

STUDENT ATTENDANCE

1. In accordance with State Education Law, the Board of Education requires each child between the ages of six to sixteen to regularly attend school full-time. It is the legal responsibility of the local school district to know the whereabouts of every student for safety and other reasons. The Board of Education recognizes that attendance is an integral part of a student's performance in school. Therefore, it is the basic responsibility of both the student and the parent/guardian to insure that the student arrives on time and attends all classes.

The Board of Education acknowledges that learning takes place when students actively participate in class, successfully complete assignments and pass tests. In order for students to demonstrate their understanding of the subject matter and to actively participate in the learning process, they must be present in class.

The district will endeavor to identify attendance patterns to design improvement efforts, close gaps in student performance and increase school completion.

2. General Procedures/Data Collection

- Attendance will be taken during each class period at the secondary level.
- Attendance will be taken at the beginning of the school day at the elementary level.
- At the conclusion of each class period or school day, all attendance information shall be compiled and provided to the designated staff member(s) responsible for attendance.
- The nature of an absence, tardy, early dismissal (ATED) shall be coded on a student's record.
- Student ATED data shall be available to and should be reviewed by the designated school personnel.
- Where additional information is received that requires corrections to be made to a student's attendance records, such correction will be made immediately. Notice of such a change will be sent to appropriate school personnel subject to applicable confidentiality rules.
- Attendance data will be analyzed periodically to identify patterns or trends in student absences.
- Where consistent with other school practices, teachers and staff shall detain students in the hallways who are absent from a class period without excuse and refer the students to the building House Principals.
- Continuous monitoring will be conducted to identify students who are absent, tardy, or leave class or school early.

3. Excused and Unexcused Absences

All absences from school will be recorded as unexcused except:

- a. Suspension and illnesses resulting in homebound instruction as per State Education Law, unless the student is offered alternative instruction which he/she does not attend;
- b. Curricular alteration of a student's schedule, school testing, curriculum based field trips, excusals by the school nurse, excusals by an administrator or if guidance and/or intervention counseling is needed.
- c. An ongoing set of medical circumstances, which will periodically cause a large number of absences. As soon as the medical condition is known and before absences begin to accumulate, the parent should initiate an appeal in the form of a letter to the Principal so that a plan that meets the student's needs and protects the attendance standards can be developed. The development of the plan will be the joint effort of an Appeals Committee and the parent. Confirmation by a physician will be necessary.

All other ATEDs are considered unexcused absences.

Students are required to be on time and in attendance for every class for which they are registered.

Students will be considered late to class if they enter within 10 minutes of the bell signifying the start of class. Students entering a class later than 10 minutes after the start will be marked absent.

All ATEDs must be accounted for. It is the parent's responsibility to notify the school office within at least 24 hours of the ATED.

Please refer to your school calendar when planning vacations. Any vacations that interfere with your child's ability to attend school will be considered unexcused absences. Teachers are not obligated to provide work for these absences.

4. Coding System for Absences - see attachment

5. Attendance and Grades

In implementing the policy set forth above, students who are unable to attend school or a class on a given day due to their participation in a school-sponsored activity, may arrange with their teachers to make up any work missed.

All students with an excused ATED are expected, upon their return, to consult with their teachers regarding missed work.

High School Credit Policy

Class credit will not be given when a student exceeds:

- 24 absences in a full year course
- 12 absences in a half year course

Middle school students taking high school courses for high school credit must also adhere to this policy.

When a student accrues 8 absences in a full-year course, or 4 absences in a semester course, the teacher will make a phone call to the student's parent. The teacher will also notify the appropriate principal.

When a student accrues 16 absences in a full-year course or 8 absences in a semester course, a conference may be arranged to include the parent, student, house principal and guidance counselor. A concerted effort will be made to resolve any difficulties creating absences. At this time tutoring, extra help or other AIS services will be recommended.

When a student accrues 24 absences in a full year course or 12 in a semester course, the parent will receive administrative notification that an attendance review meeting is mandated. A meeting between the student, parent, house administrator shall be held to determine further action. The student's teacher may be invited to provide documentation or assistance. The meeting may have one or more of the following outcomes:

- The student may remain in the course under contract with the administrator and teacher
- The student may remain in the course only to participate in summer school. No credit will be given for the course.
- The student is removed from the course with no credit. The student's schedule may be "squashed."
- The student may be referred to alternative programming.
- The student may be assigned after school make-up. A student's failure to follow through with the determinations as set forth in the attendance hearing will result in an administrative hearing to determine disciplinary action.

When a student reaches 25 absences in a full year course or 13 in a half-year course, the parent will receive administrative notification that no credit can be earned. The student will remain in that course, but will not be permitted to take further tests or examinations. Continued absences in the course will result in further administrative action. Those students who do not receive credit because of excessive absences, shall be deemed having not completed the course. Such students will have to repeat the course. Only those students remaining in the course for the full year will be eligible to attend summer school.

Appeals Process

The purpose of having an appeals process is to ensure that all absences are treated equally and that there is accuracy and fairness in the application of the policy. The appeals committee will consist of:

- The teacher(s) of the class(es) for which credit is being denied;
- One administrator; and
- One guidance counselor.

After exceeding the class absence limit, students who believe there were extenuating circumstances concerning their absences may present an appeal in writing, with supporting evidence, to the Appeals Committee. This appeal must be made within 5 school days of the notice that no credit can be earned.

The committee will meet with the student to review the absences and consider documentation. The committee will resolve the matter in a timely fashion and the decision will be communicated in writing to all parties involved. If the committee denies the appeal, the student may appeal the committee's decision to the High School Principal within five school days of the committee's decision. If the Principal sustains the committee's decision the student may appeal to the Superintendent of Schools within five days of the Principal's decision.

Middle School Promotion Policy

If a student is absent more than 24 days in a year, promotion to the next grade may be denied at the discretion of the Appeals Committee. The Appeals Committee shall consist of the Building Principal and the student's teachers.

Elementary School Promotion Policy

If a student is absent for more than 30 days, promotion to the next grade level (this policy includes kindergarten students) may be denied at the discretion of the Appeals Committee. The Appeals Committee shall consist of the Building Principal and the student's teacher(s).

6. Attendance Incentives

The district will design and implement systems to acknowledge a student's efforts to maintain or improve school attendance. For example:

- At the building and classroom levels, Building Principals and teachers are encouraged to schedule special events (quizzes, game days, debates, etc.) for days of chronically high absenteeism, like Mondays and Fridays.
- Monthly lottery drawings to award prizes for perfect attendance. Three prizes will be awarded each month at each grade level. Names of students with perfect attendance will be placed in the drawing by grade and three names will be drawn for the award of prizes each month, subject to parental consent and applicable confidentiality rules.
- An attendance honor roll shall be maintained and published monthly identifying those students with perfect attendance as well as those students whose attendance has improved significantly, subject to parental consent and applicable confidentiality rules.

- At the classroom levels, teachers are encouraged to assign special responsibilities (distribute and collect materials, lead groups, assist the teacher, etc.) to students who may need extra motivation to come to school.
- At the classroom levels, teachers are encouraged to acknowledge the importance of good attendance (individual certificates, recognition chart, bulletin boards).

Disciplinary Consequences

Unexcused ATEDs will result in disciplinary sanctions as described in the District's Code of Conduct. Those penalties may include detention or in-school suspension.

In addition, the house principals will contact the student's parents and the student's guidance counselor. Such staff member(s) shall remind parents of the attendance policy, explain the ramifications of unexcused ATEDs, stress the importance of class attendance and discuss appropriate intervention strategies to correct the situation.

Impact of Attendance on Parking Privileges and Co-curricular Activities

Parking Privileges. A student who accumulates

- 6 absences before the first marking period,
- 12 absences before the end of the second marking period,
- 18 absences before the end of the third marking period, and/or
- 24 absences before the end of the fourth marking period

will lose parking privileges until perfect attendance is achieved for a two-week period. Continued absences may result in removal of permit for the year. Exceptions mentioned in the policy will remain in effect when evaluating these absences.

Students who lose credit in any course due to excessive absences are ineligible for parking the following year. Students who subsequently improve their attendance for a full year may then become eligible for parking.

Co-Curricular Activities. In order to participate in any after school activities, a student must be present at least six periods on the day of the activity and must attend all scheduled classes during that time.

7. Notice

To be successful in this endeavor, it is imperative that all members of the school community are aware of this policy, its purpose, procedures and the consequences of non-compliance. To ensure that students, parents, teachers and administrators are notified of and understand this policy, the following procedures shall be implemented.

- The attendance policy will be included in student handbooks and will be reviewed with students at the start of the school year.

- Parents will receive a plain language summary of this policy by mail at the start of the school year. Parents will be asked to sign and return a statement indicating that they have read and understand the policy.
- When a student is absent, tardy, or leaves early from class or school without excuse, the attendance officer and/or house principals will notify the student's parent(s) by phone of the specific ATED and remind them of the attendance policy.
- A back-to-school event will be held at the beginning of each school year to explain this policy and stress the parent's responsibility for their ensuring their children's attendance.
- School newsletters and publications will include periodic reminders of the components of this policy.
- The district will provide a copy of the attendance policy and any amendments thereto to faculty and staff. New staff will receive a copy upon their employment.
- All faculty and staff will meet at the beginning of each school year to review the attendance policy to clarify individual roles in its implementation.
- Copies of this policy will also be made available to any community member, upon request.
- At the high school and middle school levels, parents will be notified of the number of absences at the 8, 16, and 24 absence thresholds by the appropriate building principals.
- At the elementary level parents will be notified at the 10, 20, and 30 absence thresholds by the appropriate building principals.

8. Intervention Strategy Process

In order to effectively intervene when an identified pattern of unexcused absences, tardiness or early departures occur, designated district personnel will pursue the following:

- a. Identify specific element(s) of the pattern (e.g. grade level, building, time frames, type of unexcused absences, tardiness or early departures);
- b. Contact the district staff most closely associated with the element. In specific cases where the pattern involves an individual student, the student and parent/guardian will be contacted;
- c. Discuss strategies to directly intervene with the specific element(s);
- d. Recommend intervention to the Superintendent of Schools or his/her designee if it relates to a change in district policy or procedure;
- e. Implement changes, as approved by appropriate administration;
- f. Utilize appropriate district and/or community resources to address and help remedy student unexcused absences, tardiness or early departure; or
- g. Monitor and report short and long term effects of intervention.

9. Person to review attendance records and initiate change

The building House Principals will work in conjunction with the building attendance clerk in reviewing attendance records at the end of each term. This review is conducted to identify individual and group attendance patterns and to initiate appropriate action to address the problem of unexcused absences, tardiness and early departures.

The Board shall annually review the building level student attendance records and if such records show a decline in student attendance, the Board shall make any revisions to this policy deemed necessary to improve student attendance.

Cross-ref: 1741, Relations with "Home Schools"
4321, Programs for Students with Disabilities Under IDEA and Article 89
4327, Homebound Instruction
4710, Grading Systems

Ref: Education Law §§1709; 3024; 3025; 3202(1-a); 3205-3213; 3225
8 NYCRR §§104.1; 175.6

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