

ATTENDANCE POLICY
RHODE ISLAND SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF
BOARD OF TRUSTEES

PURPOSE

- To promote academic success. Regular attendance is closely linked to academic achievement.
- To encourage responsibility. By setting clear expectations for attendance, students learn the importance of responsibility and commitment.
- To ensure equity. A policy helps ensure that all students have equal access to educational opportunities.
- To support social development. Regular interaction with peers and teachers is essential for social and emotional development.
- To comply with legal requirements. Many educational systems have legal requirements based on student attendance. A well-defined policy helps schools comply with these regulations.

ATTENDANCE / ABSENCE / TARDINESS

Rhode Island law states that every child less than 18 years of age shall regularly attend school during all days and hours that the public schools are in session. It is the responsibility of the parent or guardian to ensure his or her child's attendance at school. (*R.I. Gen. Laws § 16-19-1 and § 16-19-6*).

Daily school attendance is a critical factor in achieving academic and social success. Students who attend school regularly are more successful academically, socially, and emotionally. They are less likely to drop out of school and more likely to continue their education beyond high school. Children who are not in school miss critical information and opportunities for skill development. This is particularly true for students with hearing loss who often do not learn incidentally and require direct teaching of foundational concepts.

Ensuring regular and timely attendance requires school and family collaboration. Therefore, communication with families regarding any unexcused absence is an important intervention by schools. Families have a responsibility to work with the school or ask for help from the school to develop a support plan if attendance and/or punctuality pose a problem.

ABSENCE PROTOCOL

It is the responsibility of parents/guardians to contact the school by 8:00 a.m. when they know their child will be absent and to follow up with a note in the case of an unexcused absence. Email absent@rideaf.net or call 401-222-3525, or 401-216-8425 (VP). A message will be sent by text, phone, and email to families who have not contacted the school to report their child's absence.

TYPES OF ABSENCES

Excused

Any absence verified by written note or phone call from a parent or family member due to:

- Student illness
- Medical, counseling, or court appointment
- Family emergency or death
- Religious holidays
- School-sponsored conferences and events

Unexcused

Unexcused absences are those days out of school that do not qualify as excused absences, such as absences due to:

- missing the school bus
- Employment
- poor planning, or
- cutting class, etc.

Unlawful

An unlawful absence is any absence from school for one or more days with the knowledge and consent of the student's parent or guardian for reasons inconsistent with provisions of state law pertaining to compulsory attendance. (*R.I. Gen. Law § 16-19-1(a)*).

This definition applies to vacations taken beyond the parameters of the adopted school calendar. It does not apply to health problems or unanticipated emergencies.

The parent must assume full legal responsibility under state law. No disciplinary action will be taken against the child, but it is expected that all work that is missed during the absence will be completed.

In serious cases of repeated unlawful absence, the school social worker and/or school counselor will become involved. They will attempt to determine with the parent the cause of the prolonged absences and help prevent further absences. Strategies may

include home visits, daily calls, letters, or referrals for support. Designated staff, with the parent/guardian, will view any information necessary to determine appropriate action. If this intervention is unsuccessful the school will notify the sending school district. (*R.I. Gen. Laws § 16-19-1, § 16-19-4, § 16-19-6, and §16-29-10*).

When a student has 3 unexcused absences on three (3) consecutive days, a call will be made to the student's parents to discuss attendance.

Student absences will be reviewed monthly. When a student has missed ten percent (10%) or more of the number of school days in one month (2 days or more), due to unexcused absences or absences of concern, the family will receive an absenteeism letter. If the student's attendance does not improve (drop below 10%) 4 weeks after receiving the absenteeism letter a meeting will be scheduled with the principal and/or special education director.

Designated staff will attempt to determine with the parent the cause of the prolonged absences and help prevent further absences. Strategies may include home visits, daily calls, letters, or referrals for support. Designated staff, with the parent/guardian, will view any information necessary to determine appropriate action.

Students who miss **30 or more days** of school in one academic year and who are unable to keep up with the academic content are at risk of not being promoted.

TRUANCY

Truancy is the willful, unexcused absence from school by a student for one or more days.

In all cases of truancy, the parent will be notified and a concerted effort will be made to locate the child. A follow-up conference will be held with the child and the parent/guardian.

The outcome of the conference should be a plan of action, including appropriate counseling activities, which will determine the causes of truancy and provide suggestions for the prevention of future occurrences.

In serious cases of repeated unlawful absence, the school social worker will become involved. If this intervention is unsuccessful the school will contact the student's local educational authority (LEA) in the student's home school district. (*R.I. Gen. Laws § 16-19-1, § 16-19-4, § 16-19-6, and §16-29-10*)

TARDINESS TO SCHOOL

School starts at 8:05 AM. Please send an email to absent@rideaf.net or call 401-222-3525 to let us know your child will be tardy. A student is marked tardy if the student is not in the homeroom by 8:15 AM, unless the student is tardy as a result of the late arrival time of the school bus, see below for a list of excused late arrival.

When a student has four (4) unexcused tardies, a **Notice of Tardiness** letter will be sent to the parent.

For unexcused tardy reasons the student may not participate in extracurricular or sports activities for that day if they arrive after 10:00.

Students who arrive late must check in with the front office to receive a late pass. No student arriving at school late will be permitted into class without first signing in at the office and receiving a late pass.

In serious cases of repeated tardiness, more than four (4), a conference may be held with the parent or guardian and the child to develop a plan of action to remediate the problem. Additional instances of tardiness will result in referral to the school social worker, school counselor, and the principal or designee.

EXCUSED LATE ARRIVALS

- Late school bus arrivals.
- Doctor appointments with a note from a parent or an appointment card from the doctor
- Personal illness (with a note from parent).
- A note, email, or phone call must be received on the day of the late arrival for it to be excused. Please send an email to absent@rideaf.net or call 222-3525 to inform the school of your child's late arrival.

REQUESTS FOR EARLY DISMISSAL

RI School for the Deaf recognizes its responsibility for providing effective safeguards to ensure the safety and well-being of all its students. ***Unless the school is informed in writing (Note or email) by 12:00 PM, students will be transported home on the school buses provided by the student's home district.***

On occasion, the need arises to have a child dismissed from school per parental request, before the end of the school day for medical appointments, etc.

Students leaving school before the end of the school day, or students not traveling home on their regular school buses will be dismissed from school under the following guidelines:

- Parents wishing to have their child excused from school early or to have their child transported from school in a manner other than the school bus are required to submit a request in writing (note, email or text) specifying the date, time, reason for early dismissal, and the name of the adult who will be picking up the child.
- At the time of early dismissal, the parent or adult specified in the written request to pick up the child must report to the Information Office. This person will be required to show a picture form of identification. The student will be released only into the custody of the person designated in the note.
- In cases of divorce or separation, the school will only honor the request of the individual(s) legally entrusted with the care of the child. Appropriate legal paperwork must be on file with the school.

Faculty, staff, and administrators of RISDeaf shall not be involved in the transportation of students without special permission from the Director. RISDeaf staff does not transport students in their personal vehicles. For urgent circumstances and with written parental permission (note, email or text) RISDeaf staff could transport a student in a school-owned vehicle.

PARTICIPATION IN EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Students with an unexcused absence from school for more than half a day the day of the extracurricular/after school activity are not permitted to participate in the extracurricular/after school activities. *The Principal and/or Director of Athletics and After-school Programs may grant exceptions to this rule.*

PARTICIPATION IN EVENING/WEEKEND ACTIVITIES

Students must attend a full day of school prior to evening or weekend activities such as sports games and tournaments, overnight field trips etc. unless the absence is excused.

LEAVING SCHOOL WITHOUT AUTHORIZATION

Students may not leave the classroom, school building, or school grounds without authorization. Students leaving campus without prior written permission during school hours will face disciplinary action.

In such cases of elopement (unexcused leaving of school grounds), a concerted effort will be made to locate the student, and if after a **20-minute search**, the child cannot be located, the parent, local police, and the student's local school district will be notified. At the initiative of the Director, a follow-up conference may be held with the student, the parent, following teacher, school counselor and principal and any other designated staff,

to determine the cause of the student's leaving, and to plan an appropriate course of action for the prevention of future occurrences. In serious cases of repeated occurrences, the local school district, parent, and a RI School for the Deaf administrator and/or other designated staff will convene to determine appropriate safeguards.

MIDDLE AND HIGH SCHOOL SPECIFIC GUIDELINES

ABSENCE

Middle school students will be given a zero for the day of an unexcused absence, make-up work will be provided at the discretion of the teachers.

Students 18 and older are responsible to report their absence to absent@rideaf.net or call 401-222-3525.

TARDINESS TO CLASS

It is the responsibility of students to arrive at their next class on time. Passing time in the hallways does not allow for extended socializing. Chronic tardiness to class may result in lunch detention, required make-up of missed work, and a meeting with the teacher.

HALL PASSES

Students leaving a classroom during instructional time must be signed out by the teacher using the hall pass in their student agenda book.

Repeated tardiness from class to class may warrant a conference with the school principal and/or designated staff.

MAKE-UP WORK

It is the responsibility of the student to make arrangements with their/his/her teachers to make up work and receive credit when they miss instruction. Students will be allowed to make up work only if the absence, late arrival, or early dismissal is excused.

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