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Top Ten Questions about Attendance and Truancy

1. How do I excuse my child when they are ill?

The easiest way is to contact the school and leave a message that your child is ill. Each school has an attendance hotline where you can leave a message. **Hayward High School's phone number is 715-634-2619 Ext-3 and then follow the prompt (press 3) to excuse your child.** You can also call our attendance secretary at 715-638-9501 to excuse your child. You may also write a note and send it with your child. It is best to call, before 10:00 am and excuse your child the day they are sick.

2. How many times can I excuse my child?

State statutes allow parents/guardians to excuse 10 absences under excused absences and an additional 10 absences that can be excused as pre-arranged absences. A pre-arranged absence form must be filled out, in advance of the absence in order to qualify for this excused absence. **Medically excused absences do not count towards the parent's 10 excused absences. For a medical absence, a slip from the medical provider's office confirming the appointment or medical absence must be submitted to the school.**

3. What is considered an excused absence?

State law cites that students are to be **in school all day, for every hour**. Excused absences include: illness, funerals, and religious holidays. Medical or dental appointments that cannot be scheduled for outside the school day and personal reasons must be cleared by the assistant principal to be counted as an excused absence. Oversleeping or ride problems are not excused under personal reasons.

4. How do I excuse my child for a family trip or other absence that we know about in advance?

A pre-arranged absence form must be filled out, in advance of the absence in order to qualify for this excused absence. Habitually truant students may have pre-arranged absences denied. Limit is 10 absences.

5. What happens if my child is ill for a long period of time or is hospitalized?

Hayward High School makes every effort to assist in maintaining the educational process for an ill student. Please contact our main office at 715-638-9501 to request homework or other assistance. This type of absence is covered under medical absences. Medically excused absences do not count towards the parent's 10 excused absences. For a medical absence, a slip from the medical provider's office confirming the appointment or medical absence must be submitted to the school. For extended illnesses we will make an educational plan that will support the medical needs of the student while also making every effort to continue the student's education.

6. What happens if I use up all 10 excused absences?

After the parent/guardian utilizes all 10 excused absences any further absences must be medically excused or the absence will be considered unexcused.

7. What happens if my student gets an unexcused absence?

In addition to school sanctions which may include detentions and in-school suspensions a simple truancy fine may be imposed (\$200.50) after 3 unexcused absences. After 5 unexcused absences a habitual truancy fine may be imposed (\$200.50). Truancy fines mandate a required appearance in the Sawyer County Truancy Court. After 7 unexcused absences the student will be referred to Sawyer County Human Services for investigation and possible supervision.

8. What responsibility, as a parent/guardian, do I have in my student's attendance?

Compulsory school attendance (WI statute 118.15 and supported by City Ordinance 373) - states that "any person having under control a child who is between the ages of 6 and 18 years shall cause the student to attend school regularly during the full period and hours,...." This means students must attend school unless legally excused and that it is the parent's responsibility to ensure the student is attending. Parents can be held liable for contributing to truancy if adequate effort is not taken to ensure their child is attending.

9. When do absences start over?

Excused and unexcused absences accumulate the whole year but are counted for truancy by the semester. State law says that a student is habitually truant when they have 5 or more unexcused absences in a semester. Unexcused absences for truancy purposes restart at the semester. Excused (10) or pre-arranged (10) absences accumulate over the entire year. They do not start over at the semester.

10. How can my child pay or work off any truancy fines?

The Sawyer County Court system is very accommodating, allowing students to work off fines. Their Youth Alternative Program allows some of the fine amount to be forgiven if students complete an AODA assessment, attend 3 group sessions, and complete community service hours. The county also allows community service in lieu of fines. Additionally, the Hayward High School in cooperation with the Sawyer County court system and Community Service office is developing a program called **Dollar\$ for Day\$**. Dollar\$ for Day\$ has been developed in an attempt to utilize restorative justice to help truant students get back in school, develop consistent attendance habits, increase academic success, and improve school atmosphere and perception from the student's viewpoint.

If you have to report an absence, please contact our **High School Absence Hotline at 715-634-2619 (Ext-3)**. Have a question about an absence or how to excuse one, please contact me at Hayward High School at 715-638-9504. My secretary, Mrs. Freund, is also a valuable resource for answering questions. She can be reached at 715-638-9501. Please feel free to contact us with questions or information.

Thank you
Doug Stark
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