

## **STUDENT ATTENDANCE, ACADEMIC ENGAGEMENT, AND TRUANCY PREVENTION POLICY**

The Metropolitan School District of Washington Township Board of Education believes that presence in the classroom enables the student to participate in instruction, class discussions, and other related activities. As such, regular attendance and classroom participation are integral to instilling incentives for the student to excel. Students are bound by the requirements of Indiana's compulsory attendance law. Attendance shall mean to be physically present in a school or at another location where the school's educational program is being conducted during regular school hours on a day in which the educational program in which the student is enrolled is being offered (including a mandatory videoconference, phone conference, or other virtual environment during e-learning days or as part of a continuous learning program). Academic engagement is the quality of students' participation or connection with the schooling endeavor and hence with activities, values, people, goals, and places that comprise it, and encompasses the academic, behavioral, and emotional enrichment of each student.

Attendance shall be required of all District students, except those exempted under other provisions of State law, during the days and hours that the school is in session. Daily attendance will be appropriately recorded, and reports will be submitted to the IDOE in accordance with IDOE guidance and formatting/submission requirements.

Content may be delivered onsite in person or off-site during instructional days in the academic school year. If the District conducts more than three (3) virtual days when at least 50% of the District's in-person enrolled students attend virtually or online, at least 50% of instructional time on any subsequent virtual days will consist of teacher directed synchronous instruction. Where instruction is less than 100% teacher directed synchronous instruction, the remainder of instruction will be asynchronous.

Exceptions to compulsory attendance are established in IC 20-33-2 and shall be recognized by the District. For any of these exceptions a student shall be recorded as excused absent from school.

The Superintendent shall require, from the parent of each student or from an adult student who has been absent for any reason, a written statement of the cause for such absence. The Board reserves the right to verify such statements and to investigate the cause of each:

- A. prolonged absence;
- B. absence of more than three (3) days duration;
- C. repeated unexplained absence and tardiness.

At a minimum, in accordance with Indiana law, the Board considers the following as exceptions to compulsory attendance, and may not be recorded as absences or penalized by the school in any manner:

- A. Service as a page for or as an honoree of the general assembly (not recorded as absence)
- B. Serve on a precinct election board or as a helper to a political candidate or to a political party on the date of each general, city, or town, special, and primary election at which the student works
- C. Subpoena to appear in court as a witness in a judicial proceeding
- D. Ordered to active duty with the Indiana National Guard for not more than ten (10) days in a school year
- E. Member of the Indiana wing of the civil air patrol who is participating in a civil air patrol for not more than five (5) days in a school year
- F. “educationally related nonclassroom activity” as defined in I.C. 20-33-2-17.5 and approved in writing by the Principal.
- G. Student or member of student’s household participates or exhibits in the Indiana State Fair for educational purposes, for not more than five (5) days in a school year, if student is in good academic standing, as determined by the school corporation

The following absences shall be considered excused:

- A. Illness verified by a note from the parent
- B. Illness verified by a note from a physician
- C. Recovery from accident
- D. Professional appointments – Parents are encouraged to schedule medical, dental, legal, and other necessary appointments other than during school hours. When appointments are necessary during the school day, the student shall report back to school immediately after the appointment with a signed statement from the doctor, dentist, lawyer, counselor, etc.
- E. Death in the immediate family or of a relative
- H. Observation or celebration of a bona fide religious holiday
- I. Maternity
- J. Military connected families’ absences related to deployment and return
- K. Such other good cause as may be acceptable to the Superintendent or his or her designee or permitted by law

An unexcused absence is any absence not covered under the definition of excused absence or an exception to compulsory attendance. An out-of-school suspension shall not be considered an unexcused absence.

A habitually truant student may not participate in extra-curricular or cocurricular activities, unless:

- A. at the Corporation's discretion, in accordance with a plan that meets the requirements for a Student Attendance Plan as described below (even if the student is beyond grade 6) and signed by the student and a parent, provided such participation is permitted by the association governing the activity (if applicable);
- B. after one month of attendance without any unexcused absences and provided such participation is permitted by the association governing the activity (if applicable); or
- C. in accordance with an IEP, Section 504 Plan, Service Plan, or other comparable plan created to meet legal duty to a student with a disability under federal or state law.

### **Truancy Prevention Policy**

Repeated instances of unexcused absences may result in disciplinary action up to suspension or expulsion of a student.

Truancy is defined as willful refusal to attend school as required by the compulsory attendance law.

The Board shall consider each student assigned to a program of other guided learning experiences, to be in regular attendance for the program provided that they report to such staff member they are assigned for guidance at the place or in the manner in which they are conducting study, and regularly demonstrate progress toward the objectives of the course of study.

**Absent student** – A student is an “absent student” if the student **is enrolled in kindergarten through grade 6** and is absent five (5) days within a ten (10) week period without being excused or being absent in conformity with a note on file from the student's doctor, therapist, or other professional requesting frequent absences be excused under the student's IEP, Service Plan (developed under 511 IAC 7-34), Choice Scholarship Plan (developed under 511 IAC 7-49), or a plan developed under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, 29 U.S.C. 794.

**Parent Notice** – The Corporation will immediately provide the following written notifications to the parent of an absent student :

- 1) The student is an “absent student” under the definition above.
- 2) The parent is responsible for monitoring the absent student's attendance and ensuring the absent student attends school in accordance with compulsory attendance laws.
- 3) The Corporation will be initiating truancy prevention measures regarding the absent student.
- 4) The parent is required to attend an attendance conference regarding such truancy prevention measures.
- 5) If the absent student meets the requirements of a habitual truant, the Superintendent or attendance officer of the school is required to report the student

to an intake officer of the juvenile court or the department of child services in accordance with IC 20-33-2-25. The juvenile court may determine that the student is committing a delinquent act as provided under IC 31-37-2-3. And the parent of the student may be subject to prosecution under IC 35-46-1-4.

**Attendance Conference** –The Corporation shall hold an attendance conference to discuss the absent student's absences and establish a plan for the student to prevent future absences. At least the following individuals must be present:

- A. Representative of the school
- B. Teacher of the absent student
- C. Absent student's parent
- D. Representative chosen by the absent student's parent who may provide insight into the student's absenteeism *if* the student's parent makes a request to the school that the representative attend and provides notice to the school regarding the identification of the representative at least forty-eight (48) hours before the attendance conference.

This attendance conference shall be held no more than five (5) instructional days after the absent student's fifth absence, regardless of whether the absent student's parent or representative in (4) above is able to attend. The Corporation shall make all reasonable efforts to hold such conference on a date and time that works for the schedule of the absent student's parent.

**Absent Student Attendance Plan** – Such plan may include:

- A. wraparound services that are able to be provided to the absent student to ensure the absent student attends school;
  - B. a specific description of the behavior that is required or prohibited for the student;
  - C. any additional disciplinary action the school will take if the absent student does not comply with the plan;
  - D. if applicable, a referral to counseling, mentoring, or other services for the student;
  - E. if applicable, whether a parent is expected to attend the "additional services" described below; to the extent possible, the signature of the parent of the absent student agreeing to comply with the plan; and
- 6) the period for which the plan is effective, not to exceed forty-five (45) instructional days after the plan was established.

**Additional Services** – The Corporation will offer additional counseling or services to an absent student if the school determines that the absent student's absences are related to any of the following:

- 1) the absent student's pregnancy;
- 2) that the absent student is in foster care (as defined in IC 31-9-2-46.7);
- 3) that the absent student is homeless; or
- 4) that the absent student has a severe or life threatening illness or related treatment.

The Superintendent is authorized to develop administrative guidelines for student attendance, e-learning, and truancy.

The Superintendent or an attendance officer having jurisdiction shall report a child who is habitually absent from school to an intake officer of the juvenile court or the Department of Child Services.

The Superintendent shall ensure that the Board's policy on attendance and the District's administrative guidelines are made available to all parents and adult students.

I.C. 9-24-2-1, -4

I.C. 20-33-2-3.2

I.C. 20-33-2-17.7

I.C. 20-33-2-4 et seq.

I.C. 20-33-2-14

I.C. 20-33-2.5

511 IAC 1-3-1

MSD of Washington Township

Adopted: 10/16/24

Revised: [date]