

## ATTENDANCE POLICY

Indiana State Compulsory education laws require all students seventeen years of age or less to attend school. Your child is expected to attend each class period, every school day. Non-attendance, and in particular truancy, is a violation of both Merrillville Community School Corporation and Clifford Pierce Middle School's attendance policy. Regular attendance at school is one of the most important aspects of a student's life. It is imperative that all students be in attendance in order to get the most from class work. It is very important that an accurate record of attendance be kept for each student.

### IMPORTANT ATTENDANCE INFORMATION

#### WHEN YOUR CHILD MUST BE ABSENT FROM SCHOOL PARENTS/GUARDIANS ARE REQUIRED TO CALL THE MAIN OFFICE PRIOR TO THE START OF THE SCHOOL DAY.

1. More than five (5) days of absences is considered excessive, except in cases of extended illness or extremely unusual circumstances. Days of suspension for disciplinary reasons will not be counted toward the five (5) day total. After 5 parent calls, in order for an absence to be exempt it must meet the following criteria:

*Exempt Absences*~ A student may have an excused absence, which is not included in the five (5) limit for the following reasons:

- A. Personal illness requiring a physician's statement
- B. Death in the immediate family
- C. Court appearance required by legal authorities
- D. Religious holidays (request verification)
- E. Absences due to approved school-related field trips, rehearsals, competitions, etc.
- F. Medical and dental appointments (make every effort to schedule after school)
- G. Other emergency or unusual circumstances as approved by a building administrator.

2. Students with excessive attendance problems may be referred to the Lake County Prosecutor's Office or Child Protective Services depending on the circumstances. Further, the school principal may refer the student's name to the Indiana Department of Motor Vehicles. The student will meet with a Guidance Counselor or the School Social Worker and a letter will be sent to the parents before any such action is taken.

3. Parents should make every effort to schedule doctor and dental appointments outside the school day. If a student must be absent for such a reason, the appointment must be verified in writing directly from the medical or dental office.

4. Written excuses for an absence due to a death of a member of the immediate family or relative living at home, religious holiday, or family emergency should be provided by parents or legal guardians and will be placed on file at the school.

5. If a student is truant from school, he/she will not be allowed to attend any extra-curricular activities that day.

#### Non-exempt Absences

1. A notification will be sent to parents on the 5<sup>th</sup> non-exempt absence with a copy of the Indiana Compulsory Law and information concerning the truancy diversion program.
2. The school social worker or counselor will contact the parents on the 7<sup>th</sup> absence to address issues that are impacting consistent attendance.
3. A second notification will be sent to parents on the 9<sup>th</sup> non-exempt absence stating that further absences will be subject to a referral to the Lake County Prosecutor's Office.

4. Students with 10 or more non-exempt absences will be referred to the Lake County Prosecutor's Office. Parents will receive a citation indicating a mandatory appearance to discuss the student's attendance. Failure to appear may result in educational neglect charges being filed.

**VACATIONS~** Absences due to vacations must be pre-arranged with school officials at least one week prior to the start of the vacation. Failure to do so will result in a student marked truant and the student will receive a "0" for the work missed on those days. Students returning from vacation are expected to turn in assignments on the first day they return to school following vacation. NO vacations will be permitted during standardized testing periods or the weeks of final exams.

\*\* Parents may leave a message at any time. Voice mail is available when the school office is closed.

\*\*\*Verify the student's absence whether by telephone, written note from a legal guardian, or with documentation from a medical office.

\*\*\*\*The student shall bear the responsibility for making up all work missed due to any absence. Arrangements must be made with the teacher within a reasonable time (never exceed three days after returning to school).

## Truancy/Tardy Policy

### Tardy

It is extremely important for students to arrive to school on time. Late arrival hinders the child's ability to receive instruction at the beginning of the day with the rest of the classmates. Students who arrive after the school day begins will be considered tardy. Students arriving late to school in the morning must check in at the main office. Our school day begins at 7:30 a.m. Students will be marked tardy to class if they are not in their assigned seat at the beginning of each class.

### Truant

A student is considered truant from school when they are late 15 or more minutes without a legitimate excuse. A student is considered truant from class when they are out of the class without permission for 15 minutes or more. A student is also considered truant when they have an unexcused absence or an absence without a parental call.

The following policy will be implemented for excessive tardiness to class/school during each trimester

- Two (2) unexcused tardies-warning
- Three (3) unexcused tardies-lunch detention
- Four (4) unexcused tardies-after school detention/parent notification
- Five (5) unexcused tardies-and any tardy thereafter = Friday School

### Habitual Truancy and/or Unexcused Absences

In accordance with Indiana State Law Section 18 IC 20-33-2-11. Any student who has accumulated ten (10) days of absences for one (1) school year, which are either truancies, unexcused absences and/or absences without parental phone calls, will be reported to the Lake County Prosecutor's Office as a 'habitually truant and/or unexcused absent student'.

According to the state law, students who are identified as 'habitually absent' may also be reported to the Bureau of Motor Vehicles and may NOT be issued an operator's license or a learner's permit to drive a motor vehicle under IC 9-24-2-1 until the individual is at least eighteen (18) years of age.

### Tardy/Truancy Guidelines

1 Tardy- Warning	9 Tardies- Friday School
2 Tardies or 1 Truancy- Parent Phone Call	10 Tardies or 5 Truancies - In School Suspension/ Suspended from Activities List

<b>3 Tardies- Lunch Detention</b>	<b>11 Tardies- In School Suspension</b>
<b>4 Tardies or 2 Truancies- After School Detention</b>	<b>12 Tardies or 6 Truancies Parent letter and Conference with Administration (Form 16)</b>
<b>5 Tardies- Friday School</b>	<b>7 Truancies - Out of School Suspension/Referral to Department of Child and Family Service (DCFS)</b>
<b>6 Tardies or 3 Truancies- Parent letter and Referral to Guidance/ Attendance Law Letter to Sign</b>	<b>8 Truancies - Referral to Prosecutors Office/Recommendation for Expulsion</b>
<b>7 Tardies- Friday School</b>	
<b>8 Tardies or 4 Truancies- Friday School &amp; Residency referral</b>	