

## Students

Subject: Comprehensive Student Attendance Policy

Statement of Overall Objectives

The District 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. The District recognizes that consistent school attendance, academic success, and school completion have a positive correlation, and therefore, has developed and, if necessary, will revise a Comprehensive Student Attendance Policy to meet the following objectives:

- a) Increase school completion for all students;
- b) Raise student achievement and close gaps in student performance;
- c) Identify attendance patterns in order to design attendance improvement efforts;
- d) Know the whereabouts of every student for safety and other reasons;
- e) Verify that individual students are complying with education laws relating to compulsory attendance;
- f) Determine the District's average daily attendance for state aid purposes.

Description of Strategies to Meet Objectives

The District will:

- a) Create and maintain 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.
- b) Develop a Comprehensive Student Attendance Policy based upon the recommendations of a multifaceted District Policy Development Team that includes representation from the Board, administrators, teachers, students, parents, and the community. The District will hold at least one public hearing prior to the adoption of this collaboratively developed Comprehensive Student Attendance Policy.
- c) Maintain accurate recordkeeping via a Register of Attendance to record attendance, absence, tardiness, or early departure of each student.

(Continued)

## Students

Subject: Comprehensive Student Attendance Policy (Cont'd.)

- d) Utilize data analysis systems for tracking individual student attendance and individual and group trends in student attendance problems.
- e) Develop early intervention strategies to improve school attendance for all students.

#### Determination of Excused and Unexcused Absences, Tardiness and Early Departures

Based upon the District's education and community needs, values and priorities, the District has determined that absences, tardiness and early departures will be considered excused or unexcused according to the following standards.

- a) Excused: An absence, tardiness or early departure may be excused if due to personal illness, illness or death in the family, impassable roads due to inclement weather, religious observance, quarantine, required court appearances, medical appointments, approved college visits, approved cooperative work programs, military obligations or administratively approved school-sponsored activities or other such extraordinary reasons as approved by the administration.
- b) Unexcused: An absence, tardiness or early departure is considered unexcused if the reason for the lack of attendance does not fall into the above categories (e.g., family vacation, hunting, babysitting, haircut, obtaining learner's permit, road test, oversleeping).

All absences require a written note, including date and reason for absence, from the parent/person in parental relation within a reasonable amount of time to be determined by the building principal. Parental notification for student tardiness or early departure will be presented on the day of the tardiness/early departure, indicating the date, time and reason. Excuses may be verified for authenticity.

#### Obtaining Assignments for Extended Excused Student Absences

Parents may call the school to obtain assignments for their child who is or is expected to have an excused absence for two (2) or more consecutive school days. A twenty-four (24) hour turn-around time is needed by the school to assemble the assignments. Once back in school, a student is expected to work with his/her teachers to make-up work.

#### Student Attendance Recordkeeping/Data Collection

The record of each student's presence, absence, tardiness, and early departure will be kept in a register of attendance in a manner consistent with Commissioner's regulations. An absence, tardiness, or early departure will be entered as "excused" or "unexcused" along with the District code for the reason.

(Continued)

Subject: Comprehensive Student Attendance Policy (Cont'd.)

### Chronic Absenteeism

For accountability purposes, chronic absenteeism is defined as missing at least 10% of enrolled school days in a year for any reason, excused or unexcused. Chronic absenteeism differs from truancy because it emphasizes missed instructional time rather than unexcused absences. Missed instructional time can increase a student's risk for disengagement, low achievement, and dropping out, among other things.

The district will implement intervention strategies for students who are at risk of becoming chronically absent.

Attendance will be taken and recorded in accordance with the following:

- a) For students in non-departmentalized kindergarten through grade 6 (i.e., self-contained classrooms and supervised group movement to other scheduled school activities such as physical education in the gym, assembly, etc.), the student's presence or absence will be recorded after the taking of attendance once per school day, provided that students are not dismissed from school grounds during a lunch period. Where students are dismissed for lunch, their presence or absence will also be recorded after the taking of attendance a second time upon the student's return from lunch.
- b) For students in grades 7 through 12, each student's presence or absence will be recorded after the taking of attendance in each period of scheduled instruction. For grades 7 through 12, attendance for each period of instruction will be recorded on the student's report card.
- c) Any absence for a school day or portion thereof will be recorded as excused or unexcused in accordance with the standards articulated in this policy.
- d) In the event that a student at any instructional level from grades K through 12 arrives late for, or departs early from, scheduled instruction, the tardiness or early departure will be recorded as excused or unexcused in accordance with the standards articulated in this policy.

A record will be kept of each scheduled day of instruction during which the school is closed for all or part of the day because of extraordinary circumstances including adverse weather conditions, impairment of heating facilities, insufficiency of water supply, shortage of fuel, destruction of or damage to a school building, or other cause as may be found satisfactory to the Commissioner of Education.

Attendance records will also indicate the date when a student withdraws from enrollment or is dropped from enrollment in accordance with Education Law Section 3202(1-a).

At the conclusion of each class period or school day, all attendance information will be compiled and provided to the designated school personnel who are responsible for attendance. The nature of the absence, tardiness, or early departure will be coded on a student's record in accordance with the

(Continued)

Subject: Comprehensive Student Attendance Policy (Cont'd.)

established District or building procedures.

#### Students Attendance and Course Credit

The District 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.

Consequently, for each marking period, a certain percentage of a student's final marking period grade may 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.

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.

At the K through 6 level, a student must be in attendance a minimum of eighty-five (85%) of the total school days. Parents can expect that excessive absences will be reflected in the student's grades. Sanctions on an incremental basis (e.g., parent conference, detention, retention) will be included in the individual building handbook.

At the secondary school level, a student must be in attendance a minimum of eighty-five (85%) of the total number of days that the course is in session or the student may not receive credit for the course. This eighty-five (85%) requirement means that:

- a) In a full-year, one-credit course, a student must not be absent from class more than twenty-eight (28) days.
- b) In a half-year, one-half credit course, a student must not be absent from class for more than fourteen (14) days.
- c) In physical education courses, a student must not be absent from class more than fourteen (14) times per semester.
- d) In courses with scheduled labs, e.g., science classes, a student must not be absent from class/lab for more than thirty-eight (38) class periods.
- e) Absence (lateness or early departure) from class for more than fifty percent (50%) of class time will be considered a full period of absence.
- f) A student who is absent from class or school with administrative approval will be considered present for the purposes of this policy.

(Continued)

## Students

Subject: Comprehensive Student Attendance Policy (Cont'd.)

Once a student exceeds the attendance standards in any course as specified in items a, b, c, d, and e above, he/she will not take any remaining exams/test or submit papers, projects, etc. for grades necessary to receive credit for that course regardless of the student's performance on prior tests, exams or other graded work.

The student will continue to attend the class unless suspended from such attendance in accordance with procedures under Section 3214 of the Education Law. A student who does not meet the minimal attendance requirement for a course during the school year must continue to attend the course, without violating the LHS Code of Conduct in order to be eligible to repeat the course.

For District approved summer school, the eighty-five (85%) minimum attendance requirement is also mandated no matter where students may attend summer school.

Transfer students and students re-enrolling after having dropped out will be expected to attend a prorated eighty-five (85%) attendance of the scheduled class meetings during their total time of enrollment.

Students will be considered in attendance if the student is:

- a) Physically present in the classroom or working under the direction of the classroom teacher during the class scheduled meeting time; or
- b) Working pursuant to an approved independent study program; or
- c) Receiving approved alternate instruction.

In the above situations, the student is subject to the same attendance requirements as students attending regular classes.

#### Completion of Missed Work

Upon returning to school following a properly excused absence, including fieldtrips, tardiness, or early departure, it will be the responsibility of the student to consult with his/her teacher(s) within five (5) school days upon their return regarding arrangements to make up missed work, assignments and/or tests in accordance with the time schedule specified by the teacher in order to receive credit for that work. It is not the teacher's responsibility to seek out the student.

Attendance at school-approved alternative settings, including suspensions, where instruction is substantially equivalent to the instruction that was missed, will be counted as the equivalent of regular instruction in class. However, if a student has an unexcused absence from such placement, the Attendance Clerk will count the absence accordingly.

(Continued)

## Students

Subject: Comprehensive Student Attendance Policy (Cont'd.)

Students with unexcused absences, tardiness, or early departures may request to be provided with any missed assignments. Specific building procedures will be developed to implement this section of the policy.

NOTE: This policy does not negate the right of the student to challenge a Regents Examination in accordance with State Education Department Guidelines.

#### Notice of Minimum Attendance Standard/Intervention Strategies Prior to the Denial of Course Credit

In order to ensure that parents/persons in parental relation and students are informed of the District's policy regarding minimum attendance and course credit, and the implementation of specific intervention strategies to be employed prior to the denial of course credit to the student for insufficient attendance, the following guidelines will be followed:

- a) Student newsletters and publications will include periodic reminders of the components of the District's Comprehensive Student Attendance Policy. Copies of the Attendance Policy will also be included in parent/student handbooks.
- b) At periodic intervals, a designated staff member(s) will attempt to notify the parent/person in parental relation of the student's absence, tardiness, or early departure and explain the relationship of the student's attendance to his/her ability to receive course credit. In addition, letter(s) will be sent detailing this information. Specific procedures will be developed to implement this section of the policy.
- c) Appropriate student support services/personnel within the District, as well as the possible collaboration/referral to community support services and agencies, may be implemented prior to the denial of course credit for insufficient attendance by the student as determined by the building administrator and/or his/her designee.

#### Attendance Incentives

To encourage student attendance, the District will develop and implement grade-appropriate/building-level strategies and programs such as suggested but not limited to:

- a) Attendance honor rolls and other types of District recognition to be posted in prominent places in District buildings and included in District newsletters and, with parent/person in parental relation consent, in community publications;
- b) Monthly drawings for prizes at each grade level to reward perfect attendance;
- c) Special events (e.g., assemblies, guest speakers, field days) scheduled on days that historically have high absenteeism (e.g., Mondays, Fridays, day before vacation);

(Continued)

## Students

Subject: Comprehensive Student Attendance Policy (Cont'd.)

- d) Grade-level rewards at each building for best attendance;
- e) Acknowledgement of the importance of good attendance (e.g., individual certificates, recognition chart, bulletin boards);
- f) Annual poster/essay contest on importance of good attendance;
- g) Assemblies collaboratively developed and promoted by student council, administration, PTO and other community groups to promote good attendance;

#### Disciplinary Consequences

Unexcused absences, tardiness and early departures will result in disciplinary sanctions as described in the District's Code of Conduct. Negative consequences will not be imposed, however, where the absence, tardiness, or early departure is related to homelessness. Consequences may include, but are not limited to, in-school suspension, detention, and denial of participation in interscholastic and extracurricular activities. Parents or persons in parental relation will be notified by designated District personnel at periodic intervals to discuss their child's absences, tardiness or early departures and the importance of class attendance and appropriate interventions. Individual buildings and grade levels will address procedures to implement the notification process to the parent or person in parental relation.

#### Intervention Strategy Process

In order to effectively intervene when an identified pattern of excused absences, unexcused absences, tardiness or early departures occur, designated District personnel will pursue the following:

- a) Identify specific element(s) of the pattern (e.g., grade level, building, time frame, type of excused absences, unexcused absences, tardiness or early departures);
- b) Contact the District staff most closely associated with the element. In specific cases where the pattern involves an individual student, the student and parent or person in parental relation will be contacted;
- c) Discuss with appropriate personnel (e.g., social worker, counselor, Student Support Teams and Family Support Center) strategies to directly intervene with specific element;
- d) Recommend intervention to administration or his/her designee if it relates to change in District policy or procedure;
- e) Implement strategies, as approved by appropriate administration;
- f) Utilize appropriate District and/or community resources to address and help remediate student unexcused absences, tardiness or early departures;

(Continued)

Subject: Comprehensive Student Attendance Policy (Cont'd.)

- g) Monitor and report short and long term effects of intervention.

#### Building Level Review

In the event a student is denied credit under the LCSD Attendance Policy, his/her parent (or person in parental relation) may request a building level review of their child's attendance record. A written request must be made to the Principal of the building where their child attends within ten (10) school days of the date of the notice indicating denial of credit.

The Principal, or his/her designee, will examine whether or not the denial of credit is appropriate, but only if one (1) less than fifty percent (50%) of the accumulated absences of the student are recorded by the attendance clerk as unexcused absences and (2) the student continues to regularly attend the class(es) for which credit has been denied, without violating the District's Code of Conduct in any manner.

#### Building Review of Attendance Records

The Building Principal/designee will work in conjunction with the building attendance clerk and other designated staff in reviewing 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 excused absences, unexcused absences, tardiness and early departures.

#### Annual Review by the Board of Education

The Board of Education will annually review the building level student attendance records and if such records show a decline in student attendance, the Board will make any revisions to the Policy and plan deemed necessary to improve student attendance.

#### Community Awareness

The Board of Education will promote necessary community awareness of the District's Comprehensive Student Attendance Policy by:

- a) Providing a plain language summary of the policy to parents or persons in parental relation to students at the beginning of each school year and promoting the understanding of such a policy to students and their parents/persons in parental relation;
- b) Providing each teacher, at the beginning of the school year or upon employment, with a copy of the policy; and
- c) Providing copies of the policy to any other member of the community upon request.

(Continued)



Subject: Comprehensive Student Attendance Policy (Cont'd.)

Education Law §§ 3024, 3025, 3202, 3205, 3206, 3211, and 3213  
8 NYCRR §§ 104.1, 109.2, and 175.6

Note: Refer also to Policy #7131 – Education of Students in Temporary Housing