

SUBJECT: COMPREHENSIVE STUDENT ATTENDANCE POLICY

This document has been developed in response to the November 2001 revision from the New York State Board of Regents to Regulation Section 104 of the Commissioner of Education. Referral is also made to Education Law Sections 3024, 3025, 3202, 3205, 3210, 3213 and also to 8 New York Code of Rules and Regulations (NYCRR) Sections 104.1, 109.2, and 175.6.

School attendance is both a right and a responsibility. The Washingtonville Central School District is an active partner with students and parents in the task of ensuring that all students meet or exceed the New York State Learning Standards. Because the District recognizes that consistent school attendance, academic success, and school completion have a positive correlation; the District has developed this Comprehensive Student Attendance Policy to meet the following objectives:

- a) **To promote the educational success of all students who, under the tutelage of a qualified teacher and through continuity of instruction, will participate in well planned instructional activities and classroom experiences;**
- b) **To raise student achievement and close gaps in student performances;**
- c) **To identify attendance patterns in order to design attendance improvement efforts;**
- d) **To know the whereabouts of every student for safety and other reasons;**
- e) **To verify that individual students are complying with education laws relating to compulsory attendance;**
- f) **To determine the District's average daily attendance for State aid Purposes.**

Description of Strategies to Meet Objectives:

The Washingtonville Central School District will:

- a) Create and maintain a positive school building culture by fostering a positive physical and psychological environment where the presence of strong adult role models encourages respectful and nurturing interactions between adults and students. This positive school culture is aimed at encouraging a high level of student bonding to the school, which in turn should lead to increased attendance.
- b) Implement and regularly assess the Washingtonville Central School District Comprehensive Student Attendance Policy.
- c) Maintain accurate record keeping via a Register of Attendance to record attendance, absences, tardiness or the early departure of each student.
- d) Utilize data analysis systems for tracking individual student attendance and individual and group trends in student attendance problems.
- e) Develop early intervention strategies to improve school attendance for all students.

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A written excuse, signed by the parent/legal guardian, should be presented by the student on the day when returning to school following each absence.

Determination of Excused and Unexcused Absences, Tardiness and Early Departures

The Washingtonville Central School District has determined that absences, tardiness and early departures will be considered excused or unexcused according to the following standards.

- a) **EXCUSED:** An absence, tardiness or early departure may be excused if due to personal illness, illness or death in the family, religious observance, quarantine, required court appearances, attendance at organized medical clinics, approved college visits, approved cooperative work programs, military obligations, "Take Your Child to Work" day, or other such reasons as may be approved by the Board of Education.
- b) **UNEXCUSED:** An absence, tardiness or early departure is considered unexcused if the reason for the lack of attendance does not fall into the above categories (e.g., family vacation, hunting, babysitting, haircut, obtaining a learner's permit, road test, oversleeping, etc.)

Student Attendance Recordkeeping/Data Collection:

The record of each student's presence, absence, tardiness and early departure shall be kept in a register of attendance in a manner consistent with Commissioner's Regulations. An absence, tardiness or early departure will be entered as "excused" or "unexcused" along with the District code for the reason. Attendance shall be taken and recorded in accordance with the following:

- a) For students in kindergarten through grade five, each student's presence or absence shall be recorded after the taking of attendance **once per school day**.
- b) For students in grades six through twelve, each student's presence or absence shall be recorded after the taking of attendance **in each period of scheduled instruction**.
- c) Any absence for a school day or portion thereof shall be recorded as excused or unexcused in accordance with the standards articulated in this policy.
- d) In the event that a student at any instructional level from kindergarten through grade twelve arrives late for or departs early from scheduled instruction, such tardiness or early departure shall be recorded as excused or unexcused in accordance with the standards articulated in this policy.

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- 1) A record will be kept of each scheduled day of instruction during which the school is closed for all or part of the day due to extraordinary circumstances. (adverse weather, insufficient water, etc.).
- 2) Attendance records will indicate the date when a student withdraws from enrollment or is dropped from enrollment in accordance with Education Law Section 3202(1-a).
- 3) At the conclusion of each class period or school day, all attendance information shall be compiled and provided to the designated school personnel who are responsible for attendance. All information will be coded on a student's record in accordance with the established District procedures.

Attendance Incentives

The building administration in consultation with guidance personnel and teachers may utilize attendance incentives (addressing not only attendance but also tardiness and early departures) including recognition of students with good attendance, consideration of special privileges or activities for such students, and commendation certificates that are issued to the student's parents/guardians.

Disciplinary Consequences

Class cutting, truancy and excessive absenteeism shall be deemed infractions of the Code of Conduct in the nature of insubordination. The Code of Conduct shall describe a range of disciplinary penalties to address these issues.

In the event that school level interventions have not improved the student's attendance, the principal may recommend interventions such as a Person in Need of Supervision (PINS) petition to the Family Court and/or contact with the appropriate social services agency to initiate a neglect petition.

Appeal Process

A parent/person in parental relation may request a building level review of their child's attendance record.

Building Review of Attendance Records

The Building Principal will work in conjunction with the building attendance clerk and other designated staff 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.

SUBJECT: COMPREHENSIVE STUDENT ATTENDANCE POLICY (Cont'd.)**Building Review of Attendance Records**

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Annual Review by the Washingtonville Central School District Board of Education/Community Awareness:

The Board of Education will 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 the Comprehensive Student Attendance Policy deemed necessary to improve student attendance.

In addition, the Board of Education will promote necessary community awareness of the Washingtonville Central School District's Attendance Policy by:

- Providing a plain language summary of the policy to parents or persons in parental relation to students at the beginning of each school year and promoting the understanding of the policy to both students and parents/persons in parental relation;
- Providing each teacher, at the beginning of the school year or upon employment, with a copy of the policy;
- Providing copies of the policy to any other members of the community upon request.

Education Law Sections
3205, 3210

Revised First Reading: 5/20/02
Adopted: 6/17/02
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