

8312 EXCESSIVE ABSENTEEISM

The Grand Island Public Schools strongly advocates that regular attendance is essential for all students to obtain maximum opportunities from the education program. Parents and students alike are encouraged to ensure an absence from school is a necessary and unavoidable absence. Students shall attend school unless excused by the principal or designee. This policy, developed in collaboration with the county attorney, is written to address the problem of excessive absenteeism.

Excessive absenteeism is the failure to attend school for the minimum number of days established in the school calendar by the board. The Grand Island Public Schools sets the minimum number of days at 95% of days that the student's school is open and in session.

The superintendent shall designate the building administrator as the attendance officer. The attendance officer will investigate the report of any child who may be in violation of the state's compulsory attendance statutes.

If any student has accumulated absences of a total of more than 5% of the days, or the hourly equivalent, of the current required attendance days for the previous and current semester, the school shall render all services in its power to compel the student's attendance. These services include but are not limited to the following:

1. Verbal or written communication by school officials with the person or persons who have legal or actual charge or control of any child; and
2. A meeting or meetings between the building administrator (school attendance officer) or designee, and/or school social worker, the student's parent/guardian and the student (if necessary) to develop a plan to solve the excessive absenteeism problem

The plan shall consider but not be limited to:

- a. Determine if illness is related to physical, mental, or behavioral health of the child (verified by appropriate documentation);
- b. Educational counseling to explore curriculum changes such as alternative educational programs to solve the excessive absenteeism problem;
- c. Educational evaluation to assist in determining the specific condition(s) contributing to the excessive absenteeism problem, supplemented by specific efforts by the school to help remedy any condition diagnosed.
- d. Investigation of the problem by a school social worker (or principal or administrative staff member) to identify conditions contributing to the excessive absenteeism problem. If services for the student and student's family are determined to be needed, the investigator shall meet with the parent/guardian and child to discuss any referral to appropriate agencies to remedy the conditions.

If the parent/guardian refuses to participate in such meeting, the refusal will be documented in the child's attendance records.

Students are subject to disciplinary action for excessive absenteeism. Disciplinary action for students receiving special education services will be assigned in accordance with the goals and objectives of the student's Individualized Education Program.

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The school may report to the county attorney of the county in which the person resides when the school has documented the efforts to address excessive absences, the collaborative plan to reduce barriers identified to improve regular attendance has not been successful, and the student has accumulated more than twenty (20) absences per school year. The school shall notify the child's family in writing prior to referring the child to the county attorney. Illness that makes attendance impossible or impracticable shall not be the basis for referral to the county attorney. A report to the county attorney may also be made when a student otherwise accrues excessive absences as herein defined.

Annually, the Grand Island Public Schools Board of Education will meet in regular session and include a public hearing to discuss, consider, receive input, and take action (if deemed appropriate) on policy 8312 EXCESSIVE ABSENTEEISM. It shall be the responsibility of the superintendent to implement this policy.

Legal Reference: Neb. Statute 79-208 and 209
 NDE Rule 10.012.01B

Policy Adopted: 11.15.2010
Policy Revised: 11.15.2015
Policy Reviewed: 05.12.2016 – Public Hearing
Policy Revised: 05.11.2017 – Public Hearing
Policy Reviewed: 06.13.2019 – Public Hearing
Policy Reviewed: 07.09.2020 – Public Hearing
Policy Revised: 01.14.2021