Student Attendance

Regular and punctual school attendance is essential for success in school. The Webster Public School Committee does recognize that parents of children attending our schools have special rights as well as responsibilities, one of which is to ensure that their children attend school regularly, in accordance with state law.

Research indicates that early school attendance patterns is a critical factor in determining successful high school completion. Therefore, students may be excused temporarily from school attendance for only the following reasons:

1. Illness with a note from a medical provider indicating the specific dates of the excused absences.
2. Quarantine with a medical note indicating when the student may safely return to school.
3. Students sent home by the school nurse for medical reasons.
4. Bereavement with parent/guardian notification to the school.
5. Observance of major religious holidays not identified within the school calendar with parent/guardian notification to the school.
6. College visits by high school students with documentation supporting attendance at the college on a specific date. Not to exceed three college visits per academic year.

A child may also be excused for other exceptional reasons with approval of the school administrator. Family vacations scheduled within the school year that accrue student absences from school will not be excused.

A student's understanding of the importance of the day to day school work is an important factor in shaping his/her character. Parents and guardians can help their children by refusing to allow them to miss school needlessly.

Accordingly, parents and guardians will provide a written explanation of the absence and/or tardiness of a child to the school office on the day of the child's return to school. Whenever possible, this notification can be provided in advance of the absence or tardy in circumstances where advanced notice is possible. A student's late arrival or early dismissal from school in excess of 30 minutes on a given day or per period at the high school shall affect their overall attendance and academic progress.

In instances of chronic or irregular absence or tardiness reportedly due to illness, the school administration shall require a physician's statement certifying such absences are justifiable.

Students, who meet or exceed 30 days of absence or tardiness as outlined in this policy, shall be referred to the district attendance committee to determine the need for

retention and/or other remedial interventions to improve school attendance and address academic concerns.

Student Absence Notification Program

Each Principal or his/her designee will notify a student's parent/guardian within 3 days of the student's absence in the event the parent/guardian has not informed the school of the absence.

Each Principal or designee shall make a reasonable effort to meet with any student, and that student's parent/guardian, who has five (5) or more unexcused absences in a school year. The meeting shall be to develop action steps to improve student attendance and shall be developed jointly by the Principal or designee, the student, and the student's parent/guardian. The parties may seek input from other relevant school staff and/or officials from relevant public safety, health and human service, housing, and nonprofit agencies.

Dropout Prevention

No student who has not graduated from high school shall be considered permanently removed from school unless the Principal has sent notice to a student and that student's parent/guardian who has been absent from school for ten consecutive days of unexcused absence. The notice shall be sent within five days of the tenth consecutive day of absence and shall offer at least two dates and times within the next ten days for an exit interview with the Superintendent or designee, the student, and the student's parent/guardian. The notice shall be in both English and the primary language of the home if applicable. The notice shall include contact information for scheduling the exit interview and shall indicate the parties shall reach an agreement on the date/time of interview within a ten day timeframe. The timeframe may be extended at the request of the parent/guardian and no extension shall exceed 14 days.

The Superintendent or designee may proceed with any interview without a parent/guardian present, provided the Superintendent or designee has documented a good faith effort to include the parent/guardian.

The Superintendent or designee shall convene a team of staff members to participate in the exit interview and shall provide information to the student and, if applicable, the student's parent/guardian on the detrimental effects of early withdrawal from school and the alternative education programs and services available to the student.

LEGAL REFS.: M.G.L. 76:1; 76.1B; 76:16; 76:18; 76:20

Regulations

Webster Public Schools uses a tiered system of intervention for addressing student learning needs and behaviors, which includes the development of regular school attendance. The District will implement through a tiered system of support universal, targeted, and intensive levels of intervention. The district will implement:

1. **Universal Attendance Interventions (**1 to 5 days)
    a. By day 3 of absence, a letter home regarding attendance.
    b. Possible parent/guardian meeting to develop plan to address unexcused absences and impact to academic progress.

2. **Targeted Attendance Interventions (**6 to 10 days)
    Parent/Guardian meeting to develop a plan to make up for academic deficits resulting from absences from school. Outside support agencies shall be involved in these meetings inclusive, but not limited to, Dudley Juvenile District Court.
    Possible home visit by school administrator and School Resource Officer (SRO).
    Loss of academic credit at the high school level.*

3. **Intensive Attendance Interventions (**11 or more days)
    Home visit by school administrator and School Resource Officer (SRO).
    Parent/Guardian meeting to develop a plan to make up for academic deficits resulting from absences from school. Outside support agencies shall be involved in these meetings inclusive, but not limited to, Dudley Juvenile District Court.
    Consideration for filing a Child Requiring Assistance (CRA) and/or "Failure to Cause" as per court requirements.
    Notification of disenrollment after 15 consecutive days absent at the high school level.

Exceptions may be made for students enrolled in specialized programs or as indicated in the student's Individual Education Plan (IEP).

First Reading: September 9, 2025

Second Reading:

Third and Final Reading: