

Student Absences and Excuses

Policy Information

Series J - Students

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Policy # JH

FILE: JH

STUDENT ABSENCES AND EXCUSES

Regular and punctual school attendance is essential for success in school. The Committee does recognize that parents of children attending our schools have special rights as well as responsibilities, one of which is to ensure that their children attend school regularly, in accordance with state law. Chapter 76, Section 2A of MGL states that in a six (6) month period a student shall not be absent for seven day sessions or fourteen half-day sessions and upon complaint of a supervisor of attendance, the parent or guardian may be punished by a fine.

Therefore, students may be excused temporarily from school attendance for the following reasons:

1. Illness or quarantine.
2. Bereavement or serious illness in family.
3. Weather so inclement as to endanger the health of the child.
4. For observance of major religious holidays.

A child may also be excused for other exceptional reasons with approval of the school administrator.

A student's understanding of the importance of day to day school work is an important factor in the shaping of his/her character. Parents can help their children by refusing to allow them to miss school needlessly.

“In support of the Bourne Public Schools strategic goal to increase and enhance student performance as measured by MCAS (Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System), parents are strongly urged NOT to plan family vacations or other activities resulting in student absence from class during time when school is in session. Students absent for any length of time often experience difficulty making up academic work. We have found there is no alternative to being present for direct instruction by the classroom teacher. To prevent students from being in a position of likely academic decline, the School Committee and school administration do not condone absences for purposes of family vacation or other activities during the school day. It is recommended that the scheduled school vacation weeks serve to accommodate vacation. All other activities should be scheduled after the school day ends. Each spring the school calendar for the ensuing year is approved. Parents are advised to reference it in their planning. Excessive or chronic unexcused absence will be taken into consideration when considering promotion to the next grade.”

Accordingly, parents will provide an explanation for the absence and tardiness of a child. This will be required in advance for types of absences where advance notice is possible.

In instances of chronic or irregular absence reportedly due to illness, the school administration may request a physician's statement certifying such absences to be justifiable.

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