

Effective the 2023-2024 School year, Bluffs School will have a few changes to the student attendance policy.

ABSENCE POLICY

The continuity of the learning process is seriously disrupted, and with adverse effect, by excessive absences (5% of attendance days). In most situations, the work missed cannot be adequately made up.

Bluffs School will utilize the following absence policy:

- a. At 7 days absent during the school year, a letter will be sent to the parents.
- b. After 10 days of absence (without doctor's excuses), a parent conference may be requested.

EXCUSED ABSENCES

Excused absences will be granted for the following situations as well as those emergencies that the principal may feel is beyond the student's control.

1. Student illness
2. Death in the family
3. Doctor's appointment
4. Court appearance
5. Religious holiday
6. Prearranged

***Parents may be asked to provide additional information of an absence to determine whether or not the absence meets the school guidelines of an excused absence. ***

MENTAL HEALTH DAYS

Mental Health Days add to excused absences, but include that these excused days count against a student's 10-day total. For reference, after 10 days absent from school, students are required to have a doctor's excuse.

REPORTING ABSENCES

Parents are responsible for calling or emailing the school BEFORE 9:00 a.m. if their student is absent.

Bluffs School – 217-754-3815 and press 1 -or- visit the school website at www.bluffs-school.com and report your child's absence under the Student Attendance tab. Absences reported by any other means (directly emailing or texting a secretary, sending a note/message with another student, privately messaging your child's teacher) are not guaranteed to be recorded correctly or in a timely manner.

We ask that the parent or guardian do the following regarding absences:

1. In the case of illness, or death in the family, please call the school office that morning to report the absence. If the parents do not call, the school will attempt to reach a parent at home or work. If no communication happens between the school and the parent/guardian, the student will be marked unexcused for the day.
2. To be considered a doctor excused absence, the student must see a doctor. Only doctor's notes will be accepted for excusal. If the student is not seen by a doctor, and has missed 10 or more days, the attendance will be marked unexcused.

RETURNING AFTER AN ABSENCE

Students that have been absent due to illness or appointment and have a doctor's note MUST turn the doctor's note in to the school office within 5 days of their absence. Notes turned in after 5 days will not be accepted.

RETURNING WHEN SCHOOL IS IN SESSION

Students are to report directly to the office, and sign in on the available Chromebook, or if unable to navigate the Chromebook, with the secretary available.

LEAVING SCHOOL

Written or verbal permission MUST be obtained from the student's parent or legal guardian before leaving school.

Students must report to the office and receive permission to sign out.

If a student becomes ill, a parent, legal guardian or authorized emergency contact person will be contacted by phone.

PRE-ARRANGED ABSENCES

For a student to receive maximum benefit from the instructional program, regular attendance is of utmost importance. However, when such circumstances dictate, parents/guardians who need their child/ren to miss school should contact the principal to make arrangements. The student may be issued a "Pre-Arranged Absence Form" to present to their teachers for approval and current quarter/semester grade. Students will not be approved for a prearranged absence if they are not passing all academic areas with a minimum score of 70%. Students must then obtain their attendance information from the school secretary. The form must be approved and signed by parents /guardians, after grades and attendance are recorded. It must then be returned to the office at least three (3) school days prior to absence for approval of the principal. A student is allowed a maximum of 5 pre-arranged absences (for non-school activities) per school year.

Parents / guardians are expected to ensure that all assignments are completed and submitted on the first day of the student's return. Parents / guardians may pick up student assignments in the office on the day before the absence. If the assignments are not returned on the first day of the student's return, the student will NOT receive credit for this work. Tests that take place during the student's absence must be completed the day that the student returns to school. (No more than 2 tests per day maximum.)

UNEXCUSED ABSENCES

An unexcused absence is one, which the parent is aware of and supports, but does not meet the school guidelines for being excused. For an unexcused absence, students CANNOT make up assignments or tests.

TRUANT ABSENCES

A student is truant when absent from class without school permission and/or without parental knowledge. Truant students will be placed at the appropriate level on the truancy policy (see below). Like unexcused absences, truant students may not make up work missed when truant. The truancy policy applies to all students regardless of age. The State of Illinois defines a chronic truant as a child who is absent without valid cause for 5% out of 180 consecutive days. Students under the age of 17 in this category will be reported to the county truant officer. 5 unexcused tardies is equivalent to one truant absence.

MAKE-UP ASSIGNMENTS

When an absence is excused, the student may be allowed to make-up work missed. The rule for make-up work is one day more than the number of days absent. (One day absent = two days to make-up work; three days absent = four days to make-up work.) If you have a special situation, talk to the principal about an extension.

The principal shall have the right to request verification of illness, injury, or appointment in writing by a medical doctor when the absence is questionable before the absence is excused. The Principal has the discretion to excuse any student for extenuating circumstances.

TARDY AND TRUANCY

The following definitions will be utilized for those students who are absent or late to class/es without valid cause. All students begin each semester with no tardies accumulated. However, unexcused absences accrue throughout the school year. The following definitions apply:

Tardy - late to class without valid cause (unexcused) for any length of time. Students tardy 1st hour should report to the office. Students tardy 2nd-7th hour are to report to the teacher.

Truant – Chronic or habitual truant shall be defined as a child who is subject to compulsory school attendance and who is absent without valid cause from such attendance for 5% or more of the previous 180 regular attendance days (unexcused absences).

Chronic Truant – any student who is absent without valid cause for 5% or more of the previous 180 days

After the 4th, 7th, and 9th day of UNEXCUSED ABSENCE the Truancy Officer and / or State's Attorney is notified. A hearing is held to determine further action.

TARDY POLICY

Step 1) 3rd – 5th tardy 30 minute after school detention

Step 2) 6th – 7th tardy 60 minute after school detention

Step 3) 8th – 9th tardy 60 minute after school detention

Parents contacted

Bluffs Pride privileges suspended for remainder of semester

Step 4) 10th + tardy 60 minute after school detention

Parents contacted

College Visits and Job Shadowing

Seniors may receive pre-arranged absence form (see above procedures) to visit colleges, technical schools, or job sites for the purpose of helping select a career after graduation. (maximum of 2 visits.)

Students should try to coordinate their visits with days that involve no student attendance at their high school. Institute days, holidays, and school improvement days are perfect days for students to travel to colleges, universities, or job sites. Juniors may receive one pre-arranged absence prior to May 1 to visit a college, technical school, or job sites for the purpose of helping select a career after graduation (maximum of 1 visit). All visits must be pre-arranged through the Guidance Counselor's office and the itinerary must be followed (signed and dated verification from visited institution). Failure to do so may result in disciplinary action (truant/unexcused). Once a student has committed to a college or university, college days to other schools will not be permitted.