7110	Comprehensive Attendance Policy

The Board of Education of the Ballston Spa Central School District recognizes that student attendance in school is an important component of student success. Through implementation of this policy, the Board expects to minimize the number of absences (excused and unexcused), tardiness, and early departures, encourage full attendance by all students, maintain an adequate attendance recordkeeping system, identify patterns of student absences and develop effective intervention strategies to improve school attendance.

The district encourages all students to attend school daily. Satisfactory attendance is attending ninety-five percent or more of school over the course of the year. A student will be considered chronically absent if they miss ten percent or more of the school year. An absence is recorded regardless of the reason being "excused" or "unexcused." The District is an active partner with students and parents in the task of ensuring that all students meet or exceed the New York State Learning Standards. Because the District recognizes that consistent school attendance, academic success, and school completion have a positive correlation, the District has developed, and, if necessary, will revise a Comprehensive Student Attendance Policy to meet the following objectives:

a. To increase school completion for all students;

b. To raise student achievement and close gaps in student performance;

c. To identify attendance patterns in order to design attendance improvement efforts;

d. To know the whereabouts of every student for safety and other reasons;

e. To verify that individual students are complying with education laws relating to ` compulsory attendance;

f. To determine the District's average daily attendance for state aid purposes.

Notice

To be successful in this endeavor, it is imperative that all members of the school community are aware of this policy, its purpose, procedures and the consequences of non-compliance. To ensure that students, parents, teachers and administrators are notified of and understand this policy, the following procedures shall be implemented.

- This policy will be posted on the District's website.
- A plain language summary of this attendance policy will be included in student handbooks and will be reviewed with students at the start of the school year.
- Parents will receive a plain language summary of this policy by mail at the start of the school year. Parents will be asked to sign and return a statement indicating that they have read and understand the policy.

7110	Comprehensive Attendance Policy

- Events will be held at the beginning of each school year to emphasize that every day of attendance counts, explain this policy, and stress the parent's responsibility for ensuring their children's attendance.
- School newsletters and publications will include periodic reminders of the components of this policy.
- The district will provide a copy of the attendance policy and any amendments thereto to faculty and staff. New staff will receive a copy upon their employment.
- All faculty and staff will meet at the beginning of each school year to review the attendance policy to clarify individual roles in its implementation.
- Copies of this policy will also be made available to any community member, upon request.
- When a student is absent, tardy, or leaves early from class or school without excuse, designated staff member(s) will notify the student's parent(s) by phone and mail of the specific absence, remind them of the attendance policy, and review specific intervention procedures with them.

Excused and Unexcused Absences

Both excused and unexcused absences are counted when calculating the total number of days absent a student accumulates to be considered "chronically absent."
Absences, tardiness, and early departures from class or school are defined as Excused due to:

- Personal illness
- Illness or death in the family
- Unsafe roads or inclement weather
- Religious observance
- Quarantine/Isolation
- Required court appearances
- Medical/dental appointments
- Approved school sponsored activity
- Approved college visits
- Approved cooperative work programs
- Military obligations
- Or such other reasons as may be approved by the appropriate building administrator (including, but not limited to, absences due to circumstances related to homelessness).

An absence is considered Unexcused if the reason for the absence does not fall into a category listed above. Examples of unexcused absences include:

- Oversleeping
- Babysitting
- Sibling drop-off or pick-up from school
- Lack of required immunizations
- Missed the bus

- Late parent/guardian drop-off
- Lack of proper clothing/personal care
- Truant
- Obtaining a learner's permit/road test
- Employment
- Vacations during school days

All student absences must be accounted for. It is the responsibility of the parent or guardians of the student to notify the school office by telephone prior to or the morning of the absence. As a follow up to any oral notification, parents or guardians of the student shall provide a written or e-mailed excuse within five (5) school days containing the date of the absence and the reason. A doctor's note verifying an absence is required after five (5) consecutive days of absences. Lengthy or frequent absences with notes may be subject to inquiry. If a doctor's note is not submitted after five (5) days, the absence will be marked unexcused. For homeless students, the homeless liaison will assist the student in providing or obtaining documentation if needed.

General Procedures/Data Collection

- Attendance in each school building shall be recorded as follows:
  -Elementary schools will take attendance once per school day
  -Middle and High School in each period of scheduled instruction
- At the conclusion of each class period or school day, all attendance information shall be compiled and provided to the designated staff member(s) responsible for attendance.
- The nature of an absence shall be coded on a student's record.
- Student attendance data shall be available to and should be reviewed by the designated school personnel in an expeditious manner.
- Where additional information is received that requires corrections to be made to a student's attendance records, such correction will be made immediately. Notice of such a change will be sent to appropriate school personnel subject to applicable confidentiality rules.
- Attendance data will be analyzed periodically to identify patterns or trends in student absences. If patterns emerge, district resources will be targeted to understand and eliminate barriers to attendance.
- (Frequent) monitoring will be conducted to identify students who are absent, tardy, or leave class or school early.
- If a pattern of chronic absenteeism for an individual student is identified a designated staff person(s) will follow-up in accordance with this policy.

Intervention Strategy Process

In order to effectively intervene when an identified pattern of chronic absenteeism occurs, designated District personnel will review at the building level attendance committee meeting. A referral may be initiated to the Multi-Tiered Systems of Supports (MTSS) to pursue solutions to root causes of the

7110	Comprehensive Attendance Policy

pattern (e.g., grade level, building time frame, type of absences, tardiness or early departures); including conversation with the student and/or the parent/guardian.

Disciplinary Consequences

A designated staff member(s) will contact the student's parent(s)/guardian(s) in the event that a student's record reveals excessive absences, excused and/or unexcused. Such staff member(s) shall remind parents of the attendance policy, explain the ramifications of chronic absenteeism, stress the importance of class attendance and discuss appropriate intervention strategies to correct the situation. In addition, the designated staff member will contact local Child Protective Services (CPS) if they suspect that the child is being educationally neglected consistent with Regulation 5460-r, Child Abuse in a Domestic Setting, and advise the Pupil Personnel Services Department.

Annual Review

The Board of Education shall annually review the District student attendance and the student attendance records for each school building. Should such records demonstrate a decline in student attendance, the Board shall revise the comprehensive attendance procedures and make any revisions to the plan deemed necessary to improve student attendance. The Board shall provide any such amendment to the comprehensive attendance procedures in writing to each staff member no later than thirty (30) days after adoption of the amendment.

42 USC §11432(g)(1)(I) (McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act)
Education Law §§1709; 3024; 3025; 3202; 3205-3213; 3225
8 NYCRR §§104.1; 175.6
Social Service Law §34-a
NYS Law §5460-r

Adoption Date: