

5115 POLICY - Attendance

Regular attendance and active participation in class are integral parts of a student's total education. Students can achieve optimal educational benefits only through regular class attendance and a serious commitment to an educational program. Expecting good attendance fosters a habit that will be beneficial to the individual student throughout life, as school attendance patterns are often repeated in the work place. The Utica Community Schools considers absenteeism and tardiness a serious disruption to the educational process, not only for the student, but also for the teacher and the entire class. In order to protect the integrity of the classroom and to encourage students to establish good attendance attitudes and habits, students who are absent/tardy may be subject to disciplinary action by the school.

Attendance in school is the responsibility of the student and the parent(s)/guardian(s). The school's task is to provide instruction, encourage attendance and notify parent(s)/guardian(s) of absences from class. Exemplary class attendance should be the desired goal of students, parent(s)/guardian(s) and teachers.

Policy

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Board of Education Utica Community Schools

5115 RULES AND REGULATIONS - Attendance

Building administrators are responsible for enforcing the State of Michigan's Compulsory School Attendance Laws and reducing/preventing chronic absenteeism. U.S. Department of Education Civil Rights Data Collection defines chronic absenteeism as missing more than 10% of school days in a year. Building administrators enforce attendance laws and reduce/prevent chronic absenteeism by encouraging attendance through an effective and accountable attendance system. To ensure accountability, each school will adhere to the following attendance rules and regulations.

I. All Students

A. Student Responsibility

1. A student is to attend each scheduled class.
2. A student is to be on time and prepared for class.
3. The following reasons for an absence will be accepted as an excused absence. The absence will count in the student's overall attendance profile:
 - a. Student's illness
 - b. Hospitalization
 - c. Doctor ordered bed rest
 - d. Mandatory court appearance that has been pre-arranged
 - e. Death in the immediate family
 - f. Family vacation that has been pre-arranged and approved
 - g. Medical appointments
 - h. Administrative permission
4. When a student is absent, it is the student's/parent's/guardian's (depending on the child's age) responsibility to arrange for make-up work. Students, with the exception of pre-arranged absences in Junior High and High School, are given at minimum the same amount of time to make up the work as the amount of time they were absent.

B. Parent/Guardian Responsibility

1. On the day of absence, parent/guardian are asked to report an absence before the school day begins. Calls may be made 24 hours a day, seven days a week and will be received by an answering machine during non-school hours.
2. Parent/Guardians will be contacted about unexcused absences.
 - a. Elementary parent/guardians will be contacted by school personnel. In situations where a message is left, parent/guardians have until the end of the next school day to correct an absence if it is one of the reasons listed as an excusable absence.

- b. Secondary parent/guardians receive an automated message. Parents have until the end of the next school day to correct an absence if it is one of the reasons listed as an excusable absence.

3. Documentation or other verification may be required to establish an excused absence.

C. Teacher Responsibility

1. Teachers will accurately mark a student absent or tardy in the district's attendance system.
2. Many teachers incorporate a class participation component in their grading system. A student's grade may be adversely affected by unexcused absences. At the secondary, teachers may give zeros for assignments when students are unexcused absent or unexcused tardy (i.e. graded bell ringer activity).
3. Teachers are urged to contact parent/guardian when absences or tardies become problematic.

D. Student Illness

If a student becomes ill during the regular school day, he/she must report to the building assigned health room and a parent/guardian will be called. If a parent/guardian cannot be contacted, the student will remain in the health room until an emergency card contact can be made. All classes missed will count toward the absence total.

E. Early Dismissal

When an early dismissal is necessary, the following rules apply:

1. The office must be contacted prior to the student leaving the building.
2. The parent/guardian must make contact by a note or phone call. Verification required before the student is released.
3. Leaving school property without authorization may result in disciplinary action.
4. For the Early Dismissal to count as an excused absence in all classes missed, the Early Dismissal must meet one of the following reasons:
 - a. Student's illness at school
 - b. Hospitalization
 - c. Doctor ordered bed rest
 - d. Mandatory court appearance that has been pre-arranged
 - e. Death in the immediate family
 - f. Family vacation that has been pre-arranged and approved
 - g. Medical appointments
 - h. Administrative Permission

F. Pre-excused or Extended Absences

1. Vacation or travel during school days is discouraged. Families should seek permission from a building administrator for an excused vacation absence prior

to making any travel arrangements. The request should be made in writing at least one week prior to the vacation. Vacation absences of more than ten days in a semester will not be approved. Vacation absences for secondary students that would cause a high school student to lose credit in a class. Vacations taken without approval will be marked as unexcused absences. Arrangements should be made with the student's teacher in advance as to timelines for completing class work. Homework may be requested and requires 24 hours to process. Work at the secondary level may be due upon return from vacation.

2. A parent/guardian of a student who will be absent (ten or more consecutive days) from school for extended periods of time due to physical disabilities or illness should contact the school to make home study arrangements.

II. High School - Grades 9 (Including those students at Junior High) to 12

The following rules and regulations are implemented on a semester basis.

A. Student Responsibility

1. A student is responsible for making arrangements in advance of the absence if he/she is to be pre-arranged absent from a particular class during a school day. This involves obtaining permission from the office for outside activities, i.e. doctor and dental appointments, and obtaining permission from the teacher whose class will be missed for in-school activities, such as attending a counseling appointment, participating in student government activities or completing a class assignment. With administrative approval, absence from class for a school related activity is excused and will not count in the student's overall attendance profile. Students should review their attendance after attending a school related activity and report any error to the attendance office within 48 hours of the activity.
2. Students who accumulate more than ten absences are subject to Credit Review.
3. Students are responsible for taking the necessary steps to avoid Credit Review, to appeal Credit Review and to earn Credit back should it be lost through Credit Review.

B. Credit Review

1. For Credit Review every three tardies will count as one unexcused absence.
2. All students are limited to ten (10 parent excused, unexcused, or truant) absences per class period each semester. Upon the eleventh absence in any class period the student loses credit in that class.
3. The notification and process to earn credit back is as follows:
 - a. Absences are recorded daily by teacher and/or attendance secretary at each school. When an absence is not excused an automated phone call will be made to the primary contact number as listed in PowerSchool. A Parent/Guardian is responsible for notifying the school office if this phone number or any other contact information changes. A Parent/Guardian will have until the end of the next school day to correct any errors in attendance.

- b. Students and parents are responsible to track and review student attendance in PowerSchool on a regular basis to monitor student attendance.
- c. When a student has accumulated between seven and ten absences* in any one class (or in the case of the Gene L. Klida Utica Academy for International Studies, in any one block) per semester: the student's assistant/associate principal will meet with the student. The assistant/associate principal may use this opportunity to warn for any class that is at five absences or more (the warning should be added to the letter that will be sent, there will not be an additional meeting when the student reaches seven to ten absences in those classes). A letter signed by the student and assistant/associate principal will be scanned and emailed home (mailed in the case of no email address on file).
- d. When a student has accumulated eleven absences* in any one class over the course of a semester, the student will be notified in a meeting with an assistant/associate principal that they have lost credit in that class and that they are placed on an attendance contract to earn the credit back. The contract will have two parts. First, the class must be passed with a D- or higher. Second, the student will have to show improvement in attendance in all classes. Improvement will be determined on a sliding scale which allows for one absence for every three weeks (rounded up) left in the semester in each class. (For example, if the student lost credit with four and half weeks left in the semester, the student could not have more than 2 absences in any class in order to earn the credit back.) For the purposes of this contract, absences* include excused, unexcused, truant, and the three tardy rule (three unexcused tardies=1 absence). At this meeting, the assistant/associate principal may place a student on contract for any class the student has been previously warned but has yet to reach eleven absences. The contract would be the same as described above with the addition of the number of absences short of eleven. (For example, a student was warned when second hour was at eight absences and is now at nine, the student would get two more days added to the number of days determined by the sliding scale). Following the meeting, a letter will be sent via email to the parent/guardian (or US mail should no email be on file) stating the student has lost credit and been placed on an attendance contract to earn the credit back (as well as notifying parent/guardian of any other contracts discussed).

**The following absences will be exempt from this absence total: School Approved Absences (field trip, student government activity, etc.), death/funeral of an immediate family member (mother, father, brother, or sister), court appearance when documentation is submitted, suspensions, and absences where a parent/guardian has submitted medical documentation supporting the absence within five school days of the absence will not be considered in these totals. Chronic medical conditions can be reflected in a doctor's note indicating the student has an ongoing medical condition that can cause them to be absent from school.*

- e. Students who fail to meet the attendance contract will be given a semester grade of an “F”. If the failure to meet the contract was due to the student failing the class, the credit is lost and the student may need to make it up in credit recovery. If the student passed the class and the failure was due to excessive absences, the student can request to test out following district test out rules to have the “F” restored to a grade and thus credit earned. If the subject area does not have a test out option, a score of 77% on the course exam or better will earn the student a grade and credit back. A student who fails to do a test out or fails to meet the 77% requirement will receive an “F” as the final grade in the permanent record.
- 4. Students (if 18 or over) and/or their parents/guardians may appeal a loss of credit due to extensive absences. The appeal process is as follows:
 - a. Within ten school days from notice of loss of credit and being placed on a contract, a student (if 18 or over) and/or the parent/guardian may request a conference with assistant/associate principal.
 - b. During the conference, student/parent/guardian will be given an opportunity to explain the reason for the appeal and present supporting evidence. The assistant/associate may ask any questions regarding the explanation.
 - c. The assistant/associate principal will determine if the submitted documentation and reason for appeal demonstrate the student really did not exceed the ten-absence limit and/or the student/parent/guardian were never given fair warning of pending loss of credit. Based on that determination, the assistant/associate principal will either restore the credit or uphold the loss of credit.
 - d. The assistant/associate principal’s determination is final. There is no further appeal.

C. Unexcused Absences and Suspensions

- 1. Upon evidence that a student has an unexcused absence to a class, that student will:
 - a. Not receive participation credit for that day.
 - b. Not be permitted to make up missed work.
- 2. Upon evidence that a student has an unexcused tardy to a class, that student will:
 - a. Not receive a portion of their participation credit for that day.
 - b. Not be permitted to make up work missed.
- 3. Upon evidence that a student has been suspended from a class, that student will:
 - a. Not receive participation credit for that day.
 - b. Be permitted to make up missed work for full credit.

- c. Be allowed to take the semester final exam for full credit.

III. Junior High School - Grades 7 and 8

A. Student Responsibility

1. A student is responsible for making arrangements in advance for a pre-arranged absence from a particular class. This involves obtaining permission from the office for outside activities, i.e. doctor and dental appointments, and obtaining permission from the teacher whose class will be missed for in-school activities, such as attending a counseling appointment, participating in student government activities or completing a class assignment.
2. With administrative approval, absence from class for a school-related activity is excused and will not count in the student's overall attendance profile.
3. Students with twenty absences are subject to truancy laws.

B. Excessive Absences

1. The school will notify the parent/guardian about excessive absences in the following ways:
 - a. Absences are recorded daily by teacher and/or attendance secretary at each school.
 - b. When an absence is not excused an automated phone call will be made to the primary contact number as listed in PowerSchool. A Parent/Guardian is responsible for notifying the school office if this phone number or any other contact information changes. A Parent/Guardian will have until the end of the next school day to correct any errors in attendance.
 - c. Students and parents are responsible to track and review student attendance in PowerSchool on a regular basis to monitor student attendance.
 - d. When a student has accumulated between seven and ten absences* in anyone class per semester, the student's assistant principal will meet with the student. The assistant principal may use this opportunity to warn for any class that is at five absences or more. A letter signed by the student and assistant principal will be scanned and emailed home (mailed in the case of no email address on file).
 - e. When a student has accumulated 11 absences* in any one class over the course of a semester, a letter will be sent via email (or US mail should no email be on file) stating that the student's absences have become excessive which may result in a referral to a truancy officer.

**The following absences will be exempt from this absence total: School Approved Absences (field trip, student government activity, etc.), death/funeral of an immediate family member (mother, father, brother, or sister), court appearance when documentation is submitted, suspensions, and absences where a parent/guardian has submitted medical documentation supporting the absence within five school days of the absence will not be considered in these totals. Chronic medical conditions can be*

reflected in a doctor's note indicating the student has an ongoing medical condition that can cause them to be absent from school.

- f. Between 14 and 16 absences the assistant principal will call home to discuss the excessive absences.
- g. Twenty unexcused absences will initiate a referral for truancy.

C. Unexcused Absence and Suspensions

- 1. Upon evidence that a student has an unexcused absence to a class, that student will:
 - a. Not receive participation credit for that day.
 - b. Not be permitted to make up missed work.
- 2. Upon evidence that a student has an unexcused tardy to a class, that student will:
 - a. Not receive a portion of their participation credit for that day.
 - b. Not be permitted to make up work missed.
- 3. Upon evidence that a student has been suspended from a class, that student will:
 - a. Not receive participation credit for that day.
 - b. Be permitted to make up missed work for full credit.
 - c. Be allowed to take the semester final exam for full credit.

IV. Elementary School

- A. When a teacher recognizes that an attendance/tardiness problem is developing, a personal contact by the teacher should be made to the parent/guardian. All written communication regarding attendance will be placed in the student's academic records.
- B. After the tenth absence, the parent will receive written communication from the principal.
- C. After the fifteenth absence, there will be a parent/principal conference. In addition, the parent will receive written communication from the principal.
- D. After the twentieth absence, parent will receive written communication from the principal. School personnel may initiate a court referral.
- E. Additional interventions may be utilized to address chronic absenteeism.
- F. In the event that a child is absent due to a chronic health problem or hospitalization as verified by a physician's note, the principal will handle each situation on a case by case basis.
- G. Upon evidence that a student has been suspended from school, that student will be expected to make up missed work and tests, without a reduction in the grade earned.

Rules and Regulation

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