

(X) Required

(x) Local

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ATTENDANCE

Good attendance is a central component of the educational process. The educational program offered by the district is predicated upon student presence and requires continuity of instruction and classroom participation. Through implementation of this policy, the Board expects to reduce the current level of unexcused absences, tardiness and early departures, encourage full attendance by all students, maintain an adequate attendance recordkeeping system, identify patterns of student absences and 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, 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, designated staff member(s) will notify the student's parent(s) by phone and mail, remind them of the attendance policy, and review intervention procedures with them.
- 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.

- Copies of this policy will also be made available to any community member, upon request.

Excused and Unexcused Absences

Appropriate Grounds for Excused Absences or Tardiness. The student and his/her parent or person in parental relation are responsible for providing written notification within three school days of the reason for such absences upon the student's return to school. The following list represents appropriate reasons for being absent from school or tardy:

1. Personal illness
2. Sickness or death in family
3. Medical appointments
4. Court appearances
5. Religious observance
6. Quarantine
7. Supervised education, supervised project, scheduled athletic event (authorized release form/permission slip constitutes written notification)
8. Approved cooperative work program
9. Military obligation/pre-approved appointments with documentation of recruitment
10. Pre-approved college visits
11. Any other absence excused in the discretion of the Superintendent.

Grounds for Unexcused Absences or Tardiness. Absence for any reason not included in the list set forth above is an unexcused absence. Absences for reasons set forth above, but which a student does not have pre-approval from the district or for which the student does not provide an appropriate note or documentation within three (3) school days of his/her return to school will also be recorded as an unexcused absence. The principal may require a doctor's note for extended absences.

Parental requests to excuse their child from school for reasons not included in the above list (i.e. to take a driver's test, get a haircut, go shopping, to go on a family trip or not stating a specific reason) are unexcused absences under state law. Excuses that a student overslept or had car trouble are also unacceptable and will constitute an unexcused absence or tardy.

Recordkeeping

Taking Attendance

Elementary buildings (non-departmentalized) – Attendance shall be taken each morning at the beginning of the school day. Each classroom teacher shall record the students' presence or absence in a classroom teacher record and shall send all attendance cards of absent students to the attendance office on an attendance

report form.

Middle School/High School buildings (departmentalized) – Attendance shall be taken at the beginning of each period of scheduled instruction. Each classroom teacher shall record the students' presence or absence in a classroom teacher record and shall report all absences to the attendance office on an attendance report form.

Content/Form of District Attendance Records

The district maintains a permanent record of attendance for all students enrolled in instruction. The attendance record will be prepared by the attendance recorder and maintained electronically or in paper form on a building-level basis. A district-wide record shall also be compiled by the Superintendent based on the building-level data. The record shall include the following information for each student: name, date of birth, names of parents or person in parental relation, address where student resides, phone numbers where parents or persons in parental relation can be reached, date of enrollment, a record of the student's attendance on each day of scheduled instruction in conformity with the chart below, a record of each scheduled day of instruction during which the school is closed for all or part of the day due to extraordinary circumstances.

<u>Title</u>	<u>Status</u>	<u>Excused</u>
Unexcused Absence	Absent	No
Excused Absence	Absent	Yes
Excused/Dismissed Early	Present	Yes
Bus Late	Present	Yes
Court	Absent	Yes
In-school Suspension	Present	Yes
Out-of-School Suspension (w/o tutoring)	Absent	Yes
Out-of-School Suspension (w/ tutoring)	Present	Yes
Truant	Absent	No
Educational Absence	Absent	Yes
Religious Observance	Absent	Yes
Educational Program	Present	Yes
Other (w/ explanation)	Absent	No
School Closed (extraordinary circumstance)	Present	Yes
Family	Absent	Yes
Home Tutor	Absent	Yes
Illness/Tutored	Present	Yes
Excused Tardy	Tardiness	Yes
Unexcused Tardy	Tardiness	No
Weather	Absence	Yes

Entries on the attendance record shall be made only by the attendance recorder designated by the building principal and shall be verified under oath or affirmation.

Contacting Parents

In the event that a student is absent from school without previous notification to the teacher or building principal, the school will call the student's home to confirm the absence. If no parent or person in parental relation is home, the district will contact a parent or person in parental relationship at their place of employment or number listed on the student's emergency contact form. In both situations, if contact is not made with a parent or person in parental relation, a message will be left for the parent or person in parental relation to call the school, and remind them to send a written excuse within three days of the absence.

Attendance Requirements for Rewards, Discipline and Receipt of Course Credit

Rewards for good attendance – In addition to the likelihood of enhanced educational progress, good attendance will be the basis for student recognition awards. Any student who attends 95% or more of his or her scheduled instructional periods will be eligible for good attendance recognition. Any student who has perfect attendance shall be eligible for perfect attendance recognition. In addition, good attendance will be a positive endorsement factor in any letter of recommendation written by a school employee on behalf of a student.

Consequences for Unexcused Absences – Chronic absences and tardiness, whether excused or unexcused, are disruptive to the educational process and will not be tolerated. Make-up work will be for excused absences, subject to the classroom teacher's discretion. For unexcused absences, make-up work will generally not be offered. The following procedures are in place to deal with excessive absences (whether excused or unexcused):

Grades K-8

- a. 5 days absent – letter to parents;
- b. 10 days absent – letter to parents, attendance officer called to visit home, or certified letter; student prohibited from participating in any school-sponsored activity requiring them to miss classes;
- c. 16 days absent – letter from the Principal.

Grades 9-12

- a. 10 days absent – letter to parents and attendance reported to Principal; student may be prohibited from participating in any school-sponsored activity requiring them to miss classes;
- b. 20 days absent – certified letter sent to parent with warning that course credit is in jeopardy and the District may file a PINS petition;
- c. 32 days absent – letter from the Principal stating the next unexcused absence will result in loss of course credit;
- d. Semester courses will send letters at 5, 10 and 16 days.

The district retains discretion whether or not to file a PINS petition. A PINS petition may be filed earlier than these guidelines if the situation warrants such action.

Unexcused tardiness and absences will also subject a student to the range of penalties specified in the district's Code of Conduct (5300.25 (B)(2)).

Course Credit

Any cumulative unexcused absences in excess of thirty two (32) periods of instruction for a full-year course or sixteen (16) periods for a ½ year course shall cause parents to be notified according to the schedule set forth in "Consequences for Unexcused Absences" above that their child's receipt of course credit is in jeopardy. The District retains discretion to allow a student to perform make-up work for properly excused absences in order to avoid having the absence counted in a determination to deny course credit. The District retains discretion to evaluate a student's attendance in light of academic performance and other indicators in deciding whether credit shall be denied. The District retains discretion to allow for credit recovery.

Prior to any student being denied course credit and auditing a course, a Faculty Council shall convene to review the student's attendance record. A recommendation to the Principal will follow. Such Faculty Council shall be comprised of the Principal and the Assistant Principal, and two (2) high school teachers and a high school guidance counselor as selected by the Principal.

Attendance/Grade Policy

The Board of Education recognizes an important relationship between class attendance and student performance. Consequently, each marking period a student's final grade may be based on classroom participation as well as student's performance on homework, tests, papers, projects, etc.

Students are expected to attend all scheduled classes. Consistent with the importance of classroom participation, unexcused absences or tardies will affect a student's class participation grade for the marking period.

Development of an Attendance Intervention Strategy and Annual Review

The Principal, through a committee of teachers, parents and school administrators, will develop an attendance intervention strategy consistent with this policy in the event that regular reviews of the district's attendance record suggests that overall student attendance is declining or should be improved.

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

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

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