MANALAPAN-ENGLISHTOWN REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

Serving With Pride The
Township of Manalapan
and the
Borough of Englishtown

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August 2026

Dear Parent/Guardian,

As a district we recognize the importance that attending school ultimately has on student success. A student who is chronically absent is at a greater risk of academic, social and emotional disadvantage when compared to his/her peers. Traditionally speaking, chronically absent students lag behind their peers when it comes to academic achievement and academic growth.

In order to prevent chronic absenteeism and comply with state statute, our district implements the attendance policy and procedures outlined below. Please be sure to utilize the Genesis Parent Portal to record student absences and communicate with the Health Office so we can accurately reflect absence reasons.

Absence Categories
Student absences are recorded in one of the following categories based on information provided, or not provided, by parents and guardians:

- **State-Excused Absence:** Any absence that meets the criteria of the following five applicable reasons granted by the New Jersey Department of Education:
  - Religious observance (N.J.S.A. 18A:36-15 and 18A:36-16).
  - Participation in "Take Our Children to Work Day" or another day designated by the Commissioner (N.J.S.A. 18A:36-33.1).
  - Participation in Veterans Day observances (N.J.S.A. 18A:36-13.2).
  - Participation in district board of election membership activities (N.J.S.A. 18A:36-33).
  - Participation in one civic event for students in grades 6 through 12 (N.J.S.A. 18A:36-33.2).

- **Unexcused: District Verified Absence*:** Any absence for:
  - Illness or a medical appointment accompanied by a doctor's note with the dates of the absence.
  - Court-ordered appearances accompanied by written documentation with the dates of the absence.
  - Family illness or loss accompanied by written documentation with the dates of the absence.

- **Unexcused: Truant Absence*:** Any absence not listed above, including vacations.
  - We recognize that absences are sometimes unavoidable. Therefore, a student's first five unexcused absences, if reported by a parent or guardian, will be considered unexcused: district verified absences, regardless of the reason.

Administrative Actions
Administrators will take the following actions listed at each attendance threshold below:

- **Five Unexcused (5) Absences:**
  - A letter will be sent through the Genesis Parent Portal reminding the parent/guardian of the district attendance policy.
- **Five (5) Unexcused: Truant Absences:**
  - A letter will be sent through the Genesis Parent Portal reminding the parent/guardian of the district attendance policy.
  - Administration may request a parent meeting or phone conference to develop a collaborative attendance improvement plan.
- **Ten Unexcused (10) Absences:**
  - A letter will be sent through the Genesis Parent Portal alerting the parent/guardian that the student has reached this threshold. This letter will also be placed in the child's cumulative folder.
- **Ten (10) Unexcused: Truant Absences:**
  - A letter will be sent through the Genesis Parent Portal alerting the parent/guardian that the student has reached this threshold. This letter will also be placed in the child's cumulative folder.
  - A court referral may be made based on the discretion of the attendance officer.
  - The district attendance officer or school administrator may schedule a parent meeting.
- **Fifteen Unexcused (15) Absences:**
  - A letter will be sent through the Genesis Parent Portal alerting the parent/guardian that the student has reached this threshold. This letter will also be placed in the child's cumulative folder.
  - This letter will serve as initial notification that an attendance review committee, including the parent/guardian, will convene to determine remediation for missed instructional days, which may include retention, attendance at the District summer program, or attendance at additional school-based supports.
  - A court referral may be made based on the discretion of the attendance officer.
- **Eighteen Unexcused (18) Absences:**
  - A letter will be sent through the Genesis Parent Portal alerting the parent/guardian that the student has reached this threshold. This letter will also be placed in the child's cumulative folder.
  - Your child will be identified by the State of New Jersey as a "chronically absent" student.
  - If the student reaches this threshold in two consecutive years, the attendance review committee will convene to determine remediation for missed instructional days. Possible outcomes may include retention, attendance in the District Summer Program with 90% attendance, or participation in additional school-based supports. If attendance remains a concern during the summer program, a truancy referral may be made to the court.

Let's prevent the effects of chronic absenteeism by working together to make sure your child attends school on a regular basis!

Sincerely,



Nicole Santora, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools