

## 5200 ATTENDANCE (M)

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The Barnegat Township School District has an obligation to require that students be present in school in order that they may be taught the academic and social skills needed to function in a productive society. This policy is for the benefit of the students, their parents, and the community at large.

Student participation in all regularly scheduled classroom learning activities in each area is essential in order for each student to receive the maximum benefits of a thorough educational program. The entire process of education requires a regular continuity of instruction, classroom participation, learning experiences, and study. The regular contact of students 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.

Therefore, the Barnegat Township School District cannot condone or encourage absenteeism by students. Students who miss class for any reason must complete assignments missed because of their absence. The Barnegat Township School District, however, recognizes that the schools are run for the benefit of the students, and every effort shall be made, therefore, to identify the habitual truant, and investigate the cause(s) of his/her behavior.

The Barnegat Township School District recognizes that parent contact by school personnel with respect to student attendance is highly desirable as a method to both inform and assist parents in assuring their children's regular attendance in school. The Barnegat Board of Education encourages that, as appropriate, such parent contact is made and maintained.

The Superintendent shall promulgate regulations to ensure that the intent of this policy is carried out.

Unexcused absences from school or from classes within the school day may subject a student to consequences that may include denial of a student's participation in co-curricular activities and/or athletic competition. Repeated absences from school interfere with efforts of this Board and its staff in the maintenance of good order and the continuity of classroom instruction and such absences may result in the removal of a student from a class or course of study.

The Superintendent shall calculate and monitor the average daily attendance rate for the district and for each school in the district. Whenever the average daily attendance rate



does not meet the New Jersey Department of Education requirements the Superintendent or designee shall develop a district improvement plan to improve student attendance pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:30-5.2.

In accordance with administrative policy of the Barnegat Township School District, the following regulations are promulgated:

- A. The Principal or designee of each school shall require from the parent of each student a written statement of the reason for the absence. The Principal or designee shall take whatever means are necessary to assure the validity of all written reasons for absences.
- B. If no valid written statement as to the reason for the absence is submitted, on return to school the student may be considered truant and the parent(s) so notified. It is the responsibility of the Principal or designee to assure him/herself that notification has been made. Any student who fails to notify the school, by the second day after the student returns to school, may be assigned detention until a note is provided.
- C. All students absent, regardless of the reason, must complete assignments which, in the professional opinion of the teacher, are necessary to assure the continuity of the instructional program.
- D. Each Building Principal or designee is responsible for making the student and the student's parent(s) aware of the home bound instruction and supplemental instruction program available when the absence is beyond the student's or parent(s) control.
- E. A student who is absent from school for observing a religious holiday shall not be deprived of an award or eligibility to compete for an award, or deprived the right to take an alternate test or examination that was missed because of the absence provided there is a written excuse of such absence signed by the parent.
- F. Any child absent from school due to a communicable disease (regardless of the number of days) must present a doctor's certificate before he/she may return to school.
- G. All students with communicable or contagious diseases or illnesses shall be excluded from school and may return after examination by or approval of the school nurse or upon receipt of a doctor's certificate.



- H. The parent(s) will have an opportunity to submit documentation for all absences. In the event of a long term or recurring illness, the parent(s) must present written substantiation of such an illness from a medical doctor, psychologist, or psychiatrist indicating that the student was medically or physically unable to attend school on the specific dates indicated.
- I. Prolonged or repeated absences, excused or unexcused, from school or from class, deprive students of the educational and classroom experiences deemed essential to learning and may result in retention at grade level.

### Attendance Intervention

Parent(s) must call the school regarding student absence. Based on daily attendance, school officials will attempt to notify parent(s) if a child is absent without explanation from parent(s).

When a student reaches the following number of days absent, these actions will take place:

1. Five Days: Parents receive a letter explaining attendance policy guidelines and return a signed acknowledgement. Parent conferences may be held. If parents do not respond to the first letter, a second letter will be sent via Certified Mail.
2. Ten Days: Parent in-school conference. Create Attendance Action Plan for improved attendance. If no improvement demonstrated, Principal may, at any time, make a referral to the Court Program Administrator of the NJ Administrative Office of the Courts.
3. Eighteen Days: Mandatory referral by Principal to the Court program for truancy and parents are informed that attendance will be a factor in promotion/retention.

At the Principals' discretion, based on excessive absences, a legal notice (State Department of Education Form A59), can be sent to the parent(s), and/or charges may be filed in Municipal Court for a violation of N.J.S.A. 18A:38-25, 18A:31.

A student must attend at least four (4) hours in the morning or at least four (4) hours in the afternoon to be marked present for a full day. A student must attend at least two (2) hours in the morning or at least two (2) hours in the afternoon to be marked present for a half day. Any absenteeism will require a written notification from the parent(s) doctor. On early dismissal days, a student must be present for four hours to be marked present for a full day and must be present for two hours in order to be present for a half day.



## Acceptable Reasons for Absence

1. Personal illness or injury;
2. Medical appointments;
3. Family emergencies;
4. Court appearances;
5. Serious illness or death in the immediate family; and
6. Religious holiday as presented by the New Jersey State Department of Education.

Absences other than illness or emergencies are inadvisable. Regular participation in classroom activities is an essential part of our educational program and no amount of make-up work can replace it.

The Attendance Officer and/or Principal/Principal designee will begin intervention if a student is tardy four times in a month or ten times in a five-month period.

The Superintendent shall develop procedures for the attendance of students which:

1. Ensure a school session which is in conformity with the requirements of the rules of the State Board;
2. Identify potentially missing and/or abused students;
3. Govern the keeping of attendance records in accordance with rules of the State Board, including students serving in- or out-of-school suspensions, or excluded for cleanliness reasons;
4. Impose on truant students such disciplinary measures as may be appropriate for infractions of school regulations, but no such penalty may have an irredeemable negative effect on the student's record of achievement beyond that which naturally follows his/her absence from school activities;
5. Identify the habitual truant, investigate the causes of his/her behavior, and consider modification of his/her educational program to meet his/her particular needs and interests;
6. Address tardiness and class cutting in terms of the intent of this policy;



7. Ensure that students absent for any reason have an opportunity to make up work they missed; and
8. Recognize exemplary attendance.

N.J.S.A. 18A:36-14 et seq.; 18A:38-25 et seq.

N.J.S.A. 34:2-21.1 et seq.

N.J.A.C. 6A:16-7.8; 6:20-1.1 et seq

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