

**SUBJECT: COMPREHENSIVE STUDENT ATTENDANCE POLICY**

Regular school attendance is a major component of academic success. Accordingly, the Board of Education adopts this policy to ensure that effective strategies are in place to maximize student attendance at all scheduled periods of instruction or supervised study activities so that the District's students shall have the greatest opportunity to succeed at meeting the State learning standards. In furtherance of this goal, the District shall strive to identify patterns of absence, tardiness and early departures from school and, upon identifying patterns indicating the existence of an attendance problem or potential attendance problem, shall intervene in a manner that shall improve school attendance.

**Definitions**

- a) "Absence" shall refer to any and all of the following circumstances:
  1. A student's failure to attend any or all of his or her scheduled periods of actual instruction or supervised study activities for the full duration of said periods of instruction or study;
  2. A student's late arrival to one or more of his or her scheduled periods of actual instruction or supervised study activities during the course of a school day; and
  3. A student's departure from and failure to return to any of his or her scheduled periods of actual instruction or supervised study activities prior to the official dismissal of said period of instruction or study.
- b) "Excused absence" shall refer to any absence due to personal illness, serious illness or death in the family, impassable roads or severe weather, religious observance, quarantine, medical appointments, required court appearances, approved college visits, in-school or out-of-school suspension (provided that the student takes advantage of alternative educational opportunities), or such other reasons as may be approved by the building principal. An absence shall be considered excused only upon receipt by the Attendance Officer of a written excuse, giving the date and reason for the absence, signed by the student's parent or guardian.
- c) "Unexcused absences" shall mean all absences other than excused absences, and shall include, without limitation, absences for vacations, employment or caring for younger siblings.
- d) "Attendance officer" shall mean, for each building, the individual assigned by the building principal to maintain attendance records for that building.
- e) "Attendance Codes" shall refer to a system of recording absences, and shall consist of the following:
  1. ABS: Excused Absence
  2. UEX: Unexcused Absence

(Continued)

# POLICY

2012

7110  
2 of 6

Students

## **SUBJECT: COMPREHENSIVE STUDENT ATTENDANCE POLICY (Cont'd.)**

3. TRU: Truancy
4. TDI: Unexcused Tardy
5. TDL: Excused Tardy
6. TWN: Unexcused Tardy with Note
7. LTC: Late to Class with Note
8. ULC: Unexcused Late to Class
9. ULO: Unexcused Late to Class (over 5 minutes)
10. CLV: College Visit
11. OSS: Out-of-School Suspension (16 years and older)
12. OST: Out-of-School Tutoring (Out-of-School Suspension under 16 years)
13. VAC: Vacation
14. ISS: In-School Suspension
15. DIS: Early Dismissal from Attendance
16. MED: Early Dismissal from Nurse
17. FLT: Field Trip/Athletic Event
18. HMB: Homebound
19. ALT: In Alternate Location

### **Maintenance of Attendance Records**

#### Attendance Officers

Each building principal shall designate an attendance officer who shall maintain records of student attendance.

(Continued)

**SUBJECT: COMPREHENSIVE STUDENT ATTENDANCE POLICY (Cont'd.)**Data Collection

## a) Elementary Schools

Each regular classroom teacher in each elementary school shall take attendance twice each day, once at the beginning of the school day and once upon the return of the students from the lunch period. Attendance records noting any absences shall be recorded in the District's electronic student information system.

## b) Middle School and High School

Each teacher in the middle school and high school shall take attendance at the beginning of each period of instruction or supervised study. Attendance records noting any absences shall be recorded in the District's electronic student information system.

## c) Responsibilities of Attendance Officer

The attendance officer for each school shall maintain complete and accurate records of attendance in an attendance register using the attendance codes listed above. Such records shall be based on information provided by the teacher of the class or classes in which each student is enrolled, as well as by parents or guardians of the students. Such records shall also indicate any situation in which a school was closed for all or part of a day due to extraordinary weather conditions or school building emergencies. In addition, the parent or guardian shall be notified each time a student has an unexcused absence. Written notice shall include a reminder of the provisions of this policy and of the potential consequences of a pattern of absences. The attendance officer shall provide to the building principal at the midpoint and at the end of each marking period a report of absences in the building, such report to be in a format that shall facilitate the identification of patterns of absences.

**Strategies for Improving Student Attendance and Discouraging Unexcused Absences**Attendance Incentive

The Board recognizes that student attendance may be positively affected by the use of appropriate incentives to encourage incentives. Accordingly, it authorizes the principal of each building to utilize strategies such as awards for perfect attendance and scheduling special events for days (such as days immediately before or after weekends or vacation periods) with historically poor attendance.

(Continued)

**SUBJECT: COMPREHENSIVE STUDENT ATTENDANCE POLICY (Cont'd.)**

Non-Disciplinary Interventions to Address Patterns of Unexcused Absences

The Board recognizes that, in order to increase attendance in each building, it is important to develop a process by which teachers and building administrators can readily identify patterns of unexcused student absences and can employ specific intervention strategies in an attempt to change such patterns. Accordingly, it authorizes the principal of each building to utilize the following interventions:

- a) The building principal or assistant principal shall be responsible for reviewing student attendance records at the midpoint and at the end of each quarterly period in order to identify students who have engaged in a pattern of unexcused absences.
- b) In the event that the principal or assistant principal identifies a pattern of unexcused absences, he or she shall notify, or request that the assistant principal notify, the parents or guardians of the student involved of the pattern of absences. Such notification shall be made by telephone and shall be confirmed promptly in writing. In the case of a student in the middle school or high school, a copy of such notice shall be provided to the student's guidance counselor.
- c) In the event that a student continues to engage in a pattern of unexcused absences following such notification to his or her parents or guardians, the principal shall arrange, or request that the assistant principal arrange, to meet with the student, his or her parents or guardians, and such teachers, guidance counselors, and other staff members as the principal or assistant principal deems appropriate. The purpose of such meeting shall be to understand the reasons for poor attendance and to develop a strategy to improve attendance on the part of such student.
- d) A student who has an unexcused absence from school shall be excluded from co-curricular activities on the day of the absence.

Disciplinary Actions

In the event that an unexcused absence constitutes a violation of Board Policy, disciplinary penalties and procedures shall be applicable. Disciplinary measures that may result from unexcused absences may include, without limitation, detention and in-school suspension.

Attendance Required for Award of Course Credit

In order to earn credit for a course for which credit toward high school graduation is awarded, a student shall attend at least eighty-five percent (85%) of the class meetings for that course. Absences designated as excused are excluded from the number of absences accrued toward denial of course credit, provided that the student has performed make-up assignments required by the teacher of the affected

(Continued)

# POLICY

2012

7110  
5 of 6

Students

## **SUBJECT: COMPREHENSIVE STUDENT ATTENDANCE POLICY (Cont'd.)**

class. It shall be the student's responsibility to obtain all make-up work from his or her teachers promptly upon the student's return to school. A student who exceeds the maximum number of absences in a course shall receive no credit for the course, although a grade shall be recorded on the transcript.

### Notification of Parent or Guardian: Interventions

Notice to a student's parents or guardians of the potential for denial of course credit shall be given as follows:

- a) As soon as possible after a student has missed a significant number of the class meetings for a particular course, the teacher shall speak to the student and notify the student's guidance counselor and the principal or assistant principal. The guidance counselor shall send a letter to the parents or guardians, advising them of the number of absences and the potential consequences of further absences.
- b) As soon as possible after a student has missed sufficient class meetings for a particular course to make denial of course credit likely, the teacher shall speak to the student and notify the guidance counselor and the principal or assistant principal. The principal or assistant principal shall send a second letter to the parents or guardians, advising them of the number of absences. The principal or assistant principal shall also meet with the student, his or her parents or guardians, and the student's teacher or teachers about the pattern of absences.
- c) The principal or assistant principal shall notify in writing the parents or guardians of any student who is denied credit.

### **Policy Distribution**

#### Distribution of Policy

- a) Copies of this policy shall be distributed to all members of the teaching staff as soon as practicable following its adoption and each amendment hereto. Newly hired members of the teaching staff shall be provided with a copy of the policy at the commencement of their employment.
- b) Copies of this policy shall be retained in the office of the Superintendent and shall be available for review by members of the community at that location upon request.

#### Policy Summary

The Board shall cause to be prepared a summary of this policy, stated in plain language, to facilitate student and parent awareness of the policy. This summary shall be distributed as follows:

(Continued)

# POLICY

2012

7110

6 of 6

Students

**SUBJECT: COMPREHENSIVE STUDENT ATTENDANCE POLICY (Cont'd.)**

- a) To parents and guardians at the beginning of each school year or, in the case of students enrolling after the beginning of the year, at the time of registration. Parents shall be given the name of a District staff member who shall be available to answer questions, and shall be asked to sign and return a statement indicating that they have read and understood the policy.
- b) To students at the beginning of each school year or, in the case of students enrolling after the beginning of the year, at the time of registration. The building principal, assistant principal or guidance counselor shall review the attendance policy with students at the beginning of each school year.

**Annual Review**

The Board shall annually review the building level student attendance records, and if such records show a decline in pupil attendance, shall revise this policy and cause to be taken such other action as shall be necessary to improve attendance.

Education Law Sections 3024, 3025, 3202, 3205, 3206, 3210, 3211 and 3213  
8 New York Code of Rules and Regulations (NYCRR) Sections 104.1, 109.2 and 175.6

Adopted: 6/19/12