

High School Attendance & Attendance Recovery FAQ

Stamford High & Westhill High School

School attendance and the consequences for excessive absences are governed by State of Connecticut law and Stamford Board of Education Policy [5113](#) and Regulation [5113A-R](#).

Regulation 5113A-R was recently updated to include a progressive discipline framework for students who exceed absence limits in a quarter or school year, regardless of their earned grades.

To assist families understand the updates to BOE Policy 5113A-R, following are answers to common questions about attendance, absences, tardies, and attendance recovery.

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Q. Why is it important for my child to attend school every day?

- Research shows that regular school attendance is a critical factor in student achievement.
- Regular attendance ensures that students have consistent access to educational opportunities, which are critical for their academic success and personal development.
- Regular attendance fosters a structured learning environment, promotes the acquisition of essential knowledge and skills, and enhances social and emotional growth.
- By attending school consistently, students are better prepared for post-secondary education, the workforce, and active, informed citizenship.

Q. Do I have to send my child to school every day?

- Yes, Connecticut State Law requires parents/guardians to ensure their children, ages 5 through 18, attend school regularly during the school year.

Q: What are unexcused, excused, and exempt absences? How do these absences impact students and count toward the quarterly and cumulative absence limits?

- An **unexcused absence** is when a student misses class without permission from a parent or guardian. Unexcused absences count toward both the quarterly and cumulative absence counts. Students with unexcused absences will not be permitted to make up missed work.
- An **excused absence** is when a parent provides documentation stating they are aware their student missed school. Excused absences count toward both the quarterly and cumulative absence counts unless the absence is exempt. Students with excused absences will be permitted to make up missed work as indicated by the teacher syllabus.
- For the purposes of Regulation 5113A-R, an **exempt absence** is an absence that does NOT count toward the quarterly or cumulative absence limits. The following are considered exempt absences:
 - **Long Term Student Illness.** Must be verified by a licensed medical professional to be deemed excused, regardless of the length of the absence.
 - **Religious Holiday.** Student's observance of a religious holiday must be documented with a parent/guardian note.
 - **Mental Health Wellness Days.** Absences during which the student attends to such student's emotional and psychological well being in lieu of attending school. Such days shall not be consecutive, nor shall they exceed a total of two days per school year. Must be documented with a parent/guardian note.
 - **Bereavement** (or other emergency beyond the control of the student's family). Documentation must be provided by the parent/guardian.
 - **Mandated Court Appearance.** Official documentation required

- **Lack of Transportation** that is normally provided by a district other than the one the student attends (no parental documentation required).
- **Field Trips, School-Related Activities, or Testing.** Absences relating to school activities may include, but are not limited to, field trips, early dismissal to participate in athletic events, meetings with school personnel, and mandated testing.
- **Extraordinary Educational Opportunities.** Must be pre-approved by District administration and to be in accordance with Connecticut State Department of Education guidance.
- **Awaiting Medical.**
- **Out of School Suspension/In-School Suspension.**

Q: How many classes is my student allowed to miss before requiring Attendance Recovery?

- Attendance is divided by quarter.
- There are 4 quarters in a school year.
- For full year courses that meet every other day, students are allowed **3 absences per quarter (12 for the school year)**.
- For classes that meet every day, students are allowed **5 absences per quarter (20 for the school year)**.

Q: Do all absences require documentation?

- Yes, the State of Connecticut requires that all student absences be documented.
- Documentation, if submitted within 10 days of the absence, will permit students to make up work per teacher expectations. Undocumented absences will result in additional intervention.

Q: How do I submit documentation to verify my child's absence?

- Parent notes and other documentation may be uploaded to a school-based form. Forms will be reviewed, documented, and the absence will be updated to “excused” which allows for makeup work to be completed via the teacher syllabus.
- [SHS Form](#) to submit documentation.

Q: Why does it matter if students are late to class (tardy)?

- Arriving on time enables students to hear instructions and prepare for the day's lesson. Tardy arrivals disrupt the learning environment for everyone in the class. Students are required to be seated in class when the transition late bell rings. Students that enter after the late bell are considered tardy.

Q: What are unexcused and excused tardies? How do these tardies impact students' attendance total for each quarter/school year?

- Tardies are **unexcused** when a student arrives after the late bell without a pass. Four (4) unexcused tardies will count as 1 unexcused absence toward the student's total quarterly and cumulative absence limit.
- Tardies are **excused** when a student arrives after the late bell with a pass from a school official. Administrators, service providers, school counselors, MTSS staff, the school nurse, or the athletic director can issue a late pass. Excused tardies do NOT count toward quarterly and cumulative absence limits.

Q: How will I know if my student is at risk of exceeding the allowed absences for the quarter or the school year?

- Parents and students can check absences and tardies at any time in [PowerSchool](#). Absences and tardies are updated in real time as soon as they are recorded by a teacher or staff member. You can set up the PowerSchool Mobile App for [iOS](#) and [Android](#) to receive notifications whenever an absence or tardy is recorded.
- Automated phone calls and emails are sent by PowerSchool when a student is reported absent. Please make sure your contact information is up-to-date in PowerSchool to receive these communications.
- Weekly attendance reports will be provided to counselors and school administrators to monitor student absences and tardies.
- Mid Quarter Progress Reports will also be utilized to report on student attendance.

Q: What happens if my student goes over the attendance allotment for a quarter?

- Students who exceed the quarterly or cumulative absence limit in a course but have earned a passing grade will be required to enter an Attendance Recovery period to retain their passing grade.

Q: What is Attendance Recovery and what has to be done?

- Attendance Recovery holds students accountable for their absences and encourages more consistent attendance going forward. Attendance Recovery will allow students to have their **earned quarter/end-of-year passing grade** reinstated for classes where the attendance policy was breached. The requirements and interventions associated with Attendance Recovery increase with each marking period a student exceeds the absence limit.

Q: What are the "tiers" of the intervention available to students?

- Attendance Recovery is available to students who are **PASSING** a course (grade is a D- or higher), but have exceeded the absence limit for the quarter. *Students with a failing grade in a*

course are NOT eligible for Attendance Recovery and should see their counselor regarding Grade Recovery.

- The passing grade will be posted as **AGR (Attendance Grade Recovery)** on the student report card. **That grade will have a temporary value of 58.**
 - **Tier I (First Offense):**
 - The student will meet with the Multi Tiered Support Specialist (MTSS) and their school counselors to enter into a contract that will monitor attendance and or academic behaviors for a specified time period. The student must abide by all conditions of the contract to have their passing grade reinstated at the end of the specified time period.
 - **Tier II (Second Offense):**
 - Students who have exceeded the absence limits for a second marking period will enter a behavioral contract with their grade level administrator. A parent meeting will be scheduled to discuss ways we can work together to ensure that the student is attending school regularly. Interventions included in this second contract could include, but are not limited to: service learning, volunteering, tutoring (if needed), and school-based event participation. The student must abide by all conditions of the contract to have their passing grade reinstated at the end of the specified time period.
 - **Tier III (Third Offense):**
 - Students who have exceeded the absence limits for a third marking period will be required to make up class time by completing additional online coursework in Edgenuity. Coursework may include, but is not limited to: strategies for time management, strategies for organization, strategies for social emotional learning, etc. Students will be required to complete coursework that reflects the amount of class time missed due to absences.
- Students may enter into the Attendance Recovery process at **any time after exceeding the absence limit for a quarter. Students do NOT need to wait until the end of the quarter to enter into an Attendance Recovery contract.**
- When a student successfully completes the requirements for Attendance Recovery, the classroom teacher will be notified and the student's earned letter and number grade will be reinstated in their student record.
- If a student does NOT complete the Attendance Recovery requirements, the 58 will remain averaged into the student's end-of-year grade, and the AGR letter grade will be updated to an F.

Q: What if a student is over the attendance allotment for a quarter AND has an F in the class?

- Students who are failing a course and have exceeded the absence limit should see their counselor about participating in Grade Recovery through the Edgenuity online platform.

- Successfully completing Grade Recovery will also result in Attendance Recovery.

Q: We are planning a family vacation and my child will be absent from school for 5 days. Will they need to participate in Attendance Recovery?

- Absences for family travel count toward the absence limits. For instance, a student with passing grades and no other absences who misses a week of school for a family vacation would trigger the Attendance Recovery process on day 4. Students who will be out of school for planned family travel/vacations should speak with their guidance counselor in advance to create a plan for recovering any lost time that would trigger the Attendance Recovery process.

Q: My student is registered to play a sport. How does attendance affect his/her eligibility requirements?

- Students must maintain a Grade Point Average (GPA) of 1.7 or higher and pass a minimum of 5 classes to be eligible to participate in sports as a Stamford Public Schools athlete.
- Athletes should **enter into Attendance Recovery contracts as soon as possible** to ensure that their requirements for grade recovery are met before eligibility is finalized.
- If a student-athlete receives a letter grade of AGR (Attendance Grade Recovery) in a course, it will be considered an incomplete grade for 10 days after report cards are issued (per CIAC rules), at which time eligibility for the quarter will be finalized
 - If the Attendance Recovery contract expectations are met, a student's earned letter and number grade(s) will be reinstated for the class(es) affected, and their eligibility status assessed based on those earned grades.
 - If the Attendance Recovery contract expectations are NOT met, the affected course(s) will reflect an F/58 grade and 0 credit earned when calculating the student's eligibility status.