

Students

Attendance/High School

The administration expects that students will attend every class daily. Students, Parents/Guardians, Teachers, Guidance Counselors, and Administrators share responsibility for student attendance.

- Students must attend class and keep track of any absences. They must make up any work missed during absences.
- Parents/Guardians must provide the school with updated phone numbers and must support the emphasis on regular daily attendance.
- Teachers must record attendance daily.
- Guidance Counselors must inform administrators of absence patterns.
- Administrators must enforce the attendance policy and regulation.

Documentation of Absences

Parents/Guardians are required to notify the school in writing when a student is absent within ten (10) school days of the student's return to school. If documentation is not received within this time frame the absence will be unexcused and, therefore, unappealable. Documentation may come in the form of parent/guardian notes or notification from official sources. (*NOTE: parent/guardian notes will only be accepted for nine (9) days of Appealable absences in a given school year. For the 10th absence and all thereafter, only official absence documentation will be accepted.*)

The student must present written documentation of an absence to the principal or his/her designee. The student will be given an Absence Documentation Form to bring to each class for teachers' signatures (*see Appendix A*). The student will return the Absence Documentation Form and written documentation to the data processing office.

Types of Absences

The high school attendance policy recognizes three types of absences: Exempt, Appealable, and Unappealable. Exempt absences do not count towards credit loss. Appealable and Unappealable absences do count towards credit loss.

- A. **Exempt Absences** are documented absences that do NOT lead to loss of credit and do NOT need to be appealed. Students are allowed to make up missed work and apply it to their grade.
 1. **Standardized Testing:** Attendance will be taken for any standardized test and documented by the school.

2. **College Acceptance Orientation:** An absence for a student attending an orientation to a college to which he/she has been accepted will not count towards loss of credit.
3. **Appointments with Student Support Staff:** A scheduled appointment made by student support staff will count as an Exempt Absence.
4. **Death in the Family:** For absences due to a death in the family, the parent/guardian must notify the school by providing documentation for the absence.
5. **Long Term Illness:** For students who are absent because of hospitalization or long term illness (three (3) or more consecutive school days), the parent/guardian must provide a physician's note (letterhead, signed, and dated) or other official documentation.
6. **Mandated Court Appearances:** For students who attend court or have been detained, the parent/guardian must notify the school either before the date or in writing when the student returns, and present official documentation from the court/authorities for the dates missed.
7. **Religious Holidays:** Absences as a result of observance of religious holidays must be documented with a parent/guardian note.
8. **Field Trips or School-Related Activities:** Absences relating to school activities may include, but are not limited to, field trips, early dismissal for participation in athletic events, and meetings with school personnel.
9. **Suspension:** For absences due to suspension, the parent/guardian will be notified of the suspension and the date when the student will be expected to return to school. The student must return on the indicated date.

B. **Appealable Absences** are absences for which the school receives written documentation of the reason the student was absent, but do not meet the criteria of Exempt Absences. These absences MAY be appealable. Appealable absences count towards loss of credit, but allow for students to make up missed work and apply it to their grade.

1. **College Visits:** Parents/Guardians are asked to schedule all visits during school vacations or weekends.
2. **Student-initiated Appointments:** Students should schedule appointments with a guidance counselor, social worker, or school psychologist before or after school or during a free period such as study hall or lunch. If a student chooses to make an appointment during regular class time, the student support professional will determine if the student-initiated appointment is appealable.
3. **Short Term Illness:** An absence due to an illness up to two (2) consecutive school days verified by a note from the parent/guardian or physician.
4. **Non-emergency Medical Visits:** Doctor and dental appointments should be scheduled for after-school hours. If after-school arrangements are not possible, then written notice from the physician is required for the absence to be considered for appeal. The physician's note must be presented to the principal or his/her designee upon the student's return to school.
5. **Visits to Nurse:** Visits to the school nurse will count as Appealable absences if the student brings a pass from the teacher and the nurse deems the visit necessary.

6. **Early Dismissal:** Proper documentation for early dismissal will include official documentation from the school nurse or documentation from the parent/guardian including the reason that early dismissal is necessary.
7. **Other:** Other absences with official documentation or documentation from a parent/guardian.

C. **Unappealable Absences** are absences for which the school receives no documentation, documentation received beyond the ten (10) school days notification requirement, or absences that do not meet the criteria to be considered appealable. Unappealable absences count towards loss of credit. Students may receive a grade of zero for all missed work. Students with five (5) or more Unappealable absences per semester in any one course forfeit the right to appeal for credit.

1. **Class Cuts:** Absences from class without permission when a student is in school for the day.
2. **Family Vacations/Trips:** Discretion should be used in planning such events. Stamford Public Schools strongly discourages travel outside of school vacation periods. Students and parents/guardians should realize that if extended vacations contribute to excessive absence, an appeal for reinstatement of credit will not be possible.
3. **Leaving School Grounds:** Leaving school grounds without permission resulting in missed class time.
4. **Tardies:** See below.

Tardiness

Students are expected to come to school and class on time. Tardies cannot be appealed and will be considered Unappealable absences as follows:

- A. Four (4) tardies to a class will be recorded as one (1) Unappealable absence.
- B. Any tardy of more than 15 minutes (including arriving to school 15 minutes after the bell) will be counted as one (1) Unappealable absence, even if the student is present for the remainder of the class period.
- C. Students with sixteen (16) or more tardies per semester in any one course forfeit the right to appeal for credit.
- D. Late passes to class are not considered documented. The exception to this rule will be Late Bus passes distributed when a school bus arrives late to school.

Excessive tardies – defined as more than eight (8) in a quarter – shall necessitate school official communication with the parent/guardian to support regular attendance. Students with excessive tardies are subject to disciplinary action.

Absences and Excessive Tardies to Study Halls and Other Classes

Study Halls and other “non-credit bearing” classes are not an “optional” part of a student’s schedule and must be attended. Privileges, such as attending prom, parking on school property, or participation in extra-curricular activities may be revoked at the discretion of the principal or designee due to a lack of attendance.

Loss of Credit

To achieve a passing grade and credit in a course, students must be in attendance. Should a student be absent from a course in excess of ten (10) Appealable and/or Unappealable absences per semesterised course or twenty (20) Appealable and/or Unappealable absences per full-year course, the student will lose credit for that course. (*See Appendix B for possible absence scenarios.*)

If a student violates the Attendance Policy, his/her transcript will reflect the appropriate loss of credit. Students are expected to attend class when credit is lost; regular attendance following loss of credit strengthens a student’s appeal. Students losing credit can still earn a passing grade in the course. The grade will be factored into the student’s grade point average and may be used as a prerequisite for future courses as follows:

- A. **GPA:** The full grade will count as if the loss of credit did not exist. On the transcript there will be a letter grade with “LC,” which indicates the loss of credit. If/when a course is taken a second time, both courses (the first time the course was taken and the second time the course was taken) will appear on the transcript.
- B. **Prerequisites:** If a student receives a passing grade in a course that is part of a sequence, but loses credit toward graduation due to absences, the student will not need to repeat the course to move on in the sequence (e.g., a passing grade in Algebra 1 will allow the student to move on to Geometry, regardless of credits).

Appeals Process

A. Appeals Process to Regain Credit

The attendance policy is not designed to deny credit to students who, through no fault of their own, are unable to attend school or class. In January and June, students who have lost credit will have an opportunity to go before the Appeals Board to have credit reinstated. To be eligible for the Appeals Process, students must continue classroom responsibilities and attend class regularly. The following applies to the Appeals Process:

1. Students with five (5) or more Unappealable absences or sixteen (16) or more tardies per semester in any one course forfeit the right to appeal for credit.
2. Students must have made up any work missed in a semester/full year course and have a passing grade to qualify for an appeal.

3. At the discretion of the principal or his/her designee, Appealable absences may be exempted. In such cases, no further appeal is required.
4. Students must sign up for an appeal. Therefore, students should monitor their attendance, including tardies. Teachers are not required to inform students of the opportunity to appeal.

B. Appeals Board

The Appeals Board will be selected by the principal and composed of:

- 1-2 administrators
- 2-3 classroom teachers
- 1-2 student support staff
- 1-2 guidance counselors

In an effort to preserve impartialness, Appeals Board members will not hear any appeal for which: 1) they have the student in class, or 2) the student is on their case-load, or 3) they are the student's grade-level administrator.

The Appeals Board will hear cases and make decisions. All decisions are final and cannot be appealed.

1. Appeals will be heard on a "first to sign up, first to be heard" basis.
2. Appeals will be heard during January for first semester loss of credit and June for second semester loss of credit. (A first semester loss of credit must be appealed in January; it may not be appealed in June.)
3. The Appeals Board will not hear cases if the deadline for submitting the appeal request is missed.
4. The decision of the Appeals Board will be based on a majority vote.
5. Decisions will be made within one week of the Appeals Process. The Appeals Board will notify parents/guardians, in writing, of its decision.

Communication to Students and Parents/Guardians

- A. Student and parents/guardians will have access to information concerning attendance via the district's student information system.
- B. School personnel will attempt to notify parents/guardians by telephone and by mail to report absences daily. These attempts will be documented in writing. Parents/Guardians are also encouraged to regularly monitor their child's attendance and if there is a problem/discrepancy to notify the school through the child's counselor or administrator.
- C. The Appeals Process, including the deadline to sign up for an appeal, will be communicated to students and posted on the school's website. Students will see the principal or his/her designee to sign up for an appeal. If a student fails to attend the

scheduled appeal, the appeal will be denied unless the student provides a physician's note or other official documentation.

D. Students and parents/guardians will be notified concerning absences by mail utilizing the following letters:

1. Loss of Credit Warning Notice: generated when one-half of the number of permitted absences has been accumulated in a course (i.e., five (5) Appealable and/or Unappealable absences in a semester course; ten (10) Appealable and/or Unappealable absences in a full-year course). The purpose of this notification is to inform the parent/guardian and the student of the possibility of loss of credit if the student's attendance does not improve.
2. Loss of Credit Notice: generated when a student loses credit in any course.
3. Appeals Board Hearing Results Notification: used to communicate the decision of the Appeals Board to the student and parent/guardian when a student appeals a loss of credit.

Notification of Regulation

This regulation 5113A-R will be mailed to parents/guardians before each school year. This regulation will be included in the Student Handbook and posted on the school website. This regulation will be reviewed with students in Connection Time or other appropriate class at the start of the school year and will be provided to students and parents/guardians when they register during the school year.

Legal Reference: Connecticut General Statutes

[10-199](#) through [10-202](#) Attendance, truancy - in general (Revised, 1995, PA 95-304)

Action taken by State Board of Education on January 2, 2008, to define "attendance."

Action taken by State Board of Education on June 27, 2012, to define "excused" and "unexcused" absences.