

## 2009-10 TKHS ATTENDANCE POLICY

We believe that a successful high school experience begins with good attendance habits. Students with good attendance generally achieve higher grades and enjoy school. For these reasons, it will be the position of Thornapple Kellogg High School that a student must satisfy two (2) basic requirements to earn credit in any class:

1. Satisfy all academic requirements, and
2. Satisfy all attendance requirements

\*Students who are habitually absent and/or tardy must be reported to the ISD Truancy Office by law.

A student may not be absent from a class more than six (6) times during a trimester. Students who reach 7-10 absences (combination of excused/unexcused) in a trimester class must achieve a C+ or better on the final exam/final project or achieve an overall C+ average in the class with the final exam to have their grade calculated for the course. Students in this situation who score below a C+ on the final exam/project or do not achieve an overall C+ average will receive a grade of 'NC' for the course. Students who do not have a final passing average will receive an "F". A student who reaches 11 absences (combination of excused/unexcused) in a trimester class and is passing the class will lose credit for that course. The student will remain in the class for the duration of the trimester unless the need for removal due to behavioral issues becomes necessary.

The following shall also apply to our attendance policy:

- Absence notification letters will be mailed home on the 4<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> absences. Phone calls will be made home on the 6<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> absences. Students will be notified through the attendance office.
- Suspensions/school business/absences due to death of an immediate family member will not count towards a student's excused/unexcused absence total.
- Students who have excessive unexcused absences may not be able to make-up missed work/tests, will be given attendance expectations via a parent meeting, and may be placed on social probation (examples: cannot attend school events, loss of parking privileges, loss of passes out of class, etc.), and will be reported to the ISD Truancy Office.
- For students who exceed ten (10) absences, extenuating circumstances, such as an extended illness/injury, will be taken into consideration. Medical documentation may be required. Other circumstances may be considered by a committee if the appeal is approved by the building principal. This committee may consist of a designated administrator, counselor, and teacher. The student and parent(s) will present their appeal to this committee if approved by the building principal.

### ATTENDANCE PROCEDURES

**Attendance procedures are as follows:**

- 1. Attendance Regulations** - Students, parents and teachers are responsible for being familiar with all attendance regulations.
- 2. Scheduled Absences** - Parents and students should make every effort to schedule vacations, family trips, medical and dental appointments, family-related work, and personal business at time when school is not in session.
- 3. Attendance Requirement** - A student may not be absent from a class more than six (6) times during a trimester. Students exceeding this number may lose the opportunity to earn credit in that class(es) for that trimester. When credit is lost from any one class due to excessive absences, a student is expected to attend all classes on the original schedule even if credit is lost (see appeal process).
- 4. Absent from Class** - An absence occurs when a student misses more than 10 minutes of any class.

**Excused absence** - is one which is excused by **BOTH** the parent and the attendance office. Occasionally, well-meaning parents who believed that they had the authority to excuse their student from school have asked to authorize absences for such reasons as hair appointments, athletic events, fittings for dresses, studying for exams, working or taking a driving test. It is most important to understand that one of the most fundamental principles that underlie our attendance procedures is the fact that the **school reserves the right to determine how an absence will be classified.** Any excused absence entitles the student to make up the work missed and receive full credit upon completion. **However, excused absences still count toward the attendance requirement** (See #3 above).

An excused absence falls into one of the following categories:

- Illness
- Death in the family
- Prior permission to leave school by parents and administrator
- Approved family vacations
- Approved college visitations (limit 3)
- Required court appearance
- Religious observations
- Family emergencies
- Counseling or administrative appointment

**Unexcused absence** - is an attendance behavior that falls into one of the following categories and results in the student not earning credit for that day's work.

- Missing more than 10 minutes at the beginning of a class
- Parental failure to excuse a student's absence

**Truancy** – Truancy is the act of intentionally being absent from school without a legitimate reason.

Included in this category are:

- Skipping class
- Skipping an entire day
- Missing a class due to illness without reporting to the office
- Leaving class early without permission of the teacher
- Missing more than 10 minutes of class during the class period

- 5. Approved Family Vacations** - The first day of a vacation counts (toward the attendance requirement) as one day absent. If the student has turned in a trip slip prior to the vacation, the remaining days of a vacation will be counted as follows: 2 days absent equal 1 day counted toward your allowable days. **If the student does not turn in a trip slip prior to the vacation, all days will be counted.**
- 6. Extended Absences** - Extended absences that are beyond the student's control, such as an accident, hospitalization, death in the immediate family, or severe illness may be waived from the total days absent if the following conditions are met:
  - The student or parent is requested to contact the office at the beginning of the extended absence or as soon as possible so that the office is aware of the circumstances.
  - The student returns with a note from the doctor, when appropriate, stating the number of days it was necessary for the student to be absent.
  - The absence must be at least three (3) days in length in order to be considered an extended absence.
- 7. Signing In and Out of the School** - Whenever a student leaves the building during the course of the school day, he/she must first sign out in the attendance office. No student will be allowed to leave the building without parental permission. Failure to sign out when leaving the building will result in disciplinary action. A student who gets to school after school starts must sign in at the office. When returning to school after having signed out earlier in the day, the student must sign back in before returning to class.
- 8. The following is the absence reporting procedure:**

- In order to be excused by the office for an absence for any part of the day, a student must present a note signed by one of his/her parents prior to 7:40 a.m. on the morning he/she returns to school. **A telephone call by the parent prior to 7:40 a.m. is an acceptable substitute for a written note.** The student will have until 7:40 a.m. the following morning to have this information in to the office. An unexcused absence will be issued if this procedure is not followed. Students with unexcused absences will not be allowed to make up work. **The attendance office answering machine is available after school hours at 795-5431.**
  - To participate in an extra-curricular activity, **a student must be in his/her 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, and 5<sup>th</sup> periods** unless properly pre-excused in the office. The extra-curricular activities should include: athletic practices and events, band, plays, chorus, dances, clubs, etc.
- 9. Absence for School Related Business** - Absence for school-related business does not exempt the student from turning in assignments before or at the time such assignments are due. **These absences will not count toward the allowable absences.**

**Each twelve weeks, a student's attendance record starts over.**

**Appeal Process** - Students and parents have the right to appeal teaching and administrative decisions when they believe that such decisions are unjust or have not followed proper procedures. When unusual circumstances exist concerning absences not covered by the above rules, parents could contact the building principal. **Upon notification of the failure to meet the attendance policy, the student/parents have five (5) days to file a written appeal to the building principal.** The administration reserves the right to use discretion in all situations regarding the attendance policy and will make every attempt to see that the attendance policy is applied fairly and consistently for all students.

### **TKHS Tardy Policy**

**Philosophy:** The purpose of the THKS Tardy Policy is to create a culture in which:

- Students learn the importance of punctuality and the respect that it shows to all people involved.
- The disruption to the learning process is minimized.

**Procedure:** After the warning bell rings, students will have one minute to get into their classrooms. After one minute, the classroom teacher will close their door and begin instruction. If a student arrives to class and the door is closed, then they are to report to the high school office to receive a tardy pass (whether the tardy is excused or unexcused). The student will then return to class and be admitted, provided that he/she submits a pass to the teacher.

**Deterrents:** Each teacher will set his/her classroom expectations for promoting punctuality. When a student's tardiness has become a consistent problem and is an obstruction to his/her learning, the student will be referred to the administration. At this time, the administration will hold a meeting with the parents, the student, and the teacher to review the TKHS Student Expectations and to determine the consequences if they are not met. Examples of consequences may include, but not be limited to the following: ISS, OSS, social probation (e.g. extra-curricular privileges, attendance at school events/dances, etc.), or in-school limitations (e.g. hall passes, lunchroom privileges, parking privileges, etc.). The TKHS Student Expectations will specify which consequence(s) the student will incur for further tardies.