

Policies

Westerly Public Schools Student Attendance Policy

No. 2030

Page 1 of 2

Attendance at school is important. Each student must be in class every day of the school year unless there is a serious reason for not doing so, in accordance with the General Laws of the State of RI 16-19-1 and/or 16-19-6. Each school day is important.

In accordance with Rhode Island General Law § 16-19-1, *Attendance Required* authorizes school districts to allow the fulfillment of compulsory attendance requirements for any student who is between the ages of six (6) and eighteen (18) years of age and who meets one of the following requirements:

1. Regular attendance at a private day school (Rhode Island Department of Education (RIDE) approved)
2. Home-School approved program (school committee approval required)
3. Acceptance into an accredited postsecondary education program (intended for students who begin and regularly attend a postsecondary education program prior to their 18th birthday)
4. Waiver of attendance through an alternative learning plan, if it is determined, that despite appropriate supports and school-based interventions, a student is at high risk of dropping out of school.

Please refer to grade level student handbooks for detailed attendance procedure. A student who is absent from school without proper authorization (i.e. documented illnesses that prevent attendance, a documented financial hardship that requires a student to support his or her family, a court order, or an alternative-learning plan that has been completed) is truant.

Rhode Island General Laws, Section 16-19-1, states in part:

“Every child who has completed six (6) years of life and has not completed eighteen (18) years of life shall regularly attend some public day school during all the days and hours that the public schools are in session in the city or town wherein the child resides; and every person having under his or her control a child as above described in this section shall cause the child to attend school as required by the above stated provisions of this section, and for every neglect of this duty the person having control of the child shall be fined not exceeding fifty dollars (\$50.00) for each day or part of a day that the child fails to attend school, and if the total of these days is more than thirty (30) school days during any school year, then the person shall, upon conviction, be imprisoned not exceeding six (6) months or shall be fined not more than five hundred dollars (\$500) or both.”

- When students are absent from school, it is requested that a parent/guardian call the school before 9 a.m.

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No. 2030

Page 2 of 2

- When a parent or guardian does not call by 9 a.m., a phone call will be made to the parent/guardian at home or at work. In cases where telephone contact cannot be made, the Attendance Officer may be sent to the student's home.
- Students should miss school only for illness or serious personal responsibilities which cannot be rescheduled. Even though a student may be able to do written make-up work, the classroom learning environment cannot be duplicated and often the student's skill development is negatively impacted.
- When a student reaches the number of days established by the appropriate grade level student handbook, a meeting will be scheduled with the school to define the problem and explain the consequences to the student and parent/guardian. Appropriate referral will be made on/or before this time to the Support Services Team, RI Family Court Truancy Court and Westerly Juvenile Hearing Board. For the purposes of truancy, an absence is only excused by a note from a physician or school nurse.
- All make-up work must be completed within a reasonable period of time.
- A student absent from school on a regular school day may not attend or participate in any after school activity that day. Any exception to this rule must be made by the administration prior to the student attending the activity. The administration reserves the prerogative to exercise judgment in cases where extenuating circumstances exist.
- Absences for students will be recorded as a full day or half day depending upon the time that they arrive or leave school. Students who attend school for less than 3 ½ hours will be marked absent for the entire day.

Adopted: June 3, 2009

Revised: March 19, 2014