

# WATERFORD SCHOOL DISTRICT ATTENDANCE GUIDELINES

School attendance has a significant impact on a student's academic success starting in kindergarten and continuing through high school. Each school day is important to ensure students acquire the knowledge and skills they need to be prepared for the next grade level. If a student misses 3 days a month throughout the school year, it equates to 5 weeks of missed instruction. Capitalizing on each and every moment is important. Absences—excused or unexcused— can add up to too much time lost in the classroom and leave students falling behind. This is as true for kindergartners as it is for high school students.

## DEFINITIONS

- Attendance cap:** Total number of absences allowed. A student should miss no more than 10 excused or unexcused days per year.
- Unexcused Absence:** An absence when the parent/guardian does not call to excuse the absence and, as a result, receives an automated alert.
- Excused Absence:** An absence when the parent/guardian calls the school within 48 hours of the absence to inform the school that the student will not be in attendance. These absences still count towards the attendance cap.
- Exempt Absence:** An absence that is reported but does not count toward the attendance cap. To obtain an exemption the student/parent must provide one of the following to the building administrator:
- Documentation from a physician, dentist, orthodontist, or therapist stating the student had an appointment that required being absent for a portion of the school day.
  - Documentation from a physician stating the student was ill and needed to be absent from school for a specified period of time.
  - Documentation of a religious holiday, funeral of a close family member, legal requirements, or out of school suspensions.
- Tardy:** Failure to be present at the start of class.

## DISTRICT PROTOCOL

- At 5 absences:** The school will make personal contact with the student and parent/guardian.
- At 7 absences:** The school will mail a letter home to the parent and place a copy in the student's educational record.
- At 10 absences:** For students in grades K-5, the school will complete a referral to the Waterford Success Program and place a copy in the student's educational record. The Program Director will meet with the family to explore barriers to attendance and develop an Attendance Intervention Plan. For students in grades 6 – 12, school personnel will arrange a meeting with the parent and student to develop an Attendance Intervention Plan. A copy of the plan will be placed in the student's educational record.
- At 20 absences:** The student/family will be referred to the Oakland County Truancy Program to begin the court process.

**The State of Michigan Compulsory School Attendance law requires that every parent, guardian, or other person in this state having control and charge of a child shall send that child to a public school during the entire school year from the time the child turns the age of 6. The child's attendance shall be continuous and consecutive. A violation of this law occurs if a child is repeatedly absent from school without valid excuse. These cases are handled in District Court.**