

## **Regulation**

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### **Attendance, Absenteeism and Excuses**

#### **I. Attendance Guidelines**

It is the policy of this Board to require that the pupils enrolled in the schools of this district attend school regularly in accordance with the laws of this State pursuant to N.J.S.A.18: 38-25 and 26, N.J.A.C. 6: 8-4, 2 (d2). The educational programs offered are predicated upon the presence of pupils in school and require continuity of instruction and classroom participation. The regular contact of pupils with one another and their participation in a well-planned instructional activity under the tutelage of a teacher are vital in order for them to master course proficiencies.

The Board shall require from the parent/guardian of each child who has been absent from school or from class for any reason a written (not e-mail) statement of the cause for the absence. The Board reserves the right to verify such statements and to investigate the cause of each absence. The Board may report to appropriate authorities infractions of the law regarding the attendance of students below the age of sixteen (16). The district also interprets this law to include tardiness when lateness to school or to class diminishes classroom instructional time. It is acknowledged that the district Child Study Team, in compliance with state code and law, may adjust attendance standards for classified students.

#### **II. Attendance Procedures**

School attendance is the basic responsibility of the student toward the learning process. Parent/guardian is responsible for notifying the school each morning when the child is absent. It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to maintain a personal written record of each absence, lateness, or early release as verification data to be provided to the school in the event of an attendance appeal.

Absence from school or classes due to religious holidays, school-sponsored field trips, and other school-sponsored activities for which the student has obtained appropriate permission shall count as days of being in attendance under this policy.

No pupil in grades Kindergarten through eight shall be permitted to leave the school before the close of the school day unless he/she is met in the school office by his/her parent/guardian or a person authorized by the parent/guardian to act in his/her behalf.

**FULL-DAY CREDIT:** A student shall be considered absent from school for participation in less than 2 instructional hours (excluding lunch) during the school day, including all early dismissal days. (NJ 6A:32-4.3)

Students of Homebound Instruction shall be considered present and meeting all attendance requirements during the period provided they are meeting all of the requirements of the Homebound Instruction Policies.

Students who transfer in from other schools during the year must meet pro-rated attendance requirements to receive credit for days attended at the previous school.

Any student who transfers from the Margate schools to attend school elsewhere, and consequently re-enters Margate School during the same school year, will be assessed for all absences while at Margate Schools as well as those from any other schools attended during the school year.

If students, enrolled in Margate School during the previous year, enter school after the beginning of the school year, they will be required to meet the full minimum attendance requirements.

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**III. Absenteeism**

All absences will be categorized as EXCUSED or UNEXCUSED.

**IV. Excused and Unexcused Absences**

**FOLLOWING AN ABSENCE**

In order to be considered excused, all absences must be explained in writing by a parent/guardian upon the child's return. One or two consecutive days can be excused if explained in writing from the parent/guardian; however, any medical absence after three or more days requires a doctor's note from the treating physician upon return to school. E-mails are not an acceptable form of school notification of a pupil absence. If an e-mail is received, parent will be notified that a signed note from the parent is required. Attendance in homeroom will be the accounting method for daily attendance and for the purpose of recording attendance for the New Jersey State School registers.

The following absences are excusable:

1. Illness or Injury (*Doctor's note from the treating physician required after 3 or more consecutive days*)
2. Quarantine (*with a doctor's note from the treating physician*)
3. Death in the Immediate Family
4. Medical or Dental Appointments (*with a doctor's note from the treating physician*)
5. Approved Religious Holiday by NJSA 18A:36-16
6. School Sponsored Activities
7. Required Court Appearance (*with court documentation*)
8. Extenuating Circumstances (*as determined by the Principal*)
9. Short-term Suspension

All other absences are unexcused.

A written explanation of each absence from the parent/guardian should be presented on the first school session following an absence. All absences will be coded unexcused in the computer until such a note is received. If the absence is to be excused, medical (from the treating physician), legal or other documentation must be presented. Any undocumented absence shall be classified as unexcused. Written documentation must be presented within three school days after the student returns to school; otherwise, the absence(s) will be recorded as unexcused. E-mails are not an acceptable form of school notification of a pupil absence.

**ABSENCES AND CO-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES**

Individual student attendance will be reviewed each marking period to determine eligibility for participation in co-curricular activities. Students may be prohibited from participation in activities that would result in absence from regularly scheduled classes.

Students who are absent from school may not be permitted to participate in school events or activities held on that day (i.e. sporting or special events).

**VACATIONS**

Student absences due to family vacations or travel are not considered as "excused" under state guidelines. Absences for vacations or other travel will be included as part of the 15 absence maximum during the school year.

Students who will be absent from school for five (5) consecutive days due to a predictable reason such as a family vacation must give one week's notice of the absence to their teachers as well as the administration.

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Failure to do this could result in the student's losing the privilege of receiving the assignments and making up tests. *Note:* Students are responsible for making up all work missed to the satisfaction of his/her teacher. There is no alternative to being in the classroom; however, whenever possible the teaching staff will develop meaningful alternate make-up assignments in lieu of guest speakers, films, and other experiences that cannot be duplicated.

**EXCESSIVE UNEXCUSED ABSENCES**

Students who accumulate excessive unexcused absences (more than twenty [20] per year) are subject to serious consequences including (1) a possible court complaint for truancy or (2) possible retention at their present grade level for non-attendance. The Principal has the right to review and make all determinations on a case by case basis.

The Principal will communicate with the parent/guardian regarding attendance status. Parents/guardians will be notified when a student is not in school unless a parent/guardian calls in a student's absence to the School Secretary.

**NUMBER OF UNEXCUSED ABSENCES AND ACTION TO BE TAKEN (INCLUDING POSSIBLE COURT PROCEEDINGS)**

**3 Days-** A letter will be sent home by the Principal, or his/her designee to remind the parent/guardian of district attendance procedures.

**5 Days-** A second letter will be sent home by the Principal, or his/her designee, warning the parents/guardians of consequences if absences continue.

**7 Days-** A certified letter will be sent home by the Principal, or his/her designee, to be signed by the parents/guardians and returned to the school. The school office will contact parent/guardian to set up a conference in order to explain policy and warn of possible court proceedings. The Principal may refer to New Jersey Division of Child Protection and Permanency (DCP&P) for possible services to alleviate absences.

**10 Days-** The Principal may file a court complaint for truancy. The Principal will send home a letter by certified mail detailing each absence. The school office will contact the parent/guardian to set up a conference in order to explain policy and warn of possible court proceedings. Superintendent will also be notified.

**20 Days -** The Principal will file a (second – if applicable) court complaint for truancy with consultation from the Superintendent and Board notification. The school's office will contact the parent/guardian to set up a conference in order to explain policy and warn of possible court proceedings.

**LOSS OF PROMOTION DUE TO EXCESSIVE ABSENCES**

When a student has exceeded the attendance limit, a written notice of loss of promotion will be sent to the parents/guardians to provide their avenues of appeal. Parents/guardians must file a petition in writing in order to initiate the appeal procedure. The parent/guardian must provide documentation to reduce the number of excused absences below the limit of twenty (20) days or offer valid reason(s) to restore credit for the year. If the parent/guardian fails to appeal within a reasonable time, promotion will be withdrawn for the school year in question.

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Excused absences may be included within the 20 day absence maximum per year at the discretion of the Principal.

Any student who accumulates more than 25 unexcused absences will have forfeited the right to attend make-up sessions in order to restore promotion status, unless the Review Board determines that an exception should be made due to mitigating circumstances.

1. An Attendance Review Board will be established. The composition is the prerogative of the principal.
2. The Attendance Review Board will be convened each spring in order to allow a student who has lost attendance credit sufficient time to demonstrate an improvement in attendance. Such an Attendance Review Board will be one method by which a student may know of an impending loss of credit due to absences. Any and all notes not already submitted must be presented to the Review Board upon request.
3. If the Review Board denies a parent's/guardian's appeal, the parent/guardian has a right to re-appeal the decision to the Board of Education.

**ACTIVITY RESTRICTION FOR EXCESSIVE ABSENCES**

Any student who accumulates 10 excused or unexcused absences may be placed on ACTIVITY RESTRICTION (AR). Loss of participation in school field trips, special programs, and 8th grade promotion activities are possible consequences, at the discretion of the principal.

**CONSECUTIVE ABSENCES WITH NO PARENTAL CONTACT**

When a student accumulates 5 days of consecutive absences with no parental contact to the school, the Principal is required to contact the New Jersey Division of Child Protection and Permanency (DCP&P) in addition to the Margate Police Department

**TARDINESS**

Any time a student is late for school; the parent/guardian must accompany the student into the main office and sign the child into school. A written explanation from the parent/guardian must be supplied. Justifiable reasons may include the following:

1. Medical or dental appointments which cannot be scheduled outside of school hours;
2. Requirements of a student's individual health care plan;
3. Requirements of the student's Individual Education Program (IEP) or 504 Plan;
4. Alternate short or long term accommodations for students with disabilities;
5. Medical disability;
6. Family emergency;
7. Court appearance;
8. Extenuating circumstances, upon good cause shown, as may be acceptable to the school principal.

**EXCESSIVE TARDINESS**

At school the responsibility of students is to learn. Efficient learning cannot take place if students are not in class and on time at the beginning of instruction. School starts promptly at 8:15 AM.

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**EXPECTATIONS OF STUDENTS AND PARENTS**

It is the responsibility of the parents/guardians to see that their child leaves home on time and arrives at school before 8:15 AM

When parents and students do not fulfill their responsibilities, the following will occur:

***William H. Ross III School***

**Fourth Tardy:** Warning Letter

**Fifth Tardy:** Parent/Guardian mandatory conference with the Principal

**Tenth and Subsequent Tardies:** Detention and referral to I&RS Committee. Student may be placed on an Attendance Contract.

***Eugene A. Tighe School***

**Fourth Tardy:** Warning Letter

**Fifth Tardy:** Parent/Guardian mandatory conference with Principal and/or his/her designee.

**Sixth - Ninth Tardy:** Detention for each occurrence

**Tenth and Subsequent Tardies:** Detention and referral to I&RS Committee. Student may be placed on an Attendance Contract with an ACTIVITY RESTRICTION (AR).

The Principal has the right to review and make determinations on case by case basis.

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