

# Regional Office of Education LODIS Truancy Program Guidelines for Attendance Handbook Language

\*\*\*The following guidelines are examples of recommended handbook language for attendance policies. These examples may be incorporated into your existing handbook. The sentences in bold are meant to be actual handbook language.

## Tardy Policy

***Two (2) unexcused tardies equal one (1) unexcused absence. Students with excessive tardies or absences may be referred to the Lee/Ogle ROE LODIS Truancy Intervention/Prevention Program for assistance.***

\*\*Tardy policies that specifically state that tardies add up to be unexcused days can be invaluable for involving intervention and support services for a student/family. Stating this in the handbook does not in any way affect ADA reimbursement. However, it does affect the ability of the school to make a referral for truancy services. The Regional Office of Education cannot provide services to a student based on tardies unless the school handbook specifically states that tardies equal unexcused days. It can be frustrating for schools to deal with a student that has been chronically late and not be able to make a truancy referral. The Regional Office of Education would like to work with these families to help change a pattern of tardiness that can lead to future negative patterns.

## Medical Excuse

***After ten (10) absences per school year, to excuse each absence thereafter, a physician's note stating specific medical reasons for the student's absence will be required within 24 hours of the student's return to school. While seeking a medical excuse, the student's parent or guardian must still comply with absence notification procedures. Should a parent or guardian choose not to secure a medical excuse, the absence will be considered unexcused. Medical notes must state specific days that a student is excused from school and must be signed by a doctor. The medical note must state that the student has been seen by the doctor.***

## Vacation Policy

*Family trips/vacations will be excused for a maximum of five (5) days per school year. More than five (5) days will be considered unexcused. Notification of family trips must be made at least two (2) days in advance.*

## Suspensions

At a previous LODIS Advisory Board Meeting an Assistant State's Attorney addressed the issue of suspensions. A recommendation was made that school handbooks specifically state whether suspensions are excused or unexcused.

## Referral

*A referral may be made to the Lee/Ogle Regional office of Education LODIS Truancy Intervention/Prevention Program after (5) five unexcused absences during the previous 180 days of school attendance.*

\*We encourage you to check the accuracy of your handbook concerning this policy.

## Head Lice Policy

*When school personnel determine that a student has a case of head lice, the following procedures are to be followed:*

### *DAY ONE -*

*The student is to be sent home immediately, and the parent is to be provided with a copy of a letter explaining the problem. The parent is also to be directed to and instructed in the treatment regime as established by medical professionals. School personnel are not responsible for the removal of nits, but will help parents with the best procedure for removal.*

### *DAY TWO -*

*When the student returns to school, the student needs to be checked by school personnel to be found free of lice and nits before he/she may return to class. Students may be checked for re-admittance no more than twice in one day. If the*

*excluded student has not returned to school or is still not free of lice/nits, the school shall consider the student subject to the unexcused absence policies.*

#### **Excused Absences according to the Illinois School Code**

*Section 26-2a of the Illinois School Code, considers the following circumstances to be valid causes for a student's absence:*

- Significant illness*
- Family emergency*
- Observance of a religious holiday*
- Death in the immediate family*
- Circumstances which cause the parent concern for the safety or health of their child*

*The School Principal has the right to determine what constitutes an excused absence.*

#### **Unexcused Absences for Failure to Call**

*Any full-day or partial day absence which is not called in by a parent within two hours of the beginning of the school day for the reasons identified as "excused absences" will be termed "unexcused." A parent's call does not make the absence excused if the reason for the absence is not excusable (e.g., shopping, sleep, hunting, babysitting, car problems, etc.).*

**\*\* Reviewed by Ogle County State's Attorney Staff on February 17, 2003**