

Island Park UFSD

3103 – ATTENDANCE POLICY

The Board of Education recognizes that regular school attendance is a major component of academic success. Through implementation of this policy, the Board expects to encourage full attendance by all students, maintain an adequate attendance record-keeping system, identify patterns of student absences and tardiness and, where necessary, develop effective intervention strategies to improve school attendance.

Notice

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

- The attendance policy will be distributed to all parents/guardians in the annual “Back to School” mailing at the end of the summer and posted on the district website (www.ips.k12.ny.us). In addition, it will be included in student agenda books and reviewed with students at the start of the school year. New entrants will be provided a copy of the policy at the time of enrollment.

When a student is absent or tardy, the school nurse or designated staff member(s) will notify the student’s parent(s)/guardian(s) by phone and/or mail and, remind them of the attendance policy.

At the back-to-school night, principals will explain this policy and stress the parent’s/guardian’s responsibility for their ensuring their children’s attendance.

School newsletters and publications will include periodic reminders of the components of this policy.

- A copy of the attendance policy and any amendments thereto will be included in the faculty and staff handbook.
- Principals will review the policy with faculty and staff at the beginning of each school year to clarify individual roles in its implementation.
- Copies of this policy will also be made available to any community member upon request; it will also be posted on the district website.

Excused and Unexcused Absences

Excused absences include tardiness and early departures from class or school that are the result of personal illness, death in the family, impassable roads due to severe weather conditions, religious observance, quarantine, required court appearances, and attendance at health clinics. Students who are absent from school due to illness for three or more consecutive days are required to furnish a doctor’s note upon return to school. If practicable, students may receive class work in advance of an excused absence. Additionally, they are expected to locate, complete, and makeup homework and other assignments by accessing them on the school webpage of the district website.

All other absences are considered unexcused. These include but are not limited to family trips and vacations during the school year. Students will not receive class work in advance of an unexcused absence but will be responsible to locate, complete, and makeup homework and other assignments by accessing them on the school webpage of the district website. A student’s repeated unexcused absences from school with parental/guardian consent may result in educational neglect and require mandated reporting to Child Protective Services. By law, all absences and tardiness must be counted. It is the parent’s/guardian’s responsibility to notify the school nurse within 24 hours of the absence/tardiness or to complete and submit an electronic Absence Form on the district (www.ips.k12.ny.us) website in the Quick Links box. Moreover, a written excuse from the parent/guardian or doctor must be provided to the school nurse upon the student’s return to school. By law, students who are absent from school for twenty (20) consecutive days are dropped from the attendance roll and

must re-enroll in the district before they return to school; all necessary documents, including proofs of residency, must be provided.

General Procedures/Data Collection

- Attendance will be taken during opening exercises in the elementary school and during each class period in the Middle School.
- By Noon each day, all attendance information shall be compiled and accessible for State count and to the designated staff member(s) responsible for attendance monitoring.
- The nature of an absence/tardiness or early departure shall be coded on a student's record.
- Student attendance data shall be available to and will be reviewed by the principal in concert with designated school staff, e.g., school social worker, school nurse, etc in an expeditious manner.
- 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.
- Principals will analyze attendance data periodically to identify patterns or trends in student absences. Parents/Guardians will receive absentee and tardy data on their student's report cards and progress reports. In addition, excessive patterns of absenteeism and lateness (ten percent or more) will be reported in letters to parents/guardians. Parents/Guardians will be called or may be required to attend school meetings with school officials, e.g., teacher, school nurse, social worker, guidance counselor, principal, etc to discuss and develop a plan to discuss the problem. Where the unexcused absentee rate is not improved and negatively impacts a child's academic performance, the school may be required to contact Child Protective Services to assist the family.
- Excessive absenteeism may result in retention; that is, a student may not be promoted to the next grade. (See Student Promotion and Retention Policy 3112.1.)
- Principals will conduct continuous monitoring to identify students who are absent, tardy or leave class or school early. Every effort must be made by the parent/guardian to make appointments for doctors, dentists, etc when school is not in session.
- It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to monitor their child's progress and to provide completed homework and other assignments to the relevant teacher(s) upon their child's return to school.
- Students who are absent from school are not permitted to attend or participate in extra-curricular clubs, activities, or sporting events.

Attendance Incentives

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

- An attendance honor roll shall be maintained and published at the end of each marking period identifying those students with perfect attendance as well as those students whose attendance has improved significantly, subject to parental/guardian consent and applicable confidentiality rules.
- At the classroom levels, teachers are encouraged to assign special responsibilities to students who may need extra motivation to come to school.

Interventions

Unexcused absences/tardiness and early departures will result in disciplinary action consistent with the district's Code of Conduct and Promotion and Detention Policy.

Periodic attendance letters will be sent home to students with frequent or excessive absentee rates (10% and higher). Principals will contact the student's parents/guardians and remind them of the attendance policy, explain the ramifications of unexcused absences, stress the importance of class attendance and discuss appropriate intervention strategies to correct the situation. Telephone calls from school officials, scheduled meetings with teachers, counseling sessions with the family and social worker as well as assistance from Child Protective Services are all interventions that may result.

Students who are absent are expected to return to school with all homework and other assignments listed for the period on the school webpage of the district website. In the event an excused absence is known ahead of time, the student and his/her parent/guardian should consult with the relevant teacher(s) (by writing a letter and/or scheduling an appointment for a meeting) regarding anticipated missed class work and homework. Students with an excused absence will be given the opportunity to make up a test or other missed work and/or turn in a late assignment for inclusion in their final grade. Make up opportunities must be completed by a date specified by the student's teacher for the class(es) in question. If a parent/guardian consults with a teacher in advance of a child's absence and the absence does not satisfy one of the criteria (listed above) for a legally "excused" absence, the parent/guardian will be notified.

Annual Review

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

3103.1 – Attendance Records

Student attendance records shall be confidential and may not be released outside the district except under the following conditions:

- a) By written consent of either or both parents, or the person exercising parental authority over the student.
- b) Child Protective Services requests records based on an investigation that originates from the school.
- c) Pursuant to subpoena or court order duly served upon the district.

3103.2 – Release of Students During School Hours

Students shall not be released from scheduled school activities during school hours except by proper authority and in accordance with appropriate procedures as established in this policy. Parents/Guardians must make every effort to schedule appointments for their child during after-school hours. In the event an appointment must occur during school hours, despite a parent's/guardian's best efforts to schedule it at another time, the district encourages the child to attend school before the appointment and/or to return to school after the appointment to minimize loss of instructional time.

An excessive loss of instructional time due to appointments during the school day may result in review of a student's attendance record.

Students will be released only to their parents/guardians or to persons properly authorized by the parents/guardians. Such authorized parties may be emergency contacts designated by the parent/guardian to be entered in the school's student management system; it may also be another designee as per written note from the parent/guardian. In cases of family dissension or divorce, requests by either parent/guardian to release students will be honored unless the school is placed under legal restraint.

3103.3 – Release for Religious Instruction

Pupils released for religious instruction must have a Religious Release Request signed by the parent/guardian on file in the school office. The courses in religious education must be maintained and operated by or under the control of duly constituted religious bodies. Students must be registered for the courses and a copy of the registration must be filed with the Superintendent of Schools. The attendance of students enrolled in such religious classes must be reported to the school principal at the end of each semester. Absence for release time cannot be for more than one hour per week.

3103.4 – Instruction on Days of Limited Attendance

On days when attendance is noticeably affected by factors such as inclement weather, large incidence of illness or observance of religious holy days, there is a responsibility for teachers to be sensitive to the kind of instruction given and cognizant of their obligation to all pupils, those in attendance and those who are absent.

On such days operating procedures must enable all pupils to meet their academic responsibilities without conflicting with the legitimate reasons for the absence. Normal procedures for such days are described as follows:

- 1) Instruction is to take place for those in attendance.
- 2) No penalty shall be assessed against any student for being absent under these circumstances.
- 3) Class procedures on these days should involve meaningful learning experiences and may include activities such as review, enrichment, individualized instruction, remediation, corrective instruction, individual or group diagnostic testing, and those learning activities that can easily be made up by the absent student.
- 4) There should be no major examinations, such as unit examinations or standardized examinations. There should be no field trips or one-time-only special events.
- 5) It shall be the responsibility of the faculty and administration to make available a reasonable opportunity for students to make up work requirements missed because of such absence. It shall be the responsibility of the student, upon return to class, to avail himself/herself of the opportunity afforded to make up all work.

Adoption: July 11, 2016