

**SUBJECT: COMPREHENSIVE STUDENT ATTENDANCE POLICY****Purpose**

The purpose of this policy is to:

- a) Ensure the maintenance of an adequate record verifying the attendance of all children at instruction in accordance with Education Law Section 3205 and SAVE legislation;
- b) Establish a practical mechanism for the District to account to the parents of all children enrolled in our schools for the whereabouts of such children throughout each school day; and
- c) Ensure sufficient pupil attendance at all scheduled periods of actual instruction or supervised study activities to permit such pupils to succeed at meeting the State learning standards.

**Objectives**

The objectives of this policy are:

- a) To confirm that students are meeting compulsory attendance requirements;
- b) To know the whereabouts of every student for safety and school management reasons;
- c) To identify individual and group attendance patterns;
- d) To provide data to develop interventions to help close the gap in student performance, given the high correlation between attendance and achievement; and
- e) To determine the District's average daily attendance for State Aid purposes.

**Specific Strategies**

The following strategies will be implemented as of July 1, 2003 in order to achieve the purpose of this policy:

- a) An electronic record, henceforth referred to as the Register of Attendance, will be maintained for each student enrolled in District schools between July 1 and June 30 of each school year. Each individual record will include: student name; date of birth; full name(s) of parent(s) or person(s) in parental relation; address where the pupil resides; phone number(s) where the parent(s) or person(s) in parental relation may be contacted; date of the pupil's enrollment; a record of the pupil's attendance on each day of scheduled instruction, including period by period data, where applicable; a record of each scheduled day of instruction during which the school is closed for all or part of the day because of extraordinary circumstances including water supply, shortage of fuel, weather conditions, destruction or damage to a school building, or such other cause as may be found satisfactory to the Commissioner; and the date when the pupil withdraws from enrollment or is dropped from enrollment in accordance with Education Law Section 3202 (I-a)
- b) For students in Universal Pre-Kindergarten through Sixth Grade, such students' presence or absence shall be recorded at the beginning of the school day by a classroom teacher, licensed teaching assistant, or school administrator in charge. This information will be forwarded to the individual designated by the Board of Education to supervise the keeping of the Register of Attendance for that building.

- c) For students in grades Seven through Twelve, such students' presence or absence shall be recorded during each period of scheduled instruction or supervised activities, such as study hall or assembly, by the classroom teacher, licensed teaching assistant, or school administrator in charge. This information will be forwarded to the individual designated by the Board of Education to supervise the keeping of the Register of Attendance for that building.
- d) For Universal Pre-Kindergarten through Twelfth Grade, students who arrive late for scheduled instruction will be recorded as tardy, and students who leave early will be recorded as early departure, by a classroom teacher, licensed teaching assistant, school administrator, or other school employee designated by a school administrator. This information will be forwarded to the individual designated by the Board of Education to supervise the keeping of the Register of Attendance for that building.
- e) For those situations in which a student is recorded as absent, tardy, or early departure, whether that student's lack of attendance is considered excused or unexcused in accordance with the standards articulated in this policy shall be recorded by a classroom teacher, licensed teaching assistant, school administrator, or the individual designated by the Board of Education to supervise the keeping of the Register of Attendance for that building. This information shall be forwarded to the supervisor of the Register of Attendance.
- f) In most instances, the attendance information forwarded to the supervisor of the Register of Attendance will be sent via the District's computer network utilizing a consistent attendance-monitoring software program. In situations involving substitute teachers, computer or networking errors, or loss of power, attendance information will be forwarded to the supervisor of the Register of Attendance in written form.
- g) All entries in the Register of Attendance shall be verified daily by the oath or affirmation of the person making those entries.
- h) Pupil attendance records shall be reviewed by the Building Principal for the purpose of initiating appropriate action to address unexcused pupil absence, tardiness, and early departure patterns. Each building administrator is responsible for developing written procedure in support of this policy.
- i) The attendance policy will be included in student handbooks and will be reviewed with students at the start of each school year.
- j) Parents will receive a plain language summary of this policy by mail at the start of each school year.
- k) The District will provide a copy of the attendance policy and any amendments thereto to faculty and staff. New faculty and staff members will receive a copy upon their employment.
- l) Copies of this policy will also be made available to any community member, upon request.

### **Summary of Excused/Unexcused Absences, Tardiness and Early Departures**

- a) Sample reasons given for absence, tardiness, or early departure:

Excused

Military obligations  
Religious observance  
Medical/Dental appointment  
Personal illness  
Illness or death in the family  
Impassable roads or weather conditions  
Quarantine  
Required court appearance  
Approved work programs  
School-supplied transportation issues

Unexcused

None  
Overslept  
Missed the bus  
Family vacation  
Hunting/Fishing  
Unapproved employment  
Unapproved college visits  
Unapproved field trips  
Personal transportation issues  
Locker difficulties  
Using the bathroom

Excused - Parallel Instruction

Music Lessons  
School-sponsored trips  
Leadership workshops  
College visitations/College rep. meetings  
Alternate educational programs  
Home tutoring  
In-school instruction  
Recruitment meetings  
Course selection/scheduled school meetings  
Class/school-wide assemblies  
Religious education  
Related services (e.g., counseling, occupational therapy)

- b) All absences, tardiness, and early departures must be accounted for. It is the responsibility of the parent(s) or person(s) in parental relation to the student to notify the appropriate school office within at least twenty-four (24) hours of the absence, tardiness, or early departure and to provide a written excuse upon the student's return to school. Prior parental notice is required for early dismissal.
- c) For excuses provided that do not match any of the categories in section "a" above, and for those that cannot be supported as true or for which evidence exists that suggests the excuse is false, the Building Principal shall determine whether to consider the absence, tardiness, or early departure excused or unexcused.
- d) The District will use a coding system for information recorded in the Register of Attendance. Specific abbreviations and symbols (see attached) will be used to represent absences, tardiness, and early departures, the various reasons given for non-attendance, and for whether the reasons provided are considered excused, unexcused, or pending determination.

## **Minimum Attendance Requirements for Grades 9 through 12 and for High School Courses Offered to Students through 8th Grade**

Because High School learning is often highly sequential, and class discussions and lab experiences are hard to duplicate, students who are not in attendance for class are at a serious disadvantage. In support of this concern, the following policy will be adhered to for students at both the home school and BOCES:

- a) To obtain full credit for a course, a student may not miss more than fifteen percent (15%) of the scheduled classes for that course. Absences in excess of fifteen percent (15%) will result in a loss of credit for the course.
- b) The maximum number of absences permitted before credit is lost:
  1. Full Semester Course = Fourteen (14) Class Sessions
  2. Alternate Day or Ten (10) Week Course = Seven (7) Class Sessions
  3. Lab Science Course = Seventeen (17) Class Sessions
- c) For those students who enroll in the District after the first day of an academic semester, the minimum seat time requirement will be prorated. No student may miss more than fifteen percent (15%) of the total number of days enrolled with the District during that semester. For example, if a student was enrolled at Oxford High School for all of September, moved elsewhere for the months of October and November, then returned for December and January, the student would not be allowed to miss more than fifteen (15%) of the number of first semester school days for which that student was enrolled in the months of September, December, and January.
- d) All absences, tardiness, and early departures from class for greater than ten (10) minutes will count toward the maximum number of allowable absences, as enumerated above, except those considered to be Parallel Instruction.
- e) Parent(s) or person(s) in parental relation to a child whose absences exceed the number allowable to earn course credit will receive written notification stating the course(s) for which course credit will be denied. Interventions to be employed prior to course credit denial are stated in this policy in the following sections: (c) (8)-(10); (e)(6); and (f)-(h). Those students, parents, or persons in parental relation who wish to challenge a decision made to deny course credit may make an appeal to the Building Principal.
- f) Students who miss a class will be afforded an opportunity to make up work or time missed in accordance with the following procedures:
  1. All work must be made up by the end of the 5-week marking period during which it is assigned.
  2. The only exception to item "1." above is if a student's absence(s) occur during the week before the ending of a marking period. In this situation, an incomplete may be given which permits the individual the traditional two (2) week grace period to make up work.

3. Time that has been missed may be made up by a student's attendance at an after-school make up session arranged through the Principal's Office or some other instruction approved by the Principal in consultation with the classroom teacher. Physical Education classes may be made up during a student's Study Hall following guidelines established by the Physical Education teacher and approved by the Building Principal. For all courses, no make up sessions will be offered after the last regular day of classes before Regents week.
4. Appropriate make up sessions will result in a deduction of an absence from the total absences for the particular class made up. For example, an eighty (80) minute class period can be made up by attending a one (1) hour, after school, make up session.

### **Tutoring During Extended Absences**

In circumstances where the absence of any student enrolled in Universal Pre-Kindergarten through Grade 12 can be anticipated to be in excess of three (3) days due to a diagnosed, long-term illness or other medical condition that would warrant an excused absence, the District will initiate home tutoring or some other instruction approved by the Building Principal in consultation with the classroom teacher. Home tutoring is considered a make up activity under the "Minimum Attendance Requirements for Grades 9-12."

### **Attendance-Related Incentives, Sanctions, and Interventions**

- a) The District will design and implement systems to acknowledge a student's efforts to maintain or improve school attendance. For example:
  1. Address school attendance by adapting the curriculum to include efforts to link present learning to future careers and increase student ownership in learning.
  2. Students who are eligible for a certificate of employment as a minor to work past 10 p.m. on a school night will be issued this certificate, upon their request, as long as they meet the minimum attendance requirements for their grade level.
  3. An attendance honor roll shall identify those students with perfect attendance as well as those students whose attendance has improved significantly, subject to parental consent and applicable confidentiality laws and regulations.
  4. Determining Student of the Month will involve, among other considerations, a review of student attendance.
  5. Perfect Attendance Certificates will be issued at the end of each school year.
  6. 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.
  7. 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.
- b) The District will design and implement sanctions to be employed to discourage unexcused pupil absences, tardiness, and early departures. For example:

1. A student may be denied participation in extracurricular activities if he/she misses that day of instruction.
  2. The school may withdraw or refuse to reissue a certificate of satisfactory academic standing for a sixteen to seventeen (16-17) year old student to work beyond 10 p.m. before a school day as a result of poor attendance.
  3. Lunch detention.
  4. In-school suspension.
  5. Initiation of a PINS petition.
- c) Development of Specific Interventions

In addition to the incentives and sanctions stated above, school employees may develop other interventions intended to address attendance issues for groups of students or for individual students. Such interventions must be submitted in writing to the Building Principal for review. That which is submitted should include a description of the intervention, what individual or group of students the intervention is to be applied to, the name of the recommending/supervising school employee, and any additional, pertinent information that the employee sees fit to include or the Building Principal requires. Whether the Principal fully accepts the intervention summary, accepts it with limitations or modifications, or sends it back for revisions, the individual who submitted the summary will be notified and may then move forward with the Principal's recommendation.

### **Parent Notification of Absences, Tardiness, and Early Departures**

For enrolled pupils, the pupil's parent(s) or person(s) in parental relation shall be notified of the pupil's excused and excused absence(s), tardiness, or early departure according to the following:

- a) Where a pupil has not been marked as present for scheduled instruction and the school has not been previously notified of the absence, the District shall attempt to contact the pupil's parent(s) or person(s) in parental relation to learn the nature of the pupil's absence and notify the parent of the pupil's nonpresence;
- b) For a pattern (as established by each building administration) of absences, tardies, early departures, or any combination thereof, the pupil's parent(s) or person(s) in parental relation shall receive a notice containing the dates, times, and nature of the pupil's nonpresence.

### **Annual Policy Review**

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

### **Summer School**

Should the District offer credit bearing courses during July and August this policy will be modified to include the summer session.

## Register of Attendance Coding System

A = Absence (excuse not yet determined)

AE = Absence, Excused

AEMD = Absence, Medical

API = Absence, Parallel Instruction

AU = Absence, Unexcused

DE = Early Dismissal, Excused

DPI = Early Dismissal, Parallel Instruction

DU = Early Dismissal, Unexcused

FT = Field Trip

H = Half Day Absence (excuse not yet determined)

HE = Half Day Absence, Excused

HPI = Half Day Absence, Parallel Instruction

HU = Half Day Absence, Unexcused

HI = Home Instruction

N = Nonmember

O = Other

R = Return

SE = Suspension, External

SI = Suspension, Internal

T = Tardy (excuse not yet determined)

TAE = Tardy, AM, Excused

TAPI = Tardy, AM, Parallel Instruction

TAU = Tardy, AM, Unexcused

TPE = Tardy, PM, Excused

TPPI = Tardy, PM, Parallel Instruction

TPU = Tardy, PM, Unexcused

W = Withdrawal

Adopted 4/24/17