



SCHOOL DISTRICT OF BROWN DEER

**PARENT'S GUIDE
TO ATTENDANCE
2025-26**

WELCOME MESSAGE

Daily attendance is the number one contributing factor to a student's academic success in school. Students who attend regularly will experience greater academic achievement, social-emotional development and overall student success.

Regular daily attendance for all students is the goal of the district. We recognize there may be uncontrollable circumstances that prevent this from occurring. However, when an absence from school occurs, the parent/guardian is expected to notify the school on the same day of the absence. The message must include the reason for the student's absence.



Dr. Katrice M Cotton
Superintendent

Working together as a school community to reinforce the importance of regular attendance, helps keeps our scholars in class and promotes strong school habits.

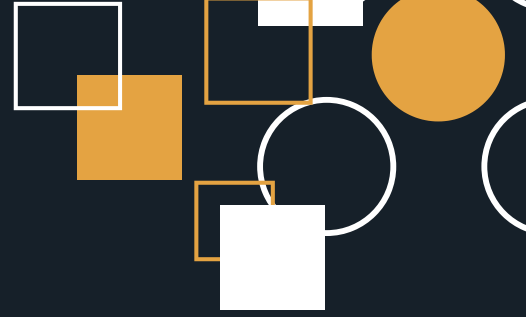
The School District of Brown Deer expects all students to be in their classroom every day, ready to learn.

Read the full attendance policy :
[Administrative Policy: po 5200](#)



ATTENDANCE

DEFINITIONS



Tardy

If a student arrives at school anytime after the start of the school day. Students will check in at the school's main office and receive a tardy pass to school.

Late

A student is considered late to class if they arrive to class after the bell rings to begin class.

Significantly Late

A student is considered significantly late to class if they arrive to class 10 minutes or more after the bell rings to begin class.

Excused Absences

Absences are considered excused for illnesses, medical and dental appointments, legal/court appearances, specific family obligations or school-sponsored activities.

Unexcused Absences

An absence is unexcused if it does not meet the criteria for excused absences or if timely documentation/notice is not provided to the school by a parent/ guardian.

Pre-Arranged Absences

When absences are known in advance, they may be pre-arranged as excused if they meet the following criteria: pre-approved family trips, prolonged student medical issue, serious illness of a member of the student's family, family emergency or bereavement, legal/court obligation, religious observation, school-sponsored extracurricular or academic-related activity.

Chronic Absenteeism

When a student misses 10% or more days of school (about 18 days in a typical 180-day school year) he/she may be considered chronically absent. This encompasses all absences, including those due to illness, family emergencies, and unexcused reasons. Chronic absenteeism specifically refers to unexcused absences without valid reasons or parental permission.

TARDIES AND TRUANCY

Tardy

A student is considered tardy any time they arrive after the start of the regular school day. For Elementary students this is 8:35am and for Middle and High school it is 7:45am. Tardies will be addressed in the district as follows:

1 Day Tardy to School	School Messenger Alert
10 Days Tardy to School	5 Day truancy letter/ meeting with the parent
15 Days Tardy to School	Meeting with the parent, social worker, and assistant principal/administration
20 Days	Meeting with parent and building principal and possible truancy ticket

Habitual Truant

A student is considered a “habitual truant” once they are absent/unexcused from school without an acceptable excuse for all or part of 5 or more school days. This applies to students under the age of 18. Parents have the right to receive written notice of the child’s non-attendance from school. Parents will also have the right and will be asked to attend a meeting with school officials to discuss the child’s truancy. Habitual Truancy will be addressed in the district as follows:

1 day unexcused absence	School Messenger Alert
2 days unexcused absence	Phone call/email from attendance secretary
5 days unexcused absence	-Habitual Truancy Letter mailed home -If no contact with family or student SRO and SSW will conduct a home visit when absences are consecutive.
10 days unexcused absence	Student becomes eligible to receive a truancy ticket.
15 days unexcused absence	Referral for truancy ticket if no contact from parent/guardian and/or no improvement in attendance.

VALID EXCUSES

Some absences are valid and are considered excusable. A parent/guardian must notify the school for the absence to be excused. These absences are then marked excused in the student's record.

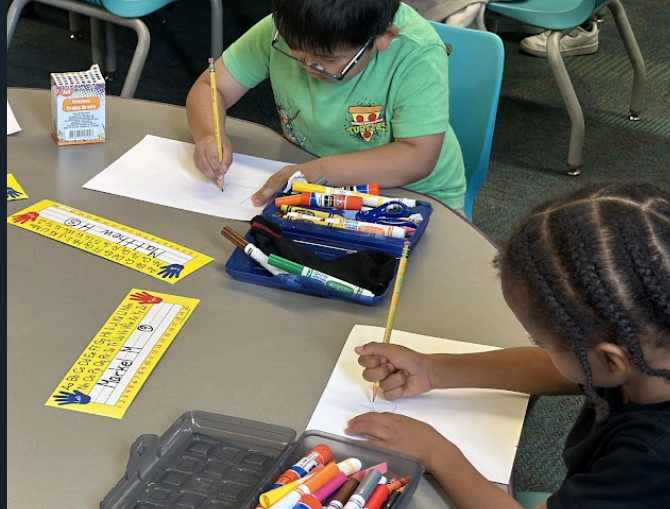
1. Personal Illness
2. Funerals
3. Mandatory Legal Appearances
4. Designated Religious Holidays
5. Medical / Dental Appointments
6. Family Emergencies
7. School Approved or District Sponsored Educational and Athletic Activities
8. Incarceration

Parents/guardians have the right to excuse a student's absence from school for any reason by submitting written notification prior to the student's absence from school. A student may be excused for up to ten (10) days per year under this provision.

Parent/Guardian Responsibility:

Under Wisconsin Statute 118.15, any person having control of a child between the ages of 6 and 18 shall see to it that the child attends school regularly until the end of the school term of the school year in which the child becomes 18.

Students in school after the age of 18 are required to remain in school until they graduate, or until the end of the school term, quarter, or semester during which they turn 18 years of age.



REPORTING AN EXCUSED ABSENCE

An absence will be excused only when a parent/guardian notifies the school.

- Using your mobile device, download and install the SchoolMessenger app from the Apple App Store or the Google Play Store. You must register with your email that is listed in Skyward.
- Use our Safe Arrival (877-813-8270) to report pre-arranged and future absences.
- Use the SafeArrival website, go.schoolmessenger.com, select Sign Up to create your account. Select Attendance then Report an Absence. You must register with your email that is listed in Skyward.
- If your child sees a health care provider, ask for a medical excuse that your child can give to the school.
- Work with your child's teacher to make up any missed assignments or tests.



ATTENDANCE LADDER



MINIMIZING ABSENCES



While some absences may not be avoided, there are multiple strategies that can be implemented to help reduce a student's time away from the classroom.

- Plan family vacations for non-school days only
- Schedule non-emergency medical and dental appointments after school hours, on weekends, or during your child's vacation
 - If the appointment must be during school hours, please have your child attend school prior to the appointment and/or return to school after the appointment to complete the school day
- Communicate often with your child's teachers and request all missed school work
- As best practice, provide a note for every absence, tardy, and early leave for your student along with reporting any tardy or absence inside of Safe Arrival.
- Call your child's school with any questions regarding their attendance
 - BDE - 414-371-6800
 - BDMS - 414-371-6900
 - BDHS - 414-371-7000



HABITUAL TRUANCY

A child is considered habitually truant if he or she misses a total of five full or partial days without a valid excuse during a school semester. The school has the authority to reject excuses that do not appear to be valid. The school will schedule a meeting with the parent/guardian to discuss ways to improve attendance.



Your child is considered truant if:

- He/she is absent for all or part of the school day and you, as the parent/guardian, have not contacted the school with a legal excuse as noted under the list of excused absences.
- He/she attends school irregularly but often enough that he/she is not in violation of the state laws that require children to attend school.



KEEPING A SICK CHILD HOME

If your student is feeling ill, it may be in their best interest to keep them home for a day to rest. This not only benefits the well-being of your student, but their fellow classmates as well. Keeping a child at home while sick is a way to help ensure the health and safety of the entire classroom.


Please keep your child home if:

- They cannot sit up comfortably.
- They cannot pay attention.
- Their illness would disrupt others (coughing and sneezing).
- They are contagious and could spread sickness.

They have symptoms listed below:

- Fever (temperature 100.4 or higher)
- Blistery rash
- Chills
- Fatigue
- Frequent cough
- Headache
- Shortness of breath/difficulty breathing
- Muscle or body aches
- Nasal congestion or runny nose
- Sore throat
- Vomiting or diarrhea

** Reminder: Your student is allotted ONLY 10 excused absences. If your student exceeds this number due to illnesses, they may still be subject to attendance related consequences and additional conversations with your child's school administrator.



RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCES

The School District of Brown Deer welcomes families of all faiths. We recognize that important religious observances may fall on school days. Our schools take steps to support students who may have special requirements for dress, diet, fasting, or other religious expressions.

You can help your school support your family's religious observances by sharing important information with staff. When your child starts school, talk to their teacher and school staff about your beliefs and needs. Consider carefully whether your child needs to miss school for a religious observance. Inform the school staff ahead of time when your child will miss school and talk to your child's teacher about making up any work your child may miss. If you have questions, please discuss them with school staff.






MONITORING ATTENDANCE AND GRADES

Children generally perform better in school when family members are involved in their education. The School District of Brown Deer offers a valuable tool to help families track children's progress. By logging into Skyward Family Access, parents /guardians can see their children's grades and attendance.

Consistent use of Skyward is a great way to track any issues and catch problems early.

- Help your child develop daily routines such as going to bed and waking up on time, setting an alarm clock, and picking out clothing the night before.
 - Try to schedule dental and medical appointments outside of the school day whenever possible . The student should attend class the remainder of the school day.
 - Keep your child home ONLY if they are truly sick. Headaches or stomach aches may be signs of anxiety. Talk with your child about stress or other concerns.
 - Watch academic progress and seek help from teachers or tutors if necessary. Children who are falling behind sometimes have anxiety and want to skip school.
 - Make sure teachers know how to contact you to discuss any concerns.
 - Ask for help from school staff, after-school programs, other parents, or community agencies if you are having trouble getting your child to school on time.
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CAUSES OF POOR ATTENDANCE



PHYSICAL HEALTH

Health conditions such as asthma, influenza, diabetes, tooth decay, and obesity are all associated with higher rates of student absenteeism. Nearly 10 percent of children aged four to 14 are diagnosed with asthma, a leading cause of school absenteeism. Asthma accounts for a third of all days of missed instruction, according to Attendance Works.



MENTAL HEALTH

Anxiety, depression, and other mental health concerns can also make it difficult for students to attend school.



ACADEMIC DIFFICULTIES

Students may avoid school to avoid feelings of shame or embarrassment.



FAMILY RESPONSIBILITIES

Caring for younger siblings or working to contribute to their family's income can conflict with school attendance.



SAFETY

Feeling unsafe due to bullying, harassment, or other factors.



EFFECTS OF POOR ATTENDANCE

When children are absent from school, they miss out on consistent instruction that is needed to develop basic skills. Children in early grades are particularly susceptible to falling behind in fundamental reading skills, which can have an adverse impact on future learning.

Children who have learning and thinking differences can be especially vulnerable to the impact of absenteeism because missing school reduces opportunities for any interventions that might be necessary. If teachers fail to realize that they need an intervention, they are more likely to attribute a learning difficulty to absenteeism, essentially confusing the symptom for the cause.




Poor attendance can also have a negative effect on social and emotional development. For example, students who are chronically absent in the early years of their education may not learn crucial school readiness skills (abilities such as critical thinking, problem solving, and creative thinking), and can fall behind their peers in social-emotional development. Excessive absences are also associated with lower scores on standardized tests, which typically assess primary skills and concepts.

Low attendance can also make it difficult to participate in sports and extracurricular activities. Participation in such activities relies on a strong performance in the classroom. The less a student is at school, the harder it is to maintain the necessary grades required to participate in after school activities.



STRATEGIES FOR PARENTS

Parents who are concerned that their child has a problem with school attendance can employ several strategies:

- Talk with the child. Conversations are the first step to understanding root causes and working toward a solution.
 - Contact the school. Teachers, counselors, and administrators may be able to provide additional information that helps determine what is causing a child to miss school.
 - Talk with your child about school daily. This will assure you that your child has been in school and can help you find out about any problems.
 - Celebrate and praise your child's success.
 - Get to know your child's teacher to understand classroom rules and procedures.
 - Ask to see homework nightly. Offer to help, if needed.
 - Keep a calendar of important school dates: first day, last day, holidays, staff professional development, etc.
 - If you are having difficulty getting your child to school, speak to school staff.
 - Contacting the school also starts a conversation that can be mutually beneficial, and it demonstrates engagement.
 - Consider an evaluation for an Individualized Education Program (IEP) or 504 Plan. Both programs can provide special accommodations and support for students who are struggling with disabilities.
 - Set attendance goals with the child. Creating a plan and tracking progress can encourage better attendance and provide opportunities for conversations and support. Simple steps such as making sure a child gets enough sleep and taking steps to prepare for school the day or night before can also be effective.
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WHY THIS MATTERS

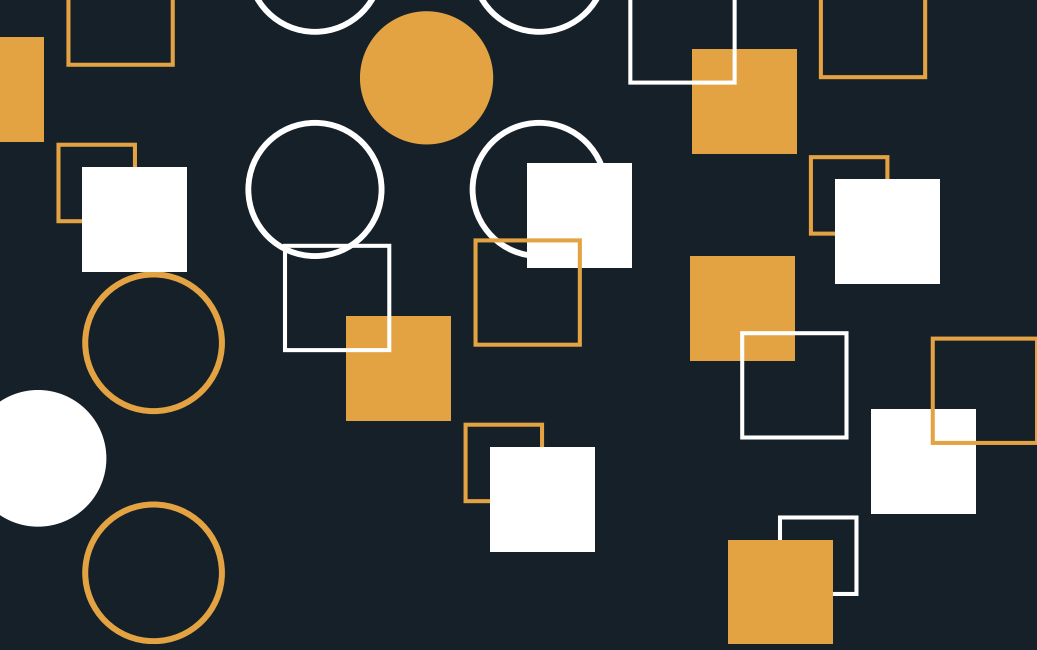
It is important to create opportunities for healthy and open communication between home and school. When children are aware of the support and partnerships between home and school, they tend to have a more favorable impression of the importance of school. Creating positive reinforcements that celebrate success and achievement, will assist in changing potential negative attendance issues.

Many parents are not aware of how quickly absences add up to academic trouble. Students who are absent 9 or fewer days will attend school 95% of the time. Students missing 10 to 17 days may improve with the creation of an attendance plan. Chronic absences of 18 or more days places a student at high risk of academic struggle, grade level failure, retention or the potential of dropping out.



The correlation between attendance and dropout rates has important ramifications that go beyond the classroom. Compared to their peers who graduate, students who fail to complete their high school education are more likely to live in poverty, suffer poor health, and become involved in the criminal justice system.

The School District of Brown Deer values your student's success in school. Attending school daily helps to ensure student success and assists in achieving positive academic outcomes.



**ATTEND SCHOOL
TODAY**

**ACHIEVE SUCCESS
TOMORROW**

