

ATTENDANCE PROCEDURE SUMMARY

The Board of Education is required to have a student attendance policy. The regulations for this policy are based on a **six-day** limit to the number of unexcused absences from any full-year course. Pupils exceeding the attendance limits for unexcused absences (see table below) in any class(es) are required to attend Credit Completion Summer School to receive credit for the class(es).

Attendance Limits for UNEXCUSED Absences		
Full-year course	6 class absences	(7+ requires credit completion)
Semester course	3 class absences	(4+ requires credit completion)
Physical Education	4 class absences	(5+ requires credit completion)
Health/Driver Ed.	2 class absences	(3+ requires credit completion)

Unexcused absences include full-day absences from school and tardiness to school that causes pupils to miss more than fifteen minutes of class and early dismissals. There are very few exceptions that will result in absences being deemed as “Excused,” and as such will not be charged against the attendance limits in the table above. Seniors who have not met all graduation requirements are not eligible to participate in the graduation ceremonies. Pupils and parent(s) or legal guardian(s) are encouraged to become familiar with the Attendance Policy and to monitor regularly the attendance records of their child(ren) and bring any problems to the attention of the administration.

The absence of a pupil for three consecutive days, without proper written notification, shall be sufficient reason for a check of the home by an attendance officer.

Students who are absent/tardy/dismissed early from school (excused or unexcused) may not participate in, attend, or be involved in any co-curricular program or after-school/evening-school activities without prior approval of the Principal or Assistant Principal.

When pupils are absent from school, regardless of the reason, they are required to make up those assignments deemed necessary. When course requirements during a marking period have not been completed to satisfaction of the teacher, an incomplete (INC) grade may be issued. The teacher will communicate the pupil’s lack of progress to the pupil, parent(s) or legal guardian(s), and school counselor. It is the responsibility of each student receiving an incomplete (INC) to determine from the teacher which requirements are outstanding. (See Incomplete Policy)

According to Board regulations, “Excused absence” is a pupil's absence from school for a full day or a portion of a day for one or more of the following reasons:

- Illness requiring hospitalization—all days deducted with medical verification.
- Illness of a chronic or persistent nature and requires regularly scheduled medical treatment over a prolonged period. Specific medical verification is required, and specific procedures must be followed (see procedures below). Such cases will be subject to periodic review by the school nurse or school doctor.
- Death in the immediate family (parents, grandparents, siblings). In such cases, up to three days will not be charged against the six day absence allotment.

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- Religious holidays as published annually by the State Board of Education will not be charged against the six day absence allotment provided that a parent signed note is submitted to the Attendance Office, preferably in advance;
- College visitations require verification from the college (signed note on college letterhead indicating dates of attendance). Up to three days will not be charged against the six day absence allotment. It is expected that the great majority of college visits will be made during the preceding summer, school holidays, weekends, or after school hours;
- Personal illness that is verified by a non-family member doctor's note signed and stamped by doctor's office with 48 hours of return to school or by the school nurse;
- Three (3) single-day absences (separate occurrences/not consecutive days) will be allowed as "excused" without a doctor's note. A phone call by a parent/guardian is required on the day of each absences and must be followed by a detailed note by the parent. The principal has the final authority to disallow excused if s/he feels the policy is being misused or abused.
- Take your son/daughter to work day—pupils between the ages of nine and fifteen will not be charged with an absence if, prior to the designated day, the parent(s) or legal guardian(s) provides a note verifying the work location to be visited;
- For pupils with disabilities, the school district shall require the attendance plans and punitive and remedial measures in accordance with the pupils:
 - IEP, pursuant to USC 1400 et. Seq., the IDEIA;
 - Procedural protections set forth in N.J.A.C. 6A:14;
 - Accommodation plans under 29 USC 794 and 705 (20);
 - Individualized health care plans, pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:16-2.362ix.

Note: Vacations or family travel while school is in session will not be considered as extenuating circumstances and will not be considered legal or legitimate reasons for absence.

PROCEDURES FOR COLLEGE VISITATION

Required college visitations which are **verified and approved in advance** by the principal will not be charged as an unexcused. Students are allowed up to three visitations per school year, provided the student is eligible to attend the school and is seriously considering attending the school. Class absences will be excused based on the length of the visit. Visits to local colleges/universities only require half day absences. Middlesex County College may be visited on weekends, and therefore VISITATION DURING THE SCHOOL DAY WILL NOT BE EXCUSED. Required placement tests for Middlesex County College, however, may be excused. Prior to the visitation, a parent/guardian signed letter indicating the college and date of the visit must be submitted to the Attendance Office. Visitation verification includes a written statement on college/university letterhead including the date of and reason for visitation. All verification must be submitted to the Attendance Office upon the students' return to school. A second visit to a school will require clear explanation of the reason beyond a tour.

ATTENDANCE POLICY SUMMARY (cont.)

PROCEDURES FOR CHRONIC ILLNESS

Chronic illness is an exception to the Attendance Policy. However, there are several requirements in order for this exception to be approved and absences excused accordingly:

1. A doctor's note must be presented to an Assistant Principal for approval. The doctor's note **must** contain the following:
 - a. an indication that a "chronic medical condition" exists.
 - b. the identification of the chronic condition.
 - c. an indication that the chronic condition will cause the student to be absent and/or tardy more than normal during the school year.

NOTE: School officials may periodically verify chronic status with physician during school year.

2. **ABSENCE FROM SCHOOL** – Once the doctor's note is accepted and approved, absences will be excused only if a parent calls the Attendance Office before 11 a.m. on the day of the absence and specifies that the absence is due to the chronic condition.
3. **TARDINESS TO SCHOOL** – If a student is tardy to school, the tardy will be excused only if the parent calls the Attendance Office by 10 a.m. on the same day and indicates that the reason is the chronic condition.
4. **EARLY DISMISSAL** – If a student signs out for early dismissal (including through the nurse's office), the absence will be excused only if a parent or nurse indicates that it is due to the chronic illness.
5. Absences/tardies/early dismissals will not be excused if notification is received the day after. A call must be made the day of in order to be excused.
6. Exceptions for chronic illness become effective from the date the doctor's note is received and approved by the Administration. The doctor's note must be renewed at the start of each year.
7. Students who have chronic illness notes on file and are absent, tardy to school, or dismiss early may not participate in, attend, or be involved in any co-curricular programs or after-school/evening activities without prior approval of the Principal or Assistant Principal. Forms for such approval are available in the Attendance Office.

PROCEDURES FOR RELIGIOUS HOLIDAYS

Religious holidays as published annually by the State Board of Education will not be charged against the six day absence allotment up to a limit of three days. To be excused for religious holiday, a student must submit a parent signed note to the Attendance Office preferably prior to the holiday.

CREDIT COMPLETION

- A. In accordance with the Attendance Policy, students exceeding the UNEXCUSED absence limits shall be required to attend a Credit Completion summer school.
- B. Students who do not complete the Credit Completion summer school will be required to repeat the relevant courses; this could mean repeating the grade. Attending Summer School for failure make-up does not remediate the credit completion requirements. Failure to earn credits in

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required courses could affect graduation. For seniors, this would preclude the right to participate in the June graduation. Diplomas will be awarded after Credit Completion.

- C. Requests for appeals are to be submitted in writing to the Principal after a review with the Assistant Principal.

TARDINESS / EARLY DISMISSAL

- A. Students who arrive at school after the start of homeroom are considered tardy to school and must sign in at the Attendance Office.

- B. Students who are tardy to school will be subject to disciplinary action as follows:

6th occasion ----- 1 day central detention
8th occasion ----- 2 days central detention
10th occasion ----- 4 hour Saturday detention
12th occasion ----- In-school suspension
Subsequent occasions ----- subject to administrative action

- C. Tardiness to school which results in tardiness to a class up to 15 minutes will not be charged as a class absence. Students who are tardy 16 minutes or more shall be charged with a class absence which counts against the unexcused absence allotment cited above.

NOTE: Tardiness or early dismissal due to attendance at religious services or driver test appointments will be excused if proper documentation is submitted.

- D. Please note that individual classes missed (15 minutes or more) due to your child being signed-out early from school ARE COUNTED towards the attendance limits for those classes. Unless the reason for the missed class(es) is deemed as “excused” as outlined in the Attendance Policy, the class absences may lead to Summer School Credit Completion.

- E. Students who are tardy to school or dismissed early may not participate in, attend, or be involved in any co-curricular programs or after-school/evening activities without prior approval of the Principal or Assistant Principal. FORMS FOR SUCH APPROVAL ARE AVAILABLE IN THE ATTENDANCE OFFICE.

ABSENCES IN EXCESS OF UNEXCUSED ATTENDANCE LIMITS

- A. The Assistant Principal will notify the parent or guardian and the student by letter that a student is required to fulfill Credit Completion.
- B. Appeals must be submitted in writing to the Principal after a review by the Assistant Principal.
- C. The Principal will notify the parent/guardian in writing of the decision regarding the appeal.
- D. The parent/guardian will be scheduled for a conference (if desired) with the Principal if the appeal is not approved.
- E. The parent/guardian may appeal the Principal’s decision to the Superintendent of Schools. (Parent should contact the Superintendent for a conference.)

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- F. The parent/guardian may appeal the Superintendent's decision to the Board of Education. (Request Superintendent to arrange meeting with Committee of Board of Education.)
- G. The decision of the Board of Education may be appealed to the Commissioner of Education.

CLASS CUTTING

- A. If a student accumulates three (3) cuts in a full-year course and two (2) cuts in all other courses (Health and Physical Education treated as separate classes) the student shall be removed from the class with no credit earned and no option for summer school. Pre-requisites for sequential courses shall be successfully completed.
- B. Students who cut class or an assigned location (e.g. lunch, study hall, homeroom) will be subject to disciplinary action, including detention(s) and suspension(s). The cut(s) will count as an unexcused absence from class.
- C. Students who cut class will receive a zero for all work, tests, assessments completed on the day of the cut, regardless of how significantly the zero will affect the overall grade for the course. Students will not be given extra time to complete assignments.

SCHEDULED EARLY RELEASE

Students who are on Early Release:

- A. Must leave the school building/grounds immediately at their release time.
- B. If students are on school property after their release time, they will lose their early release privileges and be assigned to study hall(s).
- C. May not return to school property at 2:30 to take bus transportation home.

HOMEWORK / MAKE-UP WORK

The board considers valid homework assignments to be those which reflect the curriculum, stimulate intellectual growth, accommodate the needs of individual students, and contribute to the development of academic self-discipline. The board encourages the assignment of inter-related homework such as term papers, research and creative arts projects.

- A. Students at all academic levels of instruction in all grades and subjects shall receive homework regularly throughout the school year. When long-term homework assignments extend over a vacation period, sufficient time shall be provided prior to and/or after the vacation period for students to complete the assigned work.
- B. The specific amount and type of homework assignments shall be consistent with the requirements of the curriculum and the educational needs of students. Homework shall not be assigned as a punitive measure.
- C. Homework assignments shall be reviewed and evaluated, and the evaluation shall be shared with the student within a reasonable period of time.
- D. Homework shall be a factor in evaluating student progress and in determining student grades.

ATTENDANCE POLICY SUMMARY (cont.)

HOMEWORK / MAKE-UP WORK (CONT.)

- E. Students who have been absent shall be given a reasonable amount of time to make up homework assignments, class work and tests. In most cases, a reasonable length of time shall be the same number of school days as the days missed. **When a due date for an assignment is known in advance of the absence, however, students should return from the absence prepared with the work or for the test.**
- F. Pupils being excused from class(es) for any reason must make arrangements with the teacher of the missed class(es) in order to make up the work missed. **This must be done before the absence from class.**
- G. The board policy on cheating, part of Policy #6147.1, Evaluation of Individual Student Performance, applies.
- H. If a student is absent 4 or more days, during the absence, the parent/guardian may contact the School Counseling Office to collect a list of missed assignments.

