

ATTENDANCE

Policies of the Board of Education

"The Board of Education requires that the pupils enrolled in the schools of this district attend school regularly in accordance with the laws of the state. The educational program offered by this district is predicated on the presence of the pupil and requires continuity of instruction and classroom participation. The regular contact of pupils with one another in the classroom and their participation in a well-planned instructional activity under the tutelage of a competent teacher are vital to this purpose..." (Policy #5200)

Students are expected to be in attendance on all days that school is in session. Regular attendance in class is part of the district's academic standards. Daily class work is critical in the educational process and a pre-condition for achievement. Real learning, which is neither tested nor graded and occurs daily in class, can only be realized if the student is present.

High School Attendance Regulations

Credit will be denied on the 13th countable absence in a full year course and the 7th countable absence in a semester course. A student who is denied credit for a course must remain in the class in order to be eligible to retake the course in summer school. However, a disruptive student will be removed from the class.

Types of Absences

Countable Absences

Credit will be denied on the 13th absence in a full year course and on the 7th absence in a semester course.

- (A) Unverified absence: no documentation within five school days
- (B) Family business or vacation, with note from parent upon return to school
- (C) Cuts: withdrawal from class on the 4th cut in a full year course; on the 2nd cut in a semester course
- (D) Doctor verified medical appointment
- (I) Occasional illness with note from parent upon return to school
- (N) Student initiated visit to the nurse
- (S) Student request through nurse's office, to go home
- (T) Tardies (two tardies = one countable absence)

Non-countable Absences

- (E) Death in family with note submitted within 5 school days
- (F) Field trips
- (G) Guidance/Child Study initiated appointment
- (H) Home Bound (home instruction)
- (J) Required court appearance/driver's license documented by a note, submitted within 5 school days
- (K) Approved athletic and academic competitions and performances
- (L) Scheduled instrumental music lessons
- (M) Doctor verified illness with note within 5 school days
- (O) Required by nurse to go home
- (P) Related Services
- (Q) Required by nurse to miss class due to illness/injury/required appointment
- (R) Religious holidays with note submitted within 5 school days
- (U) Testing/course conflicts
- (V) Parent note submitted within 5 school days regarding chronic medical condition that has been previously documented by a physician
- (W) College rep visit at MHS (Guidance Office)
- (X) Suspension
- (Y) Administrative meeting
- (Z) Other critical reasons approved by administration
- (1) Counseling support groups
- (2) Required restorative practices/conflict management session
- (3) Required student council meeting
- (4) Bring Your Child to Work Day
- (5) College visit/interview: College or employer with prior counselor approval and documentation within 5 school days of interview. Orientation, registration and placement tests for accepted students are typically considered family business, a countable absence.

Attendance Procedures

Call the attendance office at 201-762-2306 to report your student's absence. Voicemail is available for or parents who call prior to 7:30 a.m. Additionally, parents must submit a written note to the Attendance Office within 5 days of the absence. A parent note is required regardless of the type of absence.

Students who arrive tardy to school must sign in at the Attendance Office prior to reporting to class.

Counselors and case managers will review their students' absences on a quarterly basis.

Due process rights in the area of attendance follow this procedure:

- Review and hearing by the Attendance Committee for "compelling circumstances"
- Appeal to Principal
- Appeal to Superintendent
- Appeal to the Board of Education
- Appeal to the Commissioner of Education

Parents can track student's attendance on the Parent Portal.

Notification for full year and semester courses will occur according to the following schedule:

Full Year Course

4 countable absences	Warning letter
7 countable absences	Warning letter/I&RST Review
13 countable absences	Loss of credit letter

Semester Course

4 countable absences	Warning letter/I&RST Review
7 countable absences	Loss of credit letter

Science Lab – Semester Course

4 countable absences	Warning letter/I&RST Review
7 countable absences	Loss of credit letter

Science Lab – Full Year Course

4 countable absences	Warning letter
7 countable absences	Warning letter/I&RST Review
13 countable absences	Loss of credit letter

A student must appeal the loss of credit to the Assistant Principal within 10 school days of notification. Loss of credit letters will detail the due process procedure. Appeal forms are available from counselors and the attendance office. In their letters of appeal, students/parents must detail the circumstances of the absences and explain why these circumstances prevented the student from attendance in school. Requests for loss of credit appeals must be received **no later than 10 school days after notification**. Student athletes must be mindful of submitting Loss of Credit attendance appeals for 1st semester classes by the designated deadline (within 10 days of notification of loss of credit). An appeal will not be considered if there is a "cut" in the class for which the student has lost credit. Also, because science laboratories cannot be made up, students should be aware that absences from a science lab may impact the credit awarded for the lab (1.0 credit).

The Attendance Committee conducts hearings and makes decisions regarding any appeal for loss of credit. A parent or guardian must be present at the hearing, along with any advocate the student requests, such as the guidance counselor or case manager. The purpose of the meeting is to give the student an opportunity to present any compelling circumstances that influenced his/her attendance.

Absences for outside educational opportunities (leadership opportunities, college showcases) are recorded as countable absences (family business) unless a Request for Excused Absence form has received prior administrative approval 10 school days prior to the event.

A student who is absent may not participate in any extracurricular activities on the day of absence without the approval of an administrator.

College Visits, Employment or Military Interviews

Seniors are permitted to have four (4) excused absences and juniors are permitted to have two (2) excused absences for college visits, employment or military interviews. An admissions representative at the college, the representative company, or the military representative conducting the interview must sign and stamp the Student Visitation Form (available on the guidance website) in order for the form to be valid and for students to be credited with an official absence from Mahwah High School. Students **MUST** obtain approval from their guidance counselor at least two days prior to the visitation/interview and submit documentation within 5 school days. *All student visitations must be taken before May 8.* Orientation, registration or placement tests for accepted students should be scheduled when MHS is not in session. Orientation, registration, and placement tests which are taken when MHS is in session are coded as family business, a countable absence.

Chronic Illness Procedures

A student who has a chronic medical concern that will impact school attendance may be placed on the Chronic Illness List. Forms are available in the Health Office. The physician documentation must state the nature of the concern and that this medical issue impacts school attendance. Documentation must be obtained annually at the start of each school year, or upon new diagnosis. After verification of this information and submission of a completed parental release form, absences and/or tardiness to school shall be excused pending the submission of a parent note to the Attendance Office within 5 days of the absence or tardiness. The note must refer specifically to the chronic illness and specify the actual dates of absences or tardiness to school. These parental notes will be considered as non-countable, medical excuses. Notes not received within five days of the absence will remain unexcused absences.

When a student's attendance reflects ten absences or tardies to school related to the chronic medical condition, the school nurse may contact the student's physician regarding the medical condition and its impact on the student's attendance, and the subsequent loss of instructional time.

Truancy (Cutting) from Class

Truancy (cutting) is a countable absence. A student is considered truant if s/he leaves campus without administrative approval and permission, comes to school but does not attend classes, obtains permission to go to a specific location in school but does not report there, or, without parents' awareness, does not come to school. A student present in school who is truant from class shall be charged with a "cut." Any student who leaves class without permission or leaves class with permission and fails to return within a reasonable time is to have that unauthorized absence submitted as a cut.

If a student is withdrawn for excessive cutting, the notation on the student's permanent record will be "WA" representing withdrawal for non-attendance. Credit units toward graduation will not be awarded. The effect of the "WA" on academic class ranking will be equal to zero ("0"). Should the student repeat the course and receive a passing grade, then both grades will be used in the class ranking calculation.

Each occasion of truancy (full cut) from class will also count toward the maximum absences allowed. A student who cuts class or is truant from school will receive a zero ("0") for the day's work, and cannot earn credit for the work that is to be made up. Students who cut class or are truant will receive a zero ("0") for any examinations or tests they may have missed during that period.

Chronic absenteeism or repeated truancy beyond that listed above will be dealt with by the administration which will report the matter to the appropriate agency.

The following due process procedures shall be used if a student cuts class:

Semester Course Cuts

- The teacher shall notify the assistant principal on the occasion of the first cut.
- The assistant principal shall issue a final warning to the student and notify the parent.
- The assistant principal shall notify the parent and counselor of the student's withdrawal from class after consultation with the department supervisor when a second cut has been verified.
- The assistant principal shall assign the student to study hall.

Any student enrolled in a Math or Language Arts Literacy Lab, or an AHSA class must remain enrolled in the class regardless of excessive cuts. The student will be given a final warning after the first cut and the parent shall be notified that loss of credit will result if another cut should occur.

Full Year Course Cuts

- On the occasion of each of the first two cuts, the attendance office shall notify the parent by letter.
- The teacher shall notify the assistant principal on the occasion of the third cut.
- The assistant principal shall issue a final warning to the student and notify the parent.
- After a fourth cut, the assistant principal shall notify the parent and counselor of the student's withdrawal from class, and the assistant principal shall assign the student to study hall.

Exams

Students are expected to attend every period during examination days whether an examination is being given or not. Students are required by law to have a four-hour instructional day. Class periods in which an exam is not given (e.g., physical education, study hall) will meet and continue instruction. Student attendance will be taken during each period as per the attendance policy. Students are required to be in attendance when exams are administered. First semester exams are scheduled for 1/23 – 1/27/2017; second semester and final exams are scheduled for 6/14 – 6/19/2017.

Student-athletes are required to be in attendance for 4 hours on exam days.

Absentee Procedures

Under extraordinary circumstances, and for compelling reasons, parents may request alternative arrangements for examinations. Please make such requests, *in writing*, to the Assistant Principal by June 1.

An absent student will only be allowed to take a missed exam if the absence is excused by the Assistant Principal for a valid reason. A student who is ill including a chronic illness must see a doctor on the day of the absence and bring in a doctor's note to the Assistant Principal. Parent notes for illness, waking up late, and transportation issues will not excuse a student from an exam and the student will be given a grade of zero (0) for that exam. Other valid reasons include court appearances or death in the family. If a student cuts an examination or their absence is not excused by the Assistant Principal, a grade of zero (0) will be given for that exam.

A student who is absent must have a parent call the attendance office to report the absence immediately. A written note explaining the reason for the absence must be submitted to Linda Bohny, Assistant Principal, prior to scheduling an appointment for an absentee examination. Absentee exams will be administered in the Library/Media Center, and must be made up immediately on the next day the student is in school.

Senior Exam Conflicts

Seniors should avoid exam week conflicts by scheduling any college placement exams and freshman orientation meetings before or after Mahwah High School final exams. If there is a conflict that cannot be resolved by changing the date with the college, you must see the Assistant Principal to discuss an alternative by June 1. Students must provide documentation from the college or university that stipulates that there are no other options for placement exams/orientation.

Music Lessons

Students are required to attend a weekly small-group lesson as part of their zero period music course (band, chorus, orchestra). Students will not miss any academic class more than three times each semester (4-6 times per year) for each music course taken. Although students will miss classes for music lessons, the impact should be minimal due to the rotating class schedule.

Students are required to make up the work for their regular class just as if they were absent for the day. Students must first report to their assigned period teacher in order to get their assignments, and then they may go to their lesson.

Students should only miss their music lesson and remain in class if they have: a full period test (not a quiz), an active science laboratory, a guest speaker, a math/literacy lab, or AHSA class. If a music lesson is missed for one of these reasons, the work must be made up within two weeks to receive a grade for the lesson. Because science laboratories cannot be made up, students should be aware that absences from a science lab may impact the credit awarded for the lab (1.0 credit).

Early Dismissal

Administrative Regulation #5041

Occasional compelling circumstances may require that a student be late to school or dismissed before the end of the day. The Board of Education requires that the principal be notified in advance of such absences by a written request of the student's parent or by the adult student, which shall state the reason for the tardiness or early dismissal.

Early dismissal from regularly assigned classes will count toward the maximum allowable absences in a course.

The request for early dismissal from a regularly assigned class is to be presented in writing to the attendance office prior to the beginning of Time Block 1. Adult students who sign themselves out without having submitted a note prior to Time Block 1 will be marked as cut. Adult students may write their own notes; however, additional validation may be required. The request is to include:

- Parent's home or business telephone number
- Name of adult who will take the student off school grounds
- Reason for the request
- Parent signature

Requests for early dismissal may be verified by telephone with the parent; if the parent cannot be contacted, the early dismissal will not be approved. In the case of an unusual circumstance when it was not possible to file a note before the first time block, the parent must come into school with the note before leaving with the student. Telephone, fax, or e-mail requests will not be honored during the school day.

Parents who need to have their student released from school early must know that instruction cannot be interrupted. Parents should be aware that their student will be released only after the scheduled class period is over.

Also, please be aware that in the event of an altered day, the student will be dismissed after the completion of their scheduled classes. A parent note must be submitted to the attendance office if an early dismissal at a different time is requested on an altered day.

Students receiving approval for early dismissal must sign out in the register book in the attendance office and sign back in should they return the same day. The time of departure and return are to be indicated in the book. Students returning to school must report to class within 4 minutes after signing in to avoid being charged with a possible "cut."

The student is required to make up work missed because of the early dismissal. Assignments and examinations not completed within a reasonable time established by the teacher will be graded zero for work missed. Senior students who have been granted the off-campus privilege may leave campus for lunch or the approved study hall period. Other students who have an approved

early dismissal for work study may also leave school early. However, no other student may leave campus without both parental and administrative approval.

Under no circumstances is a 9th, 10th, or 11th grade student permitted to go off-campus with a senior class student during the senior's (approved) off-campus. Nor is an unapproved senior permitted to go off-campus.

Late/Tardy Arrival to School and/or Class

Students who are tardy to class will receive one half of an absence. Two tardies equal one absence from class. All tardies are added into the total of absences that count (see attendance policy) in that class.

Students who arrive late to study hall or support class will be assigned to a Saturday detention upon the 14th tardy to that class. At the 20th tardy, the student will be assigned to a full Saturday School. The School Security Officer will handle subsequent tardies accordingly. In lieu of serving a full Saturday School, students may petition the Assistant Principal if they wish to serve 10 hours of community service for tardies to study halls or support classes.

Students who arrive late to school must report to the attendance office to sign the register book, indicate the time of arrival and obtain a "Tardiness" pass. Failure to do this may result in assignment to Saturday detention. Students are to bring in a note from their parents stating the reason for their tardiness. The "tardiness" pass is to be presented to the teacher to whom the student is assigned at that particular time. Teachers are not to admit any student to class who does not present this form.

A student's unexcused tardiness to class will be handled as follows:

Unexcused Tardiness to Class

TARDY	PENALTY
Less than 15 minutes late to class	(1/2) one half of absence that counts
Over 15 minutes late to class	One full cut

Even though students will be charged with a cut, they are to remain in class for the remainder of the period