

SUBJECT: COMPREHENSIVE STUDENT ATTENDANCE POLICY**OVERVIEW**

It is the goal of Orange-Ulster BOCES to ensure that each student attend school the maximum number of days possible, and to afford each student the opportunity to meet his/her potential. The attendance regulations which follow are intended to be constructive rather than punitive. The intent is to encourage each student to attend all classes in order to achieve their maximum potential in school. The Orange-Ulster BOCES is committed to creating and maintaining 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.

PURPOSE

Good attendance and class participation are essential ingredients for academic and vocational success. Any absence from class is detrimental to the learning process. Classroom lessons foster and require social interaction, development of effective communication skills, and critical thinking in addition to subject mastery. Textbook or make-up assignments are not an adequate substitute for classroom attendance and participation.

In order to achieve educational goals and to maintain a true learning environment, students must attend their classes. School attendance is both a right and responsibility. The Orange-Ulster BOCES 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:

- a. to increase school completion for all students;
- b. to raise student achievement and close gaps in student performance;
- c. to identify attendance patterns in order to design attendance improvement efforts;
and
- d. to verify that individual students are complying with education laws relating to compulsory attendance.



POLICY

2005

6110

Students

2 of 10

SUBJECT: COMPREHENSIVE STUDENT ATTENDANCE POLICY (cont'd.)

ATTENDANCE REQUIREMENTS

I. Applicability

All students of compulsory education age must attend school. Legal school age and legal residence are determined by the Board of Education of the students' home district in accordance with state requirements as set forth in New York State Education Law 3202, 3205 to 3208, 3209 to 3210, and 8 NYCRR 100.2.

II. Guidelines

The Orange-Ulster BOCES recognizes an important relationship between class participation and class performance. Students are expected to attend all scheduled classes. Consistent with the importance of classroom participation, unexcused student absences, tardiness and early departures will affect a student's grade, including credit for classroom participation, for the marking period.

Consequently, each teacher will consider classroom participation as well as the student's performance on homework, tests, papers, and projects, etc. When a student is absent, with or without an excuse, he/she misses the opportunity for class participation. Any absence from class, that is not made up, will result in a loss of points from the student's class participation grade unless extenuating circumstances can be presented.

A. Minimum Attendance Rule

All registered students are expected to attend all classes as scheduled. Any student who exceeds the maximum number of absences set forth by the BOCES and/or home-school district **AND** does not make-up assigned work, pursuant to Section II (C), may not be recommended to receive credit by the BOCES.

B. Absences

1. Absences counted under the attendance/grading policy include:
 - a. all absences (whether excused or unexcused) not excluded in section two;



POLICY

2005

6110

Students

3 of 10

SUBJECT: COMPREHENSIVE STUDENT ATTENDANCE POLICY (cont'd.)

- b. any period of “Out-of-School Suspension” (OSS) where a student does not accept alternative instruction.
2. The following should **NOT** be counted as absences under the attendance policy:
 - a. In-School suspension (ISS);
 - b. any period of OSS where student accepts alternative instruction;
 - c. attendance at a special education program or service offered by a public school or an approved private school of facility when a student is homeless, disabled or incarcerated. (See 175.6 of the regulations of the NYS Commissioner of Education.)

C. Make-up Policy

The Orange-Ulster BOCES believes that classroom participation is related to and affects a student’s performance and grasp of the subject matter and, as such, is properly reflected in a student’s final grade. For purposes of this policy, classroom participation means that a student is in class and prepared to work.

1. Consequently, for each marking period a certain percentage of a student’s final grade will be based on classroom participation as well as the student’s performance on homework, tests, papers, projects, etc., as determined by the building administrator and/or classroom teacher.
2. When a student misses a class or school day, he/she is expected upon his/her return to provide a written explanation or phone call from his/her parent or guardian. Moreover, the student must consult with his/her teachers regarding missed work. When an absence occurs, the student may make up any work missed by arranging an assignment with the teacher.
3. Reasonable make-up opportunities will be given to students with excused absences due to:



POLICY

2005

6110

Students

4 of 10

SUBJECT: COMPREHENSIVE STUDENT ATTENDANCE POLICY (cont'd.)

- a. medical;
 - b. family bereavement;
 - c. no home school transportation;
 - d. religious observance;
 - e. required court appearances; or
 - f. pre-approved post secondary activities.
4. Students who are unable to attend a class period/day due to their participation in a school sponsored activity (e.g., field trip, music lessons, etc.) **and** who arrange with their teachers to make-up missed work, shall be given credit for class participation on the class day/period missed.
5. The following are not considered excused absences for Orange-Ulster BOCES and will be marked as unexcused absences on the student's report card:
- a. hair appointments;
 - b. obtain learner's permit/road test;
 - c. oversleeping;
 - d. babysitting;
 - e. needed at home;
 - f. hunting;
 - g. trip with or without parent/guardian for recreational purposes;
 - h. truancy;
 - i. home school district event or post secondary activity not pre-approved by the BOCES and/or home school district.

D. Consequences for Exceeding Absences Without Making-Up Classwork

1. Any student who does not meet the course requirements of BOCES and/or the home-school district **AND** does not make up assigned classwork pursuant to Section II (C) will:
 - a. receive a No Grade (NG) as the quarterly grade for the course;



POLICY

2005

6110

Students

5 of 10

SUBJECT: COMPREHENSIVE STUDENT ATTENDANCE POLICY (cont'd.)

- b. not be eligible to take any local final examination/assessment for that course; and
 - c. not be recommended to receive full credit for the course.
2. If a student is in jeopardy of losing course credit, he/she will attend a meeting with his/her guidance counselor to discuss all remaining options.

III. Attendance Taking Procedures (Effective July 1, 2003)

A. Elementary and Middle school (Kindergarten – Grade 8 or Ungraded)

Attendance shall be recorded after being taken once per school day. If students are dismissed from school grounds during a lunch period, attendance shall be taken and recorded a second time after the lunch period.

B. Secondary (grades 9-12 or Ungraded)

Attendance shall be recorded during each class period of scheduled instruction (including instructional or supervised study activities). If a student does not change classrooms between class periods, attendance will be recorded once per day, and if students are dismissed from school grounds during a lunch period, the student's presence or absence will be recorded a second time upon return from the lunch period.

IV. Maintenance of the Attendance Register

A. For each student, the register of attendance must include:

1. name;
2. date of birth;
3. date of enrollment;
4. parent/guardian's full name;
5. address where student resides;
6. phone number(s) where parent/guardian may be contacted;



POLICY

2005

6110

Students

6 of 10

SUBJECT: COMPREHENSIVE STUDENT ATTENDANCE POLICY (cont'd.)

7. **all** absences, tardiness, or early departures during any school day, in whole or in part., excused or unexcused;
8. appropriate coding to identify the nature of the absence (full day, class cut);
9. dates of school closings for all or part of the day of scheduled instruction due to extraordinary circumstances, including: adverse weather conditions, heating problems, lack of water or fuel, or destruction or damage to a school building; and
10. date a student withdraws from, or is dropped from enrollment.

B. A teacher or employee designated by the Board of Education will make entries on the Attendance Register. All entries must be verified by the oath or affirmation of the person taking attendance.

C. When additional information is received from a student during a student/staff conference that requires corrections to be made to a student's attendance records, such corrections will be made immediately. Notice of the change will be sent to appropriate school personnel (e.g., homeroom teachers, principals, etc.).

V. Attendance Incentives

The Orange-Ulster BOCES will design and implement incentives to acknowledge students' efforts to maintain or improve school attendance. Such incentives may include but not be limited to:

- a. special events (e.g., guest speakers, field days) scheduled on days that historically have high absenteeism (e.g., Mondays, Fridays, day before vacation);
- b. grade-level rewards at each building for best attendance;
- c. classroom acknowledgment of the importance of good attendance (e.g., individual certificates, recognition chart, bulletin boards);
- d. assemblies collaboratively developed and promoted by student council, administration, and the PTO to promote good attendance;
- e. Honors Day;
- f. Student of the Month;
- g. Incentive awards (tee shirts, gift certificates, etc.).



SUBJECT: COMPREHENSIVE STUDENT ATTENDANCE POLICY (cont'd.)

VI. Incremental Interventions

The Orange-Ulster BOCES will maintain a system of specific incremental intervention strategies to identify and alleviate attendance problems in their early stages. Examples include but are not limited to:

- A. Meetings with teacher, guidance counselor or social worker
- B. Parental Notification
 - 1. verbal
 - 2. written
 - 3. advisory
 - 4. conference request
- C. Meeting with principal or other designated administrator
 - 1. staff and student
 - 2. parent and student
- D. District notification (written)
- E. Alternative Learning Center/Student Services
- F. Loss of privileges or participation in special events/activities
- G. Loss of points from class participation grade

When resources of the school have been exhausted and attendance patterns have not improved, other outside resources, including Person in Need of Supervision (PINS), may be appropriate in an attempt to correct the problem.

Any discipline imposed as a result of unexcused absences shall be consistent with the Orange-Ulster BOCES-wide Code of Conduct.

VII. Responsibilities

Successful implementation of any attendance policy requires cooperation among all members of the educational community including parents, students, teachers, administration and support staff.



SUBJECT: COMPREHENSIVE STUDENT ATTENDANCE POLICY(cont'd.)

A. Students' Responsibilities

1. Students must attend school daily and on time.
2. Students must attend all classes.

B. Teachers' Responsibilities

1. Provide make-up assignments for students who are absent.
2. Notify parent/guardian of attendance problems via telephone and comments on progress reports and report cards.
3. Forward to administration documentation or notice indicating student absences.

C. Administrations' Responsibilities

1. When a student cuts class or is otherwise absent, designated staff member will notify the student's parent/guardian and review the attendance policy.
2. Notify the student and parent/guardian when the teacher of the course has provided notice of the unexcused absence. Hold at least one meeting to explain the attendance policy to the student.
3. Notify the student and parent/guardian when the student has exceeded a certain number of absences without making up coursework, such that credit is being denied in the course.
4. Review of Attendance Records
 - a. Each building must have a person who is designated to review attendance records and initiate appropriate action to address unexcused absences, tardiness, and early departures.
 - b. Attendance records must be reviewed by a designated teacher or administrator to address unexcused absences, tardiness and early departures. (Beginning 2003-2004 school year)

D. Guidance Counselors' or Social Workers' Responsibilities

1. Counsel students individually when they first receive a notification of excessive absences in any subject area.
2. Meet with the students to discuss options regarding credit or matters related to attending school.



POLICY

2005

6110

Students

9 of 10

SUBJECT: COMPREHENSIVE STUDENT ATTENDANCE POLICY (cont'd.)

3. Meeting with or contact parent/guardian regarding above options.
4. Provide community resource information to assist students as needed.

VIII. Notification Regarding Attendance Policy

A. Student Notification

1. School Handbooks, which shall include the Orange-Ulster BOCES' attendance policy, shall be distributed to all students.
2. If a student misses a class period or school day without an excuse, a designated staff person may review attendance requirements with the student upon his/her return to school.
3. School newsletters and publications may include periodic reminders of attendance requirements.

B. Parental/Guardian Notification

1. All parents/guardians will be provided with a plain language summary of this policy at the beginning of each school year.
2. Upon enrollment, the Orange-Ulster BOCES will provide each new student's parent or guardian with a copy of the attendance policy.
3. At any "open house" or "back to school" event, parents/guardians will have the opportunity to obtain/discuss the attendance policy.
4. If a student misses successive class periods or school day without an excuse, a designated staff person will notify the parent/guardian regarding the absences.

C. Faculty/Staff Notification

Each member of the faculty/staff will be given a copy of this policy, including any subsequent amendments. This policy will be distributed to new teachers upon commencement of employment. In addition, a building administrator may meet with faculty at the beginning of the school year to review this policy and individual roles in its implementation



POLICY

2005

6110

Students

10 of 10

SUBJECT: COMPREHENSIVE STUDENT ATTENDANCE POLICY (cont'd.)

D. Community Notification

Copies of this policy will also be available to any other member of the community upon request.

IX. Appeals

All appeals will be made directly to the BOCES and/or home school district. The home school district will make the final decision regarding the withholding of credit.

X. Returning to Program

Students who leave Orange-Ulster BOCES and subsequently return must still honor the attendance policy. All previous class absences will still count for that academic year.

XI. Building Review of Attendance Records

Commencing with the 2003-2004 school year, the building principal will work with designated staff in review 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.

XII. Annual review by the Board of Education

The Board of Education shall annually review the building level student attendance report and if such report shows a decline in student attendance, the Board shall make any revisions to the Policy deemed necessary to improve student attendance.

Education Law Sections 3024, 3025, 3202, 3205
3206, 3210, 3211 and 3213
New York Code of Rules and Regulations
(NYCRR) Sections 104.1, 109.2 and 175.6

Adopted: 5/31/95
Revised: 6/13/02
Reviewed: 8/18/05