

HIGH SCHOOL ATTENDANCE POLICY

The Board of Education recognizes that regular school attendance is a major component of academic success and the responsibility for educational success rests with the student, the parent, and the teacher. Teachers must motivate their students to participate, and curriculum must be interesting and relevant; however, good class attendance is an essential ingredient for learning to occur. Classroom lessons and participation foster social interaction, development of effective communication skills and critical thinking. Any absence from class is therefore detrimental to the learning process. This policy is intended to encourage full attendance by all students, limit the level of absences, tardiness, and early departures (referred to in this policy as “ATEDs”), maintain an adequate attendance recordkeeping system, identify patterns of student ATEDs, 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 will be implemented:

- A plain language summary of this 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.
- 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/or mail of the specific ATED, remind them of the attendance policy, and review ATED 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/or 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.

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2nd Reading (revised): 07/14/2020

1st Reading (revised): 06/02/2020

Renumbered: 05/03/2017

Approved (replacing 5114 and 5121): 01/05/2011

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1st Reading (replacing 5114 and 5121): 12/01/2010

- The district will share this policy with local Child Protective Services (CPS) to ensure a common understanding of excused and unexcused ATED's and to work toward identifying and addressing cases of educational neglect.

Excused and Unexcused Absences

Excused ATEDs are defined as absences, tardiness, and early departures from class or school due to personal illness, illness or death in the family, impassable roads or weather, religious observance, quarantine, required court appearances, attendance at health clinics, approved college visits, approved cooperative work programs, military obligations, or such other reasons as may be approved by the appropriate building administrator.

All other ATEDs are considered unexcused absences.

All ATEDs must be accounted for and absences made up. It is the parent's responsibility to notify the school office within 24 hours of the ATED and to provide a written excuse upon the student's return to school. For homeless students, the homeless liaison will assist the student in providing or obtaining documentation if needed.

General Procedures/Data Collection

- Parents should phone the school attendance office between the hours of 7:15 a.m. and 10:00 a.m. whenever a student is absent from school.
- Attendance will be taken during each class period.
- At the conclusion of each class period or school day, all attendance information will be compiled and provided to the designated staff member(s) responsible for attendance.
- The nature of an ATED will be coded on a student's record.
- Student ATED data will be available to and must be reviewed by the designated school personnel 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.
- Attendance data will be analyzed periodically to identify patterns or trends in student absences.
- Where consistent with other school practices, teachers and staff ~~shall~~ will detain students in the hallways who are absent from a class period without excuse and refer the students to the Building Principal or the Principal's designee. Continuous monitoring will be conducted to identify students who are absent, tardy, or leave class or school early.
- Continuous monitoring will be conducted to identify students who are absent, tardy, or leave class or school early. A student will be considered chronically absent if they miss ten percent or more of the school year. Satisfactory attendance is missing five percent or less of school over the course of the year. If a pattern of ATED's for an individual student is identified a designated staff person(s) will follow-up in accordance with this policy.

Attendance Incentives

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

- Students with perfect attendance for a given year will receive a letter of recognition from the Superintendent of Schools. This letter will be awarded at the annual Awards Night program (or at a similar event) at the conclusion of each school year.
- Any student with perfect attendance for two years at the middle school or four years at the high school will receive special recognition at the school building level.
- At the building and classroom levels, Building Principals and teachers are encouraged to schedule significant classroom activities for days of chronically high absenteeism such as before and after school vacations. Among these activities are graded assignments, introduction of new material, or scheduled student presentations.
- At the classroom level, 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.

Consequences of Excessive ATEDs

Unexcused ATEDs will result in disciplinary action consistent with the district's code of conduct. Those penalties may include, for example, detention or in-school suspension. Students may also be denied the privilege of participating in or attending extracurricular events. However, absences related to homelessness will not result in negative consequences where the district determines that it would be in the best interests of the student in retaining the student in school.

In addition, designated staff member(s) 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 excessive ATEDs, stress the importance of class attendance and discuss appropriate intervention strategies to correct the situation.

In addition, the building principal will contact local Child Protective Services (CPS) if they suspect that the child is being educationally neglected. The building principal will provide CPS with the information necessary to initiate a report. If other staff members suspect education neglect, they must follow the procedures outlined in Board policy and regulation 5460, Child Abuse in a Domestic Setting, and advise the building 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 grade will 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. All students with an excused ATED are expected upon their return to consult with their teachers regarding missed work. Consistent with the importance of classroom participation, unexcused ATEDs and unmade-up ATEDs will affect a student's class participation grade for the marking period.

In grades 9-12, a student who has more than five absences during any marking period will have 15 points (the value the district assigns for class participation) deducted from his/her computed marking period grade (based upon test and quiz scores, homeworks, papers, presentations, etc.). Students with properly excused ATEDs may make up the work for up to three full period absences per marking period. Made up ATEDs will not count as an accumulated absence toward the allowed five absences per marking period.

To ensure that parents and students are aware of the implications of this minimum attendance requirement for grades 9-12, the teacher will advise the student and a designated staff member will contact the parent(s) by telephone (when possible) and mail prior to the student reaching four ATEDs each marking period.

Only those students with excused ATEDs 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 marking period grade. Make up opportunities must be completed by a date specified by the student's teacher (typically the last day of the week following the return to school) for the class in question.

The district continues to have a no-cut policy. Every unexcused absence will be followed by disciplinary action as outlined in the district Code of Conduct.

Three latenesses or early departures of 15 minutes or less will be considered a full period absence. Each lateness or early departure in excess of fifteen minutes will count as a full period absence.

Administrative Procedures and Appeals

Whenever a student's ATEDs may require the denial of class participation credit, these procedures will be in effect:

1. The attendance dean will advise the Principal or his/her designee of the student's ATED for the marking period and identify absences due to school sponsored trips and activities, pre-arranged guidance appointments, days of suspension and home teaching, senior college visitation days (maximum of three), and days of religious observance.
2. The Principal or designee will review these records and the student's cumulative record.
3. The Principal or designee will meet with the student to determine the nature of the ATEDs during the marking period.
4. The Principal or designee will advise the parent/guardian and request additional information regarding the ATEDs.

5. The Principal or designee will then make one of the following determinations:
 - a. No further action is required in that extenuating circumstances will allow for additional make-ups.
 - b. The student will be denied the 15 points for class participation.

Following notification to the parent of the school's determination, an appeal may be made to the Building Principal who will confer with appropriate personnel and render a final decision.

The Superintendent of Schools and Board of Education will act in their legal capacities to review any building-level administrative decisions.

Summer School

Due to the limited class time during summer school, students with more than three absences in any course will be denied credit for that course. Parents will be notified by phone (when possible) and/or mail following the second absence.

Additional Note – Physical Education

The attendance policy in physical education classes will continue as described in current administrative procedures.

Cross ref: 4316, Physical Education
4331, Summer School
4710, Grading Systems
5300, Code of Conduct
5460, Child Abuse in a Domestic Setting

Ref: Education Law §§1709; 3024; 3025; 3202; 3205-3213; 3225
8 NYCRR §§104.1; 175.6
Social Service Law §34-a