STUDENT ATTENDANCE

The Board of Education recognizes that regular school attendance is a major component of academic success. Through implementation of this policy, the Board expects to minimize the number of unexcused absences, tardiness, and early departures (referred to in this policy as "ATEDs"), encourage full attendance by all students, maintain an adequate attendance recordkeeping system, identify patterns of student ATEDs and develop effective intervention strategies to improve school attendance.

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 will be implemented.

- A plain language summary of this attendance policy will be reviewed with students at the start of the school year.
- Parents will receive a plain language summary of this policy electronically via ParentSquare at the start of the school year. Parents will be asked to electronically verify a statement indicating that they have read and understand the policy.
- When a student is absent, tardy, or leaves early from class or school without excuse, parent(s) will be notified by phone and/or through ParentSquare.
- A back-to-school event 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.
- The district will share this policy with local Child Protective Services (CPS) to ensure a common understanding of excused and unexcused ATED's and to work toward identifying and addressing cases of educational neglect.
- This policy is applicable to students receiving home teaching for medical or disciplinary reasons.

Excused and Unexcused Absences

Excused ATEDs are defined as absences, tardiness, and early departures from class or school due to personal illness, illness or death in the family, impassable roads or weather, religious observance under rules established by education law, quarantine, required presence in court attendance at health clinics, approved school-supervised field trips, 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).

All other ATEDs are considered unexcused absences.

All ATEDs must be accounted for. It is the parent's responsibility to notify the school office within 24 hours of the ATED and to provide a written excuse upon the student's return to school. For homeless students, the homeless liaison will assist the student in providing or obtaining documentation if needed.

General Procedures/Data Collection

- Attendance will be taken during each class period.
- At the conclusion of each class period or school day, all attendance information will be compiled and provided to the designated staff member(s) responsible for attendance.
- The nature of an ATED will be coded on a student's record.
- Student ATED data will be available and must 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 corrections 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.
- Continuous monitoring will be conducted to identify students who are absent, tardy, or leave class or school early. A student will be considered chronically absent if they miss ten percent or more of the school year. Satisfactory attendance is missing five percent or less of school over the course of the year. If a pattern of ATED's for an individual student is identified a designated staff person(s) will follow-up in accordance with this policy.

Attendance Incentives

The district will design and implement systems to acknowledge a student's efforts to maintain or improve school attendance. For example:

- At the building and classroom levels, Building Principals and teachers are encouraged to schedule special events (quizzes, game days, debates, etc.) for days of chronically high absenteeism, like Mondays and Fridays.
- At the classroom levels, teachers are encouraged to assign special responsibilities (distributing and collect materials, lead groups, assist the teacher, etc.) to students who may need extra motivation to come to school.
- At all grade levels, improving the school climate through student surveys in order to provide a safe, supportive school environment and engage students in school.
- Engaging students and families determine whether systemic barriers to attendance exist for students and develop solutions to remove those barriers.

Consequences of Excessive ATEDs

An Attendance Teacher or staff member(s) designated by the principal will contact the student's parents and the student's guidance counselor in the event that a student's record reveals excessive ATED's, excused and/or unexcused. Excessive ATED's is defined as: 18 or more absences per year. Staff member(s) will remind parents of the attendance policy, explain the ramifications of excessive ATEDs, stress the importance of class attendance and discuss appropriate intervention strategies to correct the situation. Students identified as chronically absent will be considered for a mentor program.

Unexcused ATEDs may result in disciplinary action consistent with the district's code of conduct. Those penalties may include, for example, detention or denial of the privilege of participating in or attending extracurricular events. However, absences related to homelessness will not result in negative consequences where the district determines that it would be in the best interests of the student to retain the student in school.

In addition, the designated staff member will contact local Child Protective Services (CPS) if they suspect that the child is being educationally neglected. The designated staff member will provide CPS with the information necessary to initiate a report. If other staff members suspect education neglect, they must follow the procedures outlined in Board policy and regulation 5460, Child Abuse in a Domestic Setting, and advise the Coordinator of Registration and Census.

Attendance/Grade Policy

The Board of Education recognizes an important relationship between class attendance and student performance. Consequently, each marking period a student's final grade may be based on classroom participation as well as student performance on homework, tests, papers, projects, etc.

Students are expected to attend all scheduled classes. Consistent with the importance of classroom participation, unexcused ATEDs will affect a student's class participation grade for the marking period.

At the high school level, any student with more than nine unexcused ATEDs for one-half year or 18 unexcused ATEDs for a full year may not receive credit for that course. However, students with properly excused ATEDs may make up the work for each ATED, and those ATEDs will not count toward the minimum attendance standard. Teachers will still have final discretion on student grades.

To ensure that parents and students are aware of the implications of this minimum attendance requirement, the teacher, principal, or other staff member(s) designated by the principal will advise the student and contact the parent(s) by telephone and mail at appropriate intervals prior to the student reaching nine or 18 unexcused ATEDs.
In implementing the policy set forth above, students who are unable to attend school or a class on a given day due to their participation in a school-sponsored activity (i.e., music

lessons, field trips), may arrange with their teachers to make up any work missed. This also applies to any student who is absent, tardy or leaves early from school or a class due to illness or any other excused reason.

All students with an excused ATED are expected upon their return to consult with their teachers regarding missed work.

Only those students with excused ATEDs will be given the opportunity to make up a test or other missed work and/or turn in a late assignment for inclusion in their final grade. Make up opportunities must be completed by a date specified by the student's teacher for the class in question.

ATTENDANCE SCHOOL/ATHLETICS

Student-athletes accumulating three (3) unexcused absences during an athletic season will be placed on probation, will have to meet with an Academic Review Committee and will be placed on a weekly log.

Two (2) unexcused lateness's will equal one (1) absence. Those with six (6) unexcused lateness's will meet with an Academic Review Committee and be placed on a weekly log.

Continued illegal or unexcused absences may result in disqualification from all extracurricular activities and sports for an imposed period, potentially up to the remainder of the school year at the administrator's discretion.

Annual Review

The Board will annually review building-level student attendance records and, if such records show a decline in student attendance, the Board will revise this comprehensive attendance policy and make any revisions to the plan it deems necessary to improve student attendance.

Cross ref:
4710, Grading Systems
5151, Homeless Children
5300, Code of Conduct
5460, Child Abuse in a Domestic Setting

Ref:
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

STUDENT ATTENDANCE

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