

Students

**SUBJECT: COMPREHENSIVE STUDENT ATTENDANCE**

**Statement of Overall Objectives**

The District recognizes that consistent school attendance is essential for academic success and school completion and, therefore, has developed a Comprehensive Student Attendance Policy to meet the following objectives:

- a) Promote active and consistent student participation in school to support students' academic, social, and emotional development;
- b) Raise student achievement and close gaps in student knowledge;
- c) Increase school completion for all students;
- d) Account for every student for safety and other reasons;
- e) Identify attendance patterns in order to design attendance improvement efforts;
- f) Verify that individual students and parents/guardians are complying with education laws relating to compulsory attendance;
- g) 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 that supports the academic, social, and emotional growth of students and fosters consistent attendance in school.
- b) Implement a Comprehensive Student Attendance Policy that clearly conveys expectations regarding attendance and intervention strategies to promote consistent attendance in school.
- c) Maintain accurate recordkeeping via the District Student Information System.
- 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.

**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:

(Continued)

Students

**SUBJECT: COMPREHENSIVE STUDENT ATTENDANCE (Cont'd.)**

- 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, attendance at health clinics, approved college visits, approved cooperative work programs, military obligations, or other reasons as may be approved by the Superintendent or his/her designee.
- 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.

A written excuse, signed by a parent or person in parental relation should be presented by the student when returning to school following each absence and on the day of the tardy or early departure including the reason. The Principal is the final arbiter in determining if an absence is excused or unexcused.

**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.

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

- a) For students in kindergarten through grade 5, the student's presence or absence will be recorded after the taking of attendance once per school day. For purposes of APPR and Teacher-Student Data Linkages (TSDL), classroom attendance for all students in grades 6 through 12 must be recorded on a subject by subject basis for Teacher of Record Determinations.
- b) For students in grades 6 through 12 or in departmentalized schools at any grade level (i.e., students pass individually to different classes throughout the day), each student's presence or absence will be recorded after the taking of attendance at the start of each period of scheduled instruction.
- 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.

(Continued)

## Students

**SUBJECT: COMPREHENSIVE STUDENT ATTENDANCE (Cont'd.)**

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 established District or building procedures.

**Student Attendance and Course Credit**

Notwithstanding the compulsory school attendance requirements established by New York State Law, the District shall not deny course credit to a student based on absenteeism if the student has taken all tests, completed missed class work, and secured a passing grade.

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 scheduled class time; or
- b) Working under an approved independent study program; or
- c) Receiving approved alternative instruction.

Students who are absent from class due to their participation in a school-sponsored activity must arrange with their teachers to make up any work missed in a timely manner as determined by the student's teacher. Attendance at school sponsored events where instruction is substantially equivalent to the instruction which was missed will be counted as the equivalent of regular attendance in class.

Upon returning to school following a properly excused absence, tardiness, or early departure, it will be the responsibility of the student to consult with his or her teacher(s) regarding arrangements to make up missed work, assignments, and/or tests in accordance with the time schedule specified by the teacher.

**Notice of Attendance Policy**

In order to ensure that parents or persons in parental relation and students are informed of the District's policy regarding attendance, and the implementation of specific intervention strategies to be employed to support student academic success, the following guidelines will be followed:

(Continued)

Students

**SUBJECT: COMPREHENSIVE STUDENT ATTENDANCE (Cont'd.)**

- a) Copies of the District's Comprehensive Student Attendance Policy will be made available to parents or persons in parental relation and provided to students, upon request, posted on the District's website, and made available in the main office of each school.
- b) A designated staff member will notify, by telephone or email, the parent or person in parental relation to a student who is absent, tardy, or departs early without proper excuse.

**Intervention Strategies**

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

- a) The principal, assistant principal and/or school counselor will identify specific element(s) of the absence pattern (e.g., grade level, time frame, type of absence, tardiness or early departure);
- b) The principal, assistant principal and/or school counselor will meet with the student to discuss specific attendance concerns and the root causes that may be contributing to the absenteeism, as well as resources and support to assist parents and students to meet the expectations for consistent attendance;
- c) The principal, assistant principal and/or school counselor will contact the student and parent/person in parental relation to discuss attendance concern and strategies to improve attendance patterns, including resources and support to assist parents and students to meet the expectations for consistent attendance;
- d) The principal, assistant principal and/or school counselor will monitor student attendance patterns and keep data; and
- e) The principal assistant principal and/or school counselor will continue to monitor attendance patterns and updates strategies if attendance concerns persist.

If deemed necessary by appropriate school officials, or if requested by the parent or person in parental relation, a school conference will be scheduled between the parent or person in parental relation and appropriate staff members in order to address the student's attendance. The student may also be requested to attend this conference in order to address appropriate intervention strategies that best meet the needs of the student.

**Disciplinary Consequences**

While disciplinary consequences may be necessary to address absenteeism, the first priority is to identify root causes that may be contributing to absenteeism and to provide resources and support to students and parents to improve attendance. In the event disciplinary consequences are required to address absenteeism (i.e., unexcused absences, tardiness, and early departures) the District will follow the provisions set forth in the *Code of Conduct*.

(Continued)

Students

**SUBJECT: COMPREHENSIVE STUDENT ATTENDANCE (Cont'd.)**

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.

**Appeal Process**

A parent or person in parental relation may request a building level review of his or her child's attendance record. The Principal is the final arbiter in hearing appeals related to attendance and the classification of absences as excused or unexcused.

**Building Review of Attendance Records**

The building principal 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 unexcused absences, tardiness, and early departures.

**Review by the Board of Education**

The Board may periodically review the building-level student attendance records and if those 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 will promote 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 upon request and posting it on the district's website.
- b) Providing each teacher, at the beginning of the school year or upon employment, with a copy of the policy; and
- c) Providing digital access to the policy to the community by posting it on the district website.

Education Law §§ 3024, 3025, 3202, 3205, 3206, 3210, 3211, and 3213  
8 NYCRR §§ 104.1, 109.2, and 175.6

NOTE: Refer also to Policy #7131 -- Education of Homeless Children and Youth

Adoption Date: May 2, 2018