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**Revised w/ additions & corrections**

**To: Principals**

**From: Diane Atkins, Associate Superintendent  
Instructional Support Services**

**Re: Procedures for Accepting Parent Notes**

**Date: August 27, 2010**

The Compulsory School Attendance Law was amended during this past legislative session with mandates that directly impact school attendance. When accepting parent notes as outlined in the Student Rights & Responsibilities Handbook and Discipline Policy, it is important to adhere to the procedures outlined below:

1. A student with a chronic illness must have a letter on file each year from a licensed medical provider. A parent/ guardian may write a note when a student's absence is related to his or her illness. This will excuse the absence.
2. The school will identify children with Health Care Plans on file and inform parent/ guardian that they may write a note when a student's absence is related to his/her illness in the plan. This will excuse the absence.
3. Child Welfare & Attendance/CWA will work with principals to determine if an absence should be excused **when a parent note is received without any supporting documentation as outlined in the Student Rights & Responsibilities Handbook**. Absences will be excused if they are related to the following: (1) personal illness (2) serious illness in the student's immediate family (3) death in the student's immediate family not to exceed one week (4) natural disasters and (5) observances of special and recognized holidays of the student's own faith. **Absences not covered will be addressed through CWA under extenuating circumstances such as homelessness, etc.**
4. When a parent note is submitted to the office for an absence that is not outlined in steps 1-3, it will be marked in the database unexcused/parent note (UNXPN) which will generate an investigation to CWA if the parent notes exceed the limit of five (5). These parents will not be referred to Early Warning until an investigation has determined whether or not the absences are based on extenuating circumstances.

Technology will create an attendance code to alert CWA that a student's unexcused absences have been submitted with a parent note so that the student will not automatically go on the Early Warning List.

5. It is important to encourage parents to send parent notes on the day that the student returns to school.
6. **Effective 2010, Senate Bill No. 309, Act No. 644 mandates** that the principal of the school, or his designee, shall notify the parent or legal guardian in writing on or before a student's third unexcused absence or unexcused occurrence of being tardy, and shall hold a conference with such student's parent or legal guardian. ***This notification shall include information relative to the parent or legal guardian's legal responsibility to enforce the student's attendance at school and the civil penalties that may be incurred if the student is determined to be absent or habitually tardy.***
7. For the 2010-2011 school year, students in elementary and middle schools are allowed 10 unexcused absences for the school year. In high school, students are allowed 5 unexcused absences for each semester. If students miss more unexcused days with the new policy change, they will not be promoted to the next grade and /or receive credit for classes during the semester.
8. Attendance Clerks are asked to start marking **(UNXPN)** in the database on **Monday, August 30, 2010, for parents who send notes without documentation.**

Approved:   
John Dilworth, Superintendent

cc: Executive Leadership Team  
Child Welfare and Attendance  
Exceptional Student Services