

ABSENTEEISM AND TRUANCY POLICY

Attendance Procedures

When a student is absent from school, the student's parent/guardian is REQUIRED to phone the school office (685-2533) before 8:30 a.m. (***Voicemail is also available to leave a message reporting your child's absence between the non-school hours of 4:00 p.m. and 8:00 a.m.***)

Homework requests for absences should be made in conjunction with the absence call. A child who has been absent from school must present a dated written excuse from his/her parents explaining the reason for the absence. The telephone call does not cancel the need for the note.

Leaving School Early

Students who need to leave school early for medical purposes (doctor or dental appointments) must bring a note to the office before leaving school. The note should include: (1) the requested dismissal time, (2) the reason the student needs to leave early, and (3) a parent signature. Parents are encouraged to communicate any dismissal changes no later than 2:00pm. Students leaving school before 2:30 p.m. are considered absent ½ day. After 2:30 p.m. is considered early dismissal. ***Students must be present by 12:00 noon to be considered in attendance for half day. An accumulation of three or more early dismissals will prohibit a student from receiving perfect attendance.*** If a student is ill during the day, the student must check out in the office before leaving the building. Students are not to arrange for parents/guardians to pick them up; the office will contact the parents/guardians.

Absences

St. Thomas School recognizes three (3) categories of absences:

- Excused absences
- Unexcused absences
- Truant absences (after the 9th unexcused absence)

Excused Absence: An excused absence is recognized as:

- A student's personal illness
- A death in the immediate family
- A family emergency
- Medical visits
- Family vacations (up to 5 school days)
- Other circumstances that cause reasonable concern to the parent/guardian for the student's safety or health
- Other situations beyond the control of the student (such as court appearances)
- Other reasons approved by the Principal.

A health care provider's note may be required to excuse a student and/or for returning to school after the third consecutive day of being reported ill. If medical documentation is not provided, the absence may be marked "unexcused." Students who have 9 or more days of absences due to being sick will be required to provide a doctor's note to excuse the absences.

Unexcused Absence: An unexcused absence is defined as an absence from school for a reason other than those listed above as an excused absence and/or an absence not authorized by the student's parent/guardian or the Principal. When a student's absence is unexcused, the parent/guardian may recognize the absence as being valid or legitimate; however, the school does not. The following are unexcused absences (even with parent/guardian consent):

- Family vacations that are 6 or more school days
- Needed at home
- Other avoidable absences.

Truant Absences: Truancy is defined as absence without valid cause for one or more periods of the student's school day. Parents/guardians may be notified following 3, 5, and 9 days of absence or tardies within a school year, and a school intervention may be initiated. After the 9th school day (5% of regular attendance days) on which a student is absent without valid cause, he/she is deemed to be truant under Illinois law. Interventions to address truancy may include attendance letters, parent/teacher/principal conferences, student counseling, and/or involvement of the county truancy officer and/or local law enforcement. No punitive action, including out-of-school suspensions or court action will be taken against a chronically truant student unless available support services and other resources have been provided to the student, or offered to the student and refused. Any person who has custody or control of a child subject to compulsory attendance who knowingly or willfully permits the child to persist in truancy, if convicted, is guilty of a Class C misdemeanor and may be subject to up to 30 days' imprisonment and/or fine up to \$1,500.

Family Vacation Absences: Family travel during the school year does interrupt a student's regular progress; however, we recognize the educational value of these trips. Therefore, five (5) vacation days per school year will be allowed as excused. Any days after five (5) school days will be unexcused. Early notice of travel will help school personnel to accommodate parents and students during that period. It will be the student's responsibility to obtain all missing work from their teachers during their absence. Some assignments may not be available until the student returns to school. A folder containing all missed assignments will be prepared for the student upon his/her return. Work shall be completed and returned to the teacher within three (3) days for the child to receive credit.

Tardiness: Students are expected to be in class on time so they may maximize their learning opportunities. Teachers and the Principal will monitor student tardiness. Students are marked tardy after 8:30 a.m. Arrival after 9:30 a.m. is considered ½ day absence. Students in middle school receive a detention after 4 tardies. ***An accumulation of three or more tardies will prohibit a student from receiving perfect attendance.***

Make Up Work

Students who have excused absence(s) from school will be allowed to make up work for equivalent academic credit. The time allowed for makeup work will generally be two school days for every day missed, starting with the first day the student returns to school. In extenuating circumstances, a student may ask his/her teacher or the Principal for additional time to make up work. It is the responsibility of the student (and his/her parent/guardian), not the teachers, to get the assignments, complete them, and turn them in, and to arrange a time with the teacher to make up any missed quizzes or tests. Incomplete work or failure to do the work may result in a lowering of grades.

Attendance at Extracurricular Activities

Students who are absent, or who left school for an illness during the day, will not be allowed to attend or participate in extracurricular activities until they have attended school.