



MOUNTAINSIDE SCHOOL DISTRICT

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CHRISTOPHER KINNEY - SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

Attendance Guidelines and Procedures

New Jersey state law requires that students attend school regularly, and it's the responsibility of the parents/guardians to see their children attend school on the days/hours that the public schools are in session in the district (N.J.S.A. 18A: 38-25). In order to facilitate students' opportunity for success, staff will work cooperatively with parents/guardians to assure students attend school daily. In order to assist with ensuring that students attend school on a regular basis, the following guidelines and protocols are have been put in place:

- If a student is absent, notify school using the [Genesis Parent Portal](#):
 - In the portal, note the absence under "Student Data > Attendance > Notify Office" tabs.
 - **For Beechwood ONLY:** In addition to the portal, please also email your teacher and enter plan changes impacting dismissal in PUP.
- If a student is absent and the school has not been notified, the school will call the parent/guardian or emergency contacts provided to us in Genesis. If no one can be reached to verify the student's whereabouts, a police officer may be dispatched to the student's home to conduct a wellness check.
- Students must be in attendance for a **minimum of four hours** on a given school day in order to participate in or attend any extracurricular activities that are held that day.

Please note: The state of New Jersey, ONLY recognizes the following reasons as excused absences from school:

- Religious observances (pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:36-14 through 16)
- Participation in Veteran's Day activities and/or Take Our Children to Work Day
- Closure of a busing school district that prevents a student from having transportation to the receiving school

The Mountainside Board of Education has adopted policies that establish locally approved or excused absences consistent with N.J.A.C. 6A:16-7.6 which are outlined below, however be aware that an absence designated as excused by the Board pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:16-7.6 **is considered an "unexcused" absence in the submission to the State for the purpose of chronic absenteeism reporting**, as set forth at N.J.A.C. 6A:32-8.6.

The Mountainside Board of Education recognizes the following as "excused" absences that will not count towards truancy, as outlined in [District Regulation 5200](#):

- All New Jersey excused absences noted above
- Family illness or death supported by the student's parent
 - *The number of days recognized as excused must be discussed with the principal or nurse.*
- Student suspension from school
- Necessary and unavoidable medical or dental appointments that cannot be scheduled at a time other than the school day that will be accompanied by a doctor's note
- Student's required attendance in court

All other absences not described above, including vacations, will be considered "unexcused" absences that count towards truancy within the Mountainside School District. The District will implement the following response for accumulated unexcused absences as outlined in [District Regulation 5200](#):

- For up to four cumulative unexcused absences, the Principal or designee shall send a letter home and follow all other protocols outlined in policy and regulation
- For between five and nine cumulative unexcused absences, the Principal or designee shall notify the student's parents in writing and work in conjunction to develop an action plan based on the student's pattern of absences as outlined in Regulation 5200
- For ten or more cumulative unexcused absences, a student between the ages of six and sixteen is considered truant, pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:38-25, and the Principal or designee shall:
 - Meet with parents to discuss student truancy and adjust action plan as needed
 - Make a determination regarding the need for a court referral for the truancy, per N.J.A.C. 6A:16-7.6(a)4.iv. and details outlined in section G.4 of Regulation 5200
 - Consider retention due to lack of academic progress.

Please be aware of the following additional expectations and regulations:

- If parent notification IS NOT received for student illness, the absence will count towards truancy.
- Students who have an extended or serious illness shall not be charged with absences provided they are under a doctor's care and are receiving home instruction.
- Students who are absent from school due to observance of a religious holiday shall not be deprived of any award or eligibility thereof or opportunity to compete for any award, or of the right to take an alternate test/examination, as long as an absence note is submitted in Genesis.
- Teachers will cooperate in the preparation of home assignments for students who anticipate an **excused** absence of five or more school days duration.
- Students absent for any reason are expected to make up the work missed. The parent or student is responsible for requesting missed assignments and any assistance required. Teachers will provide make-up assignments as necessary.
 - In general, students will be allowed a reasonable amount of time as determined by the teacher to make up the work missed.
 - A student who missed a test or an exam shall be offered an opportunity to take the test, exam, or an appropriate alternate test.
- Scheduling vacations during the school year is strongly discouraged in that students miss valuable instructional time. **Teachers will not be able to provide a list of specific assignments in advance** but will make assignments available and set due dates for students within a reasonable amount of time upon return.
- Any questions regarding health related absences should be directed to the school nurse.
 - Beechwood - Mrs. Bruno, at libruno@mountainsideschools.org or (908) 301-9104 x202.
 - Deerfield - Mrs. Branco, sbranco@mountainsideschools.org or (908) 232-8828 x304.