

## **Please note that the attendance portion of the MPSD Elementary Handbook has been updated in accordance with state regulation:**

### **DAILY ATTENDANCE (pg. 12)**

Marshfield Public Schools recognizes that the maximum educational benefits to the students and the community of Marshfield can be attained only if students attend school daily. The classroom experience cannot be replicated, and we believe that students being present and on time each day is essential to school success. Daily attendance is the responsibility of the student and the parent, together with the best efforts of teachers and administrators. A maximum cooperative effort from all will result in a positive academic experience for the student.

In accordance with Chapter 76, Section I of Massachusetts General Law, Marshfield Public Schools is required to notify the parent/guardian of a student who has reached five (5) unexcused absences in a school year. Parents/Guardians will be notified by a letter when five (5) unexcused absences have been reached.

In the event that a student exceeds ten (10) unexcused absences, a parent/guardian is required to meet with an administrator to discuss his/her child's attendance issues.

#### **Excused Absences:**

- Death in the immediate family
- Illness or medical appointment, verified by professional note
- Religious Holidays
- Court appearances
- School sponsored and/or approved activities that fall within the guidelines of the time on learning regulations of the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

Documentation of an excused absence must be received no later than five (5) school days following the student's return to school. The decision on the validity of an absence relative to the ten (10) day rule will be made by an administrator.

#### **Unexcused Absences:**

- Illness, not verified by a professional note
- Medical appointments, not verified by a professional note
- Family vacations/trips
- Tardiness and/or dismissals that result in the loss of more than half of the school day, not verified by a professional note
- Truancy
- Out-of-School Suspensions

Upon returning to school after any absence, a note from a parent/guardian is required. A doctor's note is required if a student is out five (5) or more consecutive days. If an absence is due to a communicable disease, a doctor's note is required the day the student returns to school.

#### **TARDY / DISMISSAL**

A child is considered TARDY if he/she arrives ten (10) minutes after the start of school. When a student arrives late, he/she must be accompanied by a parent/guardian and must report to the office before going to his/her classroom. This will allow the office staff to correct the classroom teacher's attendance report which will have the student listed as absent.

A student arriving three (3) hours after the start of school will be considered absent for that school day and will not be permitted to participate in extra-curricular activities on that day. Students dismissed more than three (3) hours before the end of the school day will be marked absent for that school day. Should a student miss his/her school bus, it is the parent's responsibility to see that the child arrives to school on time. If a school bus is late, students are not considered tardy.

## **FAMILY VACATIONS DURING SCHOOL TIME (pg. 16)**

Parents/Guardians are STRONGLY discouraged from taking students out of school for family vacations. Classroom instruction cannot be duplicated. Family vacations during school time are unexcused absences.

## **STUDENT ABSENCES (pg. 22 - School Committee Policy)**

Regular and punctual school attendance is essential for success in school. The Committee recognizes that parents of children attending our schools have special rights as well as responsibilities, one of which is to ensure that their children attend school regularly, in accordance with state law.

A student's understanding of the importance of day-to-day schoolwork is an important factor in the shaping of his character. Parents can help their children by not allowing them to miss school needlessly.

### **Student Absence Notification Program**

Each Principal, or his/her designee, will notify a student's parent/guardian within 3 days of the student's absence in the event the parent/guardian has not informed the school of the absence.

Each Principal, or his/her designee, shall make a reasonable effort to meet with any student, and that student's parent/guardian, who has missed five (5) or more unexcused school days as defined in student handbooks in a school year. The meeting shall be to develop action steps to improve student attendance and shall be developed jointly by the Principal or designee, the student, and the student's parent/guardian. The parties may seek input from other relevant school staff and/or officials from relevant public safety, health and human service, housing, and nonprofit agencies.