

STUDENT ATTENDANCE

I. Philosophy

The Board of Education, in accordance with Section 104.1 (c) of the Regulations of the Commissioner of Education, establishes this comprehensive attendance policy. The objectives of this policy are to ensure the maintenance of an adequate record verifying the attendance of all children, to establish a mechanism to examine patterns of pupil absence and to develop effective intervention strategies to improve school attendance.

II. Policy

The Board, administration and staff of the district recognize that regular classroom attendance is an essential part of a successful educational program and that there is a critical relationship between academically engaged time and student performance.

III. Expectations for Good Attendance

A. 1. Students are expected to attend scheduled classes. The insistence on good attendance serves as a clear and constant reminder of the importance of attendance in instruction, enabling the student to:

- Learn subject matter and earn good grades
- Develop responsible work and study habits, and
- Prepare for the world of work

2. Under New York State Education Law Section 3205, parents are responsible for the regular attendance of their children for instruction.

B. Absences

1. Excused

Section 175.6 of the Commissioner's regulations define the following as "excused absences:" personal illness, serious illness of death in the family, impassable roads or weather, religious observance, quarantine, court appearances, attendance at health clinics, approved cooperative work programs, approved college visits, military obligations, disciplinary detention of an incarcerated youth or any other reason approved by the Commissioner.

2. Unexcused

Most absences not mentioned above are interpreted under the law as “unexcused absences” including but not limited to vacation, shopping, babysitting, oversleeping, needed at home, or missing the bus. Any reason not listed as excused shall be deemed unexcused unless the Building Principal determines otherwise.

3. All instances of absences (full-day, tardy, or leaving early) require a written parent/guardian note. The excuse must identify the date/time of absence, reason for absence, and be signed by a parent/guardian.

IV. Responsibility for Good Attendance

Successful implementation of this policy requires cooperation among all members of the educational community, including parents, students, teachers, administrators and all staff members.

A. Parent/Guardian Responsibilities

1. It is the responsibility of parents/guardians to ensure that their children attend school regularly and on time.
2. When a student is absent, tardy, or leaving early from school, parents/guardians must contact the school to report the absence and provide the appropriate written excuse.
3. District may require a written doctor's excuses after five (5) consecutive absences.
4. Parents are required to provide their current home address, telephone number, emergency number(s) and a list of adults to contact in their absence.

B. Student Responsibilities

1. Students must attend school daily and be on time.
2. Students must attend all classes and are expected to participate fully.
3. Students are expected to make timely arrangements with their teachers to make up assignments and class work they have missed during their absence.

C. Teacher/Staff Responsibilities

1. Teachers are responsible for maintaining accurate attendance reports. Period/subject attendance shall be submitted throughout the day in the Student Management System. Teachers shall inform the appropriate personnel (Nurse, Attendance, Main Office) if they have a child who should be present in their class, but who is absent.
2. Teachers shall refer students who are chronically absent (attendance rate 85% or less) to their Building Principal or Designee.
3. Teachers with the support of other appropriate staff members (e.g. the school nurse, social worker, guidance counselor, and attendance officer) shall be responsible for preliminary contact with parents and students to assess a situation of absenteeism and devise a plan of improvement.
4. Teachers and school personnel will continually stress to students the importance of promptness and regular attendance in all of their classes. Teachers can make a difference in the attendance habits of their students. (Phone calls to parents or guardians supporting attendance expectations are encouraged).

D. Administrative Responsibilities

1. The District shall maintain a register of attendance for each pupil which includes the student's name, date of birth, home address, names of parents/guardians, telephone numbers to contact parents/guardians, date of enrollment, record of pupil's attendance on days of instruction, and the date of withdrawal or date dropped from enrollment.
2. The Principal or Designee is responsible for implementing the attendance policy.
3. The Principal or Designee is responsible for identifying students who require alternative services and/or programs for absences or tardiness.

V. Activities to Support Good Attendance

- A. The implementation of an effective and efficient student attendance system that is accurately recorded, consistently maintained and fairly administered.
- B. The provision of prompt service to pupils in need of help as soon as a need is suspected.
- C. The establishment of cooperative relationships between parents and other members of the staff in the interest of the child.

- D. The establishment of cooperative relationships with other community agencies which serve families of pupils with attendance problems.
- E. The maintenance of an effective policy that encourages student attendance and is in compliance with the commissioner's regulations and rulings.

VI. Intervention

- A. The objective of intervention strategies is to identify the cause(s) of absenteeism, to reduce absenteeism and to circumvent the need for action in the courts (PINS petitions).
- B. At progress report and report card times, attendance reports will be generated (cumulative from the start of the year). Students will then be placed into one of the 3 tiers listed below, based on the percentage of days they have missed (full days). The building's Attendance Committee (made up of Building Principal, Nurse, Social Worker(s), and School Counselor, other(s)) will provide appropriate interventions to students.

Tier I - Students with normal, expected attendance (100%-92%)	Tier II - Students that are at-risk (91%-86%)	Tier III - Students who are chronically absent (attendance rate 85% or less)
<p>Possible Interventions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Attendance report/letter with each child's progress report and report card, stating which tier they fall in ● Daily call if parent hasn't informed the school of the absence ● If the absenteeism is due to an extensive illness, home or hospital instruction is available 	<p>Possible Interventions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● All tier I interventions ● Parent contact, phone call or meeting ● Inform parent and child of potential consequences if child moves to tier III ● Meeting with child ● Encourage child to get involved in extracurricular activities ● Match the child with a mentor ● Attempt to understand and address the reasons for absenteeism ● Discipline for unexcused absences 	<p>Possible Interventions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● All tier I and II interventions ● Creation of attendance action plan (which may include counseling, home visit, mentor, daily phone calls by a person, alternative transportation) ● PINS petition ● CPS call ● loss of privileges

- C. Please refer to the Athletic Code for attendance requirements that pertain to athletic participation.

VII. Incentives

The Commissioner has recommended that all Districts implement an incentive program to improve attendance.

A. Building-Wide

- a. Campaign encouraging attendance - examples include visuals, posting building attendance rates, bulletin board, stickers, etc.

B. Student Basis

We are aware that there are times when children are ill, and we do not want to encourage a 100% attendance policy at the cost of a healthy school environment. In addition, we want children to have a fresh start each report card time frame, so the attendance rate calculation for incentive purposes will not be cumulative and will be run each marking period. Students who have 95% or better attendance each marking period may be eligible for the following:

- a. Exceptional Attendance Award
- b. Having their name placed into a drawing for prize(s) and/or fun event(s)
- c. Earning other additional privileges

VIII. Coding System for Absences

Refer to IIIB for excused and unexcused reasons.

Attendance is entered into the Student Management System as Excused or Unexcused, full day, in late (tardy), or out (early dismissal).

IX. Notification

Written notification to parents concerning students' absences, tardiness or early departures, will include information that resource/support personnel are available.

X. Implementation and Review

- A. The Superintendent shall review building level pupil attendance records and if such records show a decline in pupil attendance the Board shall make any revisions deemed necessary to improve pupil attendance.
- B. The Superintendent shall establish a means to provide a plain language summary of this policy to parents/persons in parental relation at the beginning of each school year and take other steps to promote the understanding of such policy.
- C. The Superintendent shall provide each teacher with a copy of this policy after approval/amendment and provide new teachers with a copy upon employment.

D. Copies of this policy shall be made available upon request to any member of the community.