

Pirate Policies

Attendance

MERRILLVILLE'S ATTENDANCE POLICY

PHILOSOPHY

Regular attendance and promptness are essential to good performance in school. Absence from school is often the greatest single cause of poor performance and achievement. Since the learning process is a progressive activity, each day's lesson is built upon those class activities that took place on previous days. Whenever a class is missed for whatever reason, that experience can never be completely made up.

Since responsibility is a learned behavior and regular school attendance patterns encourage the development of responsible patterns of behavior, each student attending Merrillville High School is expected to make every effort possible to be in school each day. The attendance policy is developed with the idea that if a student is not present in school, he/she is not learning. Merrillville High School attendance regulations are expressed to encourage attendance and to encourage an "on the job" attitude for students to follow and to maintain throughout life. **Attendance is recorded per semester.** In accordance with the Merrillville High School attendance philosophy, a student must be in attendance in each class for a minimum of seventy-five (75) percent of each trimester in order to receive credit for a course or courses. (NOTE: ALL ABSENCES REGARDLESS OF REASON WILL COUNT TOWARD THE TWENTY-FIVE (25) PERCENT MAXIMUM.)

STATE LAW

Following is the Indiana compulsory school attendance statute (IC 20-8.1-3-20) Parent to Produce Certificate of Child's Incapacity on Demand: If a parent does not send his child to school because of the child's illness or mental or physical incapacity, it is unlawful for the parent to fail or refuse to produce a certificate of the incapacity for an attendance officer within six (6) days after it is demanded. The certificate required under this section shall be signed by an Indiana physician or by an individual holding a license to practice osteopathy or chiropractic in this state or be a Christian Science practitioner who resides in Indiana and is listed in the Christian Science Journal.

Tardies

Tardies are defined as arriving late to class without an excused pass from anywhere in the building. The excused pass must be given by a staff member. Students are considered tardy to class if they are less than 15 minutes late without an excused pass. Students will receive detention slips from teachers within the 15 minute time period.

1. Tardy:
 - 1stWritten Warning
 - 2ndWritten Warning
 - 3rdONE after school detention-Teacher will assign
 - 4thStudent may continue in the class with a grade of "W/F", withdraw to study hall with a grade of "W/F", audit, or may elect to go through the expulsion process.
2. Loitering, more than 2-14 minutes late to class (a detention will be issued)
3. Truancy, more than 15 minutes late:
 - 1st..... 2 Detentions for each period/day missed.
 - 2nd..... 3 Friday Schools
 - 3rd..... 5 Friday Schools

Truancies

Students truant from school will be assigned to after school detention or Friday School(s). The Principal or his designee will make this determination based upon the student's record. **A truancy occurs when a student fails to attend a class or classes without permission from the administration or the student's parents/guardians and a valid reason.** Truancy applies to students who remain in restrooms due to illness without reporting to a teacher, administrator, or nurse.

CALLS FOR ABSENCES

Parents/guardians must call STUDENT SERVICES (650-5380) by 10:00 a.m. if a student is going to be absent, tardy, or leave school for an appointment. (If the parent explains on the student's first day of absence that they will be gone for an extended period of time, long illness, etc., there is no need to call back everyday.) Absences without a parent phone call will be considered truanancies / unexcused. Calls can be received on a 24-hour automated voice system. Calls must be received within three days of the absence. **THE FIRST 5 CALLS GUARANTEE AN EXCUSED ABSENCE. Beginning with the Sixth (6TH) phone call the absence is considered unexcused unless a doctor's note is presented.** Secretaries answering the phone will ask the reason for the student's absence. Parents should ask to discuss unusual circumstances for a student's absence with the student's principal.

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Absences will be designated as **Excused or Unexcused.**

After a student has accumulated his/her fifth excused and/or unexcused absence from any class in a semester, he/she will be notified that a sixth absence may result in a loss of credit. The student may continue in the class without credit (audit), withdraw to study hall, or may elect to go through the expulsion process. Students may elect to appeal this decision by going to the high school principal or designee. A student may be put on an attendance contract after the 4th absence.

GUIDELINES FOR EXCUSED ABSENCES: THESE ABSENCES ARE LIMITED

Prolonged Medical Conditions: An illness that results in long-term illness must be verified by a written doctor's statement as to the length of the illness and necessary absence.

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(Note: ALL ABSENCES REGARDLESS OF REASON WILL COUNT TOWARDS THE TWENTY-FIVE (25) PERCENT MAXIMUM.) Students may appeal to his/her grade level administrator.

1. Parent phone call, **ONLY on the first five (5) absences;**
2. Student illness, ONLY with a doctor's note or the first five (5) absences with a parent phone call;
3. College visitation – seniors are allowed only two (2) per school year. The college must be beyond a 25-mile radius from the high school. A signed statement on their letterhead, with your name and date visited, to be returned to the Attendance Office the next day;
4. Family Vacation, (limited to 5 days);
5. Other emergencies and unusual circumstances as approved by principal;
6. Physician's statement (doctor's note must be presented to Student Services Office the day of return) If student fails to return without a doctor's note, this absence will be considered an unexcused absence;
7. Death in the immediate family;
8. Death of someone outside of immediate family with prior parental consent;
9. Required court appearance;
10. Medical/dental appointments that could not be scheduled outside the school day. (Students are expected to attend school except for the time of the appointment). Students must bring verification of doctor's appointment upon return. If student fails to bring verification upon his/her return, it will be considered an unexcused absence.
11. Religious holidays;
12. Military examinations (arrangements must be made in advance and appointments must be verified);
13. Working at the polls;
14. Serve as a page in the Indiana General Assembly;
15. National Guard duty;
16. Driver's examination.

UNEXCUSED

These are unlimited absences up to 25%.

1. Out of class suspensions;
 2. Out of school suspensions; Students can make up work, **and may receive credit for work.**
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1. No phone call from parent (parent has 72 hours to call from time of absence). No exceptions.
 2. Truancy from class/school. If you are more than 15 minutes late to class it will be considered truancy.
 3. Bus service is provided, if you choose other transportation and are late it will be considered unexcused.
 4. Sixth (6th) absence with or without a parent phone call. (See guidelines for excused absences for exceptions)