

STUDENT ATTENDANCE

The North Merrick Board of Education recognizes that regular school attendance is a major component of academic success. Through implementation of this policy, the Board encourages full attendance by all students, and anticipates a reduction of unexcused absences, tardiness, and early departures (hereinafter referred to as *ATEDs*). An adequate attendance recordkeeping system shall be maintained, patterns of student *ATEDs* identified, and effective intervention strategies developed to improve school attendance.

Notice

To be successful in this endeavor, it is imperative that all members of the school community are aware of this policy, its purpose, procedures, and the consequences of non-compliance. To ensure that students, parents, teachers, and administrators are notified of and understand this policy, the following procedures shall be implemented:

- ◆ The attendance policy will be included in the District calendar, and will be reviewed with parents and students at the beginning of the school year. Additional clarification of this policy will be provided at *Meet the Teacher Night*.
- ◆ Parents/guardians will receive a copy of this policy, in plain language, by mail, at the beginning of the school year. Parents/guardians will be asked to sign and return a statement indicating that they have read and understand this policy.
- ◆ The District will provide copies of the attendance policy and any amendments thereto to faculty and staff. Each new faculty and/or staff member will receive a copy upon employment.
- ◆ Copies of this policy will also be made available to any community member, upon request.

Excused and Unexcused Absences

Excused *ATEDs* are defined as absences, tardiness, and early departures from class or school due to personal illness, illness or death in the family, impassable roads or weather, religious observance, quarantine, required court appearances, attendance at health clinics, or such other reasons as may be approved. All other *ATEDs* are considered unexcused.

Teachers take attendance each day. Therefore, for each absence there must be an accounting. It is the parent's/guardian's responsibility to notify the school on the morning of the absence, if possible by 9:30 AM. A written note, signed and dated by the parent/guardian, explaining each instance of ATED must be turned over to the school upon the child's return.

Students absent for family vacations, or other activities outside of the school calendar, and unexcused absences, will be treated as such. Instruction missed during this time cannot be made up through advanced homework assignments.

General Procedures/Data Collection

- ◆ Attendance will be taken each day.
- ◆ Recording attendance a second time during the school day is not required in this Elementary School District. Whenever parents/guardians request that a child leave the school grounds during lunch/recess, such students (kindergarten through grade 6) must be picked up and signed out of school by an authorized adult.
- ◆ At the end of the school day, all attendance information shall be compiled and provided to the designated staff member responsible for attendance.
- ◆ The nature of an ATED shall be coded on a student's record, as follows:
 - Absent
 - Truant
 - Early dismissal
 - Family
 - Illness
 - Sent Home
 - Absent religious
 - Tardy
- ◆ Student ATED data shall be available to, and should be reviewed by, the school nurse or other designee.
- ◆ Where additional information is received that requires corrections to be made to a student's attendance record, such corrections shall be made immediately. Notice of such a change shall be sent to appropriate school personnel, subject to applicable confidentiality rules.

- ◆ Attendance data shall be analyzed periodically to identify patterns or trends in student absences.
- ◆ Continuous monitoring shall be conducted to identify students who are absent, tardy, or leave class or school early.

Attendance Incentives

This District will design and implement systems to acknowledge a student's efforts to maintain or improve school attendance, including—

- ◆ an attendance honor roll, at the end of each marking period, identifying students with no more than three absences; and
- ◆ a letter of recognition from the Superintendent of Schools.

Intervention Strategies

In the event excessive ATEDs are noted, parents/guardians will be requested to meet with the school social worker and/or psychologist to develop corrective measures. Should the intervention of the social worker and/or psychologist be unsuccessful, the matter will be referred to the principal or superintendent. In the event the problem persists, referral to Child Protective Services will be considered.

Attendance/Grade Policy

The Board of Education recognizes the important relationship between class attendance and student achievement. A student's successful performance on homework, papers, projects as well as State and local assessments is usually a reflection of steady attendance. Consistent with the importance of classroom participation, unexcused ATEDs will most likely affect a student's achievement.

In implementing the policy set forth above, students who are unable to attend school or a class on a given day due to their participation in a school sponsored activity (i.e., music lessons, field trips, etc.), may arrange with their teachers to make up any work missed. This also applied to any student who is absent, tardy, or leaves early from school or a class due to illness or any other excused reason.

All students with an excused ATED are expected, upon their return, to consult with their teachers regarding missed work.

In the event a student is absent for an extended period of time, the parent/guardian shall contact the building principal to discuss the implications of the absence and instruction.

Annual Review

The Board shall annually review building-level student attendance records and, if such records show a decline in student attendance, the Board shall revise this comprehensive attendance policy and make any revisions to the plan it deems necessary to improve student attendance.