arrangements have been made for the child. A copy of the required affidavit is attached to this policy.

### **Discontinuing Enrollment – 5 Year Old Students**

The person seeking to discontinue the enrollment of a student who will not reach six years of age prior to January 1 of the current school year shall submit a signed, written request and to the superintendent using the form which is attached to this policy. The school district may request written verification or documentation that the person signing the form has legal or actual charge or control of the student. The school district shall discontinue the enrollment of any student who satisfies these requirements. Any

student whose enrollment is discontinued under this subsection shall not be eligible to reenroll in this school district until the beginning of the following school year unless otherwise required by law.

### **Discontinuing Enrollment – 16 and 17 Year Old Students**

Only children who are at least 16 years of age may be disenrolled from the district. The person seeking to discontinue the child's enrollment shall submit a signed, written request and submit it to the superintendent using the form which is attached to this policy. The district will follow the procedures outlined on the attached form in considering requests to disenroll.

Only children disenrolling to attend a non-accredited school may be exempt from this policy. The person with legal or actual charge or control of the child must provide the superintendent with a copy of the signed request submitted to the State Department of Education for attending non-accredited schools. The superintendent may confirm the validity of the submission with the State Department of Education.

### **Attendance Officer**

Each building principal is designated as an attendance officer for the district. Each building principal, at his or her discretion, may delegate these responsibilities to any other qualified individual. The attendance officer is responsible for enforcing the provisions of state law relating to compulsory attendance. This responsibility includes but is not limited to filing a report with the county attorney of the county in which a student resides. Compensation for the duties of attendance officer is included in the salary for the superintendent or designee.

### **Expectations for Regular Attendance:**

1. Students are expected to attend every class, every day.
2. The only "excused" absences shall be:
  - a.) absences when a licensed health care provider has confirmed in writing that, in his/her professional medical opinion and within his/her scope of practice, the student or a child whom the student is parenting is so physically or mentally ill that attendance of the student is impracticable or impossible;
  - b.) absences when the Nebraska State Patrol confirms in writing that weather conditions have made the roads impassable so that the student's attendance impracticable or impossible;
  - c.) student attendance at a school-sponsored activity;

- d.) student has been suspended or expelled from school by the school district; and
  - e.) absences required by law enforcement, child protective services or a court of competent jurisdiction, confirmed in writing to the school district.
3. All other absences, including absences for minor illnesses, family events, routine medical appointments are simply "absences."
  4. Students must not be absent from any course more than seven days in any given quarter in order to earn academic credit for that course for that quarter. Students may lose credit in any given course due to absences. Students may appeal that loss of credit to his/her building principal.

**When students are absent from school, district staff will respond as follows:**

**First Stage Response to Absences**

1. A member of building staff will contact parent via telephone for every absence if the parent has not contacted the school in advance.
2. The Principal or designee shall contact the parents/guardians of any student who has missed 7, 10, and 15 days of school or the hourly equivalent and inform parents/guardians of the possible negative impact that further absences from school may have on the student's academic success.
3. A student who has 5 days of absence shall have a letter, phone call, or email sent to their parent(s)/guardian(s) notifying them of the attendance policy and the student's status.
4. A student who has 9 days of absence per year shall have a letter sent to their parent(s)/guardian(s) notifying them of the attendance policy and the student's status.
5. A student who is absent 15 or more days per year shall have a letter sent to their parent(s)/guardian(s) notifying them that he/she may be defined as having a record of excused absences.
6. At any point, the principal and/or the principal's designee may request one or more meetings with the parent/guardian for the purpose of addressing barriers to attendance. A collaborative attendance plan will be developed to reduce barriers and improve attendance. If the parent/guardian refuses to participate in such meetings, the principal shall place documentation of such refusal in the child's attendance record and proceed to create the attendance plan. The collaborative attendance plan shall consider, but not be limited to:
  - i. The physical, mental, or behavioral health of the child
  - ii. Educational counseling
  - iii. Educational evaluation

- iv. Referral to community agencies for economic reasons
- v. Family or individual counseling
- vi. Assisting the family in working with other community services
- vii. Referral to restorative justice practices or services

**Second Stage Response to Absences**

Students who accrue more than 20 absences in a school year may be referred to the county attorney for action under NEB. REV. STAT. § 43-247(3)(a) and (b).

Adopted on: 07-10-2023

Revised on: \_\_\_\_\_

Reviewed on: \_\_\_\_\_