

R 5200 ATTENDANCE (M)

M

A. High School, Middle School and Elementary School Attendance

1. "Attendance" is a pupil's presence in school and in the classroom to which he/she is assigned at the times scheduled for instruction or other school activities.
 - a. A pupil will be considered to have attended school if he/she has been present at least four hours during the school day.
 - b. A Kindergarten pupil will be considered to have attended school if he/she has been present at least two and one-half hours during the Kindergarten session to which the pupil is assigned.
 - c. A pupil not present in school because of his/her participation in an approved school activity, such as a field trip, meeting, cooperative education assignment, or athletic competition will be considered to be in attendance.
2. "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:
 - a. The pupil's illness (doctor's note or verified by school nurse),
 - b. Family illness or death (with evidence submitted),
 - c. Educational opportunities,
 - d. Excused religious observances, pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:36-14 through 16,
 - e. Where appropriate, when consistent with Individualized Education Programs, the Individuals with Disabilities Act, accommodation plans under 29 U.S.C. §§794 and 705(20), and individualized health care plans pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:16-2.3,
 - f. The pupil's suspension from school,



- g. The pupil's required attendance in court (with evidence submitted),
 - h. Examination for a driver's license,
 - i. Necessary and unavoidable medical or dental appointments that cannot be scheduled at a time other than the school day,
 - j. An absence for a reason not listed above, but deemed excused by the Principal, upon a written request by the pupil's parent or legal guardian to the Principal or designee stating the reason for the absence and requesting permission for the absence to be an excused absence,
3. "Truancy" is a pupil's absence from all or a part of the school day without the knowledge of the pupil's parent(s) or legal guardian(s). A pupil will also be considered truant if he/she:
- a. Leaves school at lunch time without a pass,
 - b. Leaves school without permission when school is still in session,
 - c. Leaves class because of illness and does not report to the school nurse as directed, or
 - d. Is present in school but is absent from class without approval. Such truancy from class is a "class cut."
4. "Unexcused absence" is a pupil's absence for all or part of a school day for any reason other than those listed in A2 above.
- B. Notice to School of a Pupil's Absence
- 1. The parent(s) or legal guardian(s) or adult pupil is requested to call the school office before 9:00 a.m. of the morning of the pupil's absence.
 - 2. The parent(s) or legal guardian(s) of a pupil who attended morning session but will not attend afternoon session should call the school office before 11:00 a.m. to give notice of the pupil's absence.



3. The parent(s) or legal guardian(s) or adult pupil who anticipates a future absence or anticipates that an absence will be prolonged should notify the Principal or Guidance Office, who will assist in the arrangement of make-up work.

C. Readmission to School After an Absence

1. A pupil returning from an absence of any length must present to the Principal or designee a written statement, dated and signed by the parent(s) or legal guardian(s) or adult pupil, of the reasons for the absence.
2. A note explaining a pupil's absence for noncommunicable illness for a period of more than three school days must be accompanied by a physician's statement of the pupil's illness.
3. A pupil who has been absent by reason of having or being suspected of having a communicable disease must present to the Principal or designee written evidence of being free of communicable disease, in accordance with Policy No. 8451.

D. Instruction

1. Teachers are expected to cooperate in the preparation of home assignments for pupils who anticipate an excused absence of three school days duration. The parent(s) or legal guardian(s) or adult pupil must request such home assignments.
2. A pupil who anticipates an excused absence due to a temporary or chronic health condition may be eligible for home instruction in accordance with Policy No. 2412. The parent(s) or legal guardian(s) or adult pupil must request home instruction.
3. Pupils absent for any reason are expected to make up the work missed. In grade one and above, the pupil is responsible for requesting missed assignments and any assistance required. Teachers will provide make-up assignments as necessary.



4. In general, pupils will be allowed five days to make up missed work for each one day of absence. Teachers shall make reasonable accommodations to extend time for pupils.
5. A pupil who missed a test because of an excused absence shall be offered an opportunity to take the test or an alternate test.

E. School District Response To Unexcused Absences During the School Year

1. For up to 4 unexcused cumulative unexcused absences, the Principal or designee shall:
 - a. Make a reasonable attempt to notify the pupil's parent or legal guardian of each unexcused absence prior to the start of the following school day;
 - b. Conduct an investigation of the cause of each unexcused absence, including contact with the pupil's parent or legal guardian;
 - c. Develop an action plan in consultation with the pupil's parent or legal guardian designed to address patterns of unexcused absences, if any, and to have the child return to school and maintain regular attendance;
 - d. Proceed in accordance with the provisions of N.J.S.A. 9:6-1 et seq. and N.J.A.C. 6A:16-11, if a potentially missing or abused child abuse situation is detected; and
 - e. Cooperate with law enforcement and other authorities and agencies, as appropriate.
2. For between five and nine cumulative unexcused absences, the Principal or designee shall:
 - a. Make a reasonable attempt to notify the pupil's parent or legal guardian of each unexcused absence prior to the start of the following school day;



- b. Conduct a follow-up investigation, including contact with the pupil's parent or legal guardian, to determine the cause of each unexcused absence;
 - c. Evaluate the appropriateness of the action plan;
 - d. Revise the action plan, as needed, to identify patterns of unexcused absences and establish outcomes based upon the pupil's needs and specify the interventions for achieving the outcomes, supporting the pupil's return to school and regular attendance that may include any or all of the following:
 - (1) Refer or consult with the building's Intervention and Referral Services Team, pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:16-8;
 - (2) Conduct testing, assessments, or evaluations of the pupil's academic, behavioral, and health needs;
 - (3) Consider an alternate educational placement;
 - (4) Make a referral to a community-based social and health provider agency or other community resource;
 - (5) Refer to the court program designated by the New Jersey Administrative Office of the Courts; and
 - (6) Proceed in accordance with the provisions of N.J.S.A. 9:6 et seq. and N.J.A.C. 6A:16-11, if a potentially missing or child abuse situation is detected.
 - e. Cooperate with law enforcement and other authorities and agencies, as appropriate.
3. For cumulative unexcused absences of ten or more, the pupil between the ages of six and sixteen, pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:38-27, the Principal or designee shall:
- a. Make a mandatory referral to the court program required by the New Jersey Administrative Office of the Courts;



- b. Make a reasonable attempt to notify the pupil's parent or legal guardian of the mandatory referral;
 - c. Continue to consult with the parent or legal guardian and the involved agencies to support the pupil's return to school and regular attendance;
 - d. Cooperate with law enforcement and other authorities and agencies, as appropriate; and
 - e. Proceed in accordance with N.J.S.A. 18A:38-28 through 31, Article 3B, Compelling Attendance at School, and other applicable State and Federal statutes, as required.
4. For cumulative unexcused absences of nineteen or more, the pupil between the ages of six and sixteen, pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:38-27, the Principal or designee shall:
- a. Any pupil who has unexcused absences of nineteen days shall receive a letter of retention, and a non-school attendance complaint will be filed in the local municipal court;
 - b. In order to be considered for promotion to the next grade, the pupil must complete a credit completion project in the four content areas. The pupil will have two weeks to complete the project, which will be evaluated by a Supervisor or Administrator.
 - c. For pupils with disabilities, the school district shall require the attendance plans and punitive and remedial measures in accordance with the pupil's:
 - (1) IEP, pursuant to USC 1400 et. seq., the IDEIA;
 - (2) Procedural protections set forth in N.J.A.C. 6A:14;
 - (3) Accommodation plans under 29 USC 794 and 705 (20); and
 - (4) Individualized health care plans, pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:16-2.362ix.



5. A pupil may appeal an unexcused absence following the appeal process outlined below:

a. Appeal Process

- (1) Appeals must be submitted in writing to the Principal;
- (2) Principal will notify parent(s) or legal guardian(s) of decision regarding appeal;
- (3) Parent(s) or legal guardian(s) will be scheduled for a conference (if desired) with the Principal, if appeal is not approved;
- (4) Parent(s) or legal guardian(s) may appeal Principal's decision to the Superintendent of Schools. (Parent to phone for a conference);

Parent(s) or legal guardian(s) may appeal Superintendent's decision to the Board of Education. (Request Superintendent to arrange meeting with committee of the Board);

Decision of the Board may be appealed to the Commissioner of Education.

F. Potentially Missing Children

1. If daily attendance records indicate a child is absent, and the parent(s) or legal guardian(s) has not called, a designated person shall attempt to contact the parent(s) or legal guardian(s).
2. If the pupil is absent two additional days without a parent(s) or legal guardian(s) telephone call, the Attendance Investigator shall be notified and investigate.
3. If a pupil who was present in the morning is absent after lunch, a designated person shall attempt to call the parent(s) or legal guardian(s). The Attendance Investigator shall investigate if no telephone contact can be made. The Edison Police Department shall be notified.



4. The pupil shall not be withdrawn from school until the investigation by our Investigators or the Edison Police Department is complete.

G. Marking Missing Child's School Record

Whenever the Superintendent receives notice from law enforcement that a child has been reported missing, he/she shall mark the child's record in such a way that whenever a copy or information regarding the record is requested, district personnel will be aware that the record is that of a missing child. If a copy of a marked school record is requested, the Superintendent shall supply the record to the requester without alerting him/her to the fact that the record has been marked, according to provisions in code and statute on accessing pupil records. After the Superintendent has complied with the request for copies of records or information, he/she shall immediately report the inquiry or any knowledge as to the whereabouts of the missing child to law enforcement. When the child is found, the Superintendent must remove the "missing" mark for the child's records.

H. High School Credit Completion - Attendance/Tardiness/Class Cutting

This procedure provides a six day limit to the number of unexcused absences from any full-year course (semester courses - six days, physical education - four days, health education - two days). Pupils who exceed six days absent (six days - semester course) in any class(es) are required to complete a Credit Completion Project to receive credit for the class. These six absences include full-day absences from school, tardiness to school that causes pupils to miss more than fifteen minutes of class and early dismissals. The exceptions, as outlined in this Regulation, will result in an absence not being charged against the six day allotment.

Attendance Limits for (UNEXCUSED) Absences

Full-year course	6 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)

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.

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 the 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 guidance counselor. It is the responsibility of each pupil receiving an incomplete (INC) to determine from his/her teacher which requirements are outstanding. Specific guidelines pertaining to the assignment of Incomplete (INC) are referenced in Board Policy.

1. More than six unexcused absences per year

Pupils absent more than six days per class for a full year course, three days per semester for a semester course, four days for physical education, and two days for health shall be required to complete a credit recovery project to receive credit for the course. Pupils will have one week to complete the project, which will be evaluated by the appropriate department supervisor.

Failure to complete and receive supervisor approval for the Credit Completion Project will require students to repeat all courses with more than six unexcused absences the following school year.

If a pupil completes an approved summer program, the pupil shall receive the credits for that course upon submission of documentation to the guidance department. Otherwise, the pupil will take the course over again during the next school year to earn credits.

2. Extenuating Circumstances

Circumstances constituting an exception to the class attendance requirements outlined in 1. above shall be for the following reasons only:



- a. Illness requiring hospitalization - all days deducted;
- b. Illness will be deducted if illness is verified by a doctor's note on the day of return to school.
- c. Illness of one or two day duration which is of a chronic or persistent nature and requires regularly scheduled medical treatment over a prolonged period (e.g., physical therapy). Specific medical verification is required. Such cases will be subject to periodic review by the school nurse or school doctor.
- d. 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;
- e. Religious holidays as published annually by the State Board of Education will not be charged against the six day absence allotment;
- f. Required college visitations must be approved in advance by the Principal.

Verification from the college is requested and 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;

- g. 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.
- h. For pupils with disabilities, the school district shall require the attendance plans and punitive and remedial measures in accordance with the pupils:
 - (1) IEP, pursuant to USC 1400 et. seq., the IDEIA;
 - (2) Procedural protections set forth in N.J.A.C. 6A:14;



- (3) Accommodation plans under 29 USC 794 and 705 (20);
- (4) 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.

- 3. Grade 9 through 12 Appeal Procedure for Absences of 6 or More Days
 - a. Appeals must be submitted in writing to the Principal;
 - b. The Principal or designee will consider all information submitted by the parent(s) or legal guardian(s) and will notify the parent(s) or legal guardian(s) of a decision regarding the appeal in writing within five calendar days of receiving the written appeal;
 - c. If the appeal is not approved, the parent(s) or legal guardian(s) may request and will receive a conference with the Principal, provided the written request for a conference is submitted the Principal within five calendar days of the notification to the parent(s) or legal guardian(s) by the Principal or designee. The Principal's final decision will be in writing within five calendar days of the conference.
 - d. The parent(s) or legal guardian(s) may appeal the Principal's decision to the Superintendent of Schools provided a written appeal request is submitted to the Superintendent of Schools within five calendar days of the Principal's decision. The Superintendent will consider all information submitted by the parent(s) or legal guardian(s) and will submit a written decision to the parent(s) or legal guardian(s) within five calendar days of the receiving the written appeal request from the parent(s) or legal guardian(s);
 - e. Parent(s) or legal guardian(s) may appeal the Superintendent's decision to the Board of Education by submitting a written request to the Superintendent for meeting with committee of the Board within five calendar days of the Superintendent's decision; and



f. The decision of the Board may be appealed to the Commissioner of Education.

4. High School Class Cutting

Pupils who are absent from class without authorization shall be referred to the Principal's office for cutting class. Pupils who cut class shall be subject to disciplinary action as follows:

a. Total Cuts - All Classes:

- (1) First action - detention, 1 day for each class/location cut, up to a maximum of 4 detentions;
- (2) Second action - Saturday detention 4 hours;
- (3) Third action - In-school suspension 1 day;
- (4) Fourth action - suspension, 1-3 days/parent and Assistant Principal conference;
- (5) Fifth and subsequent action - suspension, 3-4 days/Principal conference for administrative action.

b. Cuts Per Class:

Pupils who cut a specific class shall be withdrawn from the course after three cuts for a full year course, two cuts for all other courses (Health and physical education treated as separate classes). Prerequisites for sequential courses shall be successfully completed.

Note: Each class cut shall also be counted as an unexcused/unauthorized absence from class.



5. The Teacher

- a. It is absolutely essential that every teacher takes accurate attendance in each of his/her classes in order for this proposal to work successfully. Do not delegate this responsibility to a pupil;
- b. The teacher's roll book must clearly indicate who was present and who was absent for each day school is in session;
- c. The daily "attendance sheet", including the correction segment, must be examined in detail each day;
- d. Teachers must verify authorized pupil absences by checking with the Attendance secretary;
- e. After a cut has been verified, teachers are to submit the appropriate "cut slip" to the administrator in charge;
- f. At the first opportunity, converse privately with the pupil about our class cut policy, and what your expectations are as a teacher. In such situations we should be firm, but genuinely concerned about the youngster's educational welfare.

Note: In order for this policy to be successfully implemented, it is required that every teacher follow the above steps.

6. The Counselor

- a. Each counselor will examine the attendance records of his/her counselees at the beginning of each year. The counselor will make a genuine effort to meet with each pupil who has an attendance profile that gives indication that this pupil may be a "class cutter." The counselor will provide counseling regarding this situation;
- b. After a pupil cut has been verified, the appropriate counselor will be notified;
- c. Continuous and frequent counseling of a pupil dropped from a course is imperative.



7. The Administrator

After verifying an illegal class absence, the administrator will confer with the pupil. He/she will reiterate the cut policy and emphasize the importance of regular class attendance. The administrator will communicate with teachers, counselors and other staff members in order to insure that every effort is made to assist the pupil.

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