

EAST QUOGUE UNION FREE SCHOOL DISTRICT

STUDENT ATTENDANCE

POLICY 5100

The Board of Education recognizes that regular school attendance is a major component of academic success. School attendance is an essential factor in the academic success of students. Classroom activities and student participation are an integral part of student learning; poor attendance is often a key factor in student failure. Through implementation of this policy, the Board of Education expects to reduce the current level 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/persons in parental relation, teachers and administrators are notified of and understand this policy, the following procedures shall be implemented.

- The attendance policy will be posted on the website and will be reviewed with students at the start of the school year.
- Parents will receive a plain language summary of this policy at the start of the school year via email.

When a student is absent, tardy, or leaves early from class or school without excuse, designated staff member(s) will notify the student's parent(s) by phone and mail of the specific ATED, remind them of the attendance policy, and review ATED intervention procedures with them.

A back-to-school event will be held at the beginning of each school year to 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 School 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 School 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.

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Student Responsibilities

A student will be held accountable for all work missed while absent from school. It is the student's responsibility to collect assignments from the student's teachers.

Procedures for Recording Student Attendance

Each student's presence, absence, tardiness and early departure will be recorded in a register of attendance. For the purposes of this policy, a student shall be considered "absent" when he/she has missed all of a scheduled day.

Each register of attendance shall set forth the following for every student:

1. Student's name;
2. Student's date of birth;
3. Full name(s) of student's parent(s)/person(s) in parental relation;
4. Student's address;
5. Phone number(s) where the parent(s)/person(s) in parental relation may be contacted;
6. Date of student's enrollment;
7. A record of the student's attendance on each day of scheduled instruction. (For purposes of this policy, "scheduled instruction" means every period that a student is scheduled to attend actual instructional or supervised study activities during the course of a school day during the school year from July 1 to June 30.);
8. Any absence for a school day or any portion of a school day shall be recorded in the register as excused or unexcused in accordance with the standards set forth in this policy;
9. Any tardiness or early departure from scheduled instruction shall be recorded as excused or unexcused in accordance with the standards set forth in this policy;
- Record of each scheduled day of instruction during which the school is closed for all or part of the day due to extraordinary circumstances including adverse weather conditions, impairment of heating facilities, insufficiency of water supply, shortage of fuel, destruction of or damage to a school building, or such other cause as may be found satisfactory to the Commissioner; and
10. The date when a student withdraws from enrollment or is dropped from enrollment

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in accordance with Education Law §3202.

Student attendance shall be taken and recorded in accordance with the following:

Each student's presence or absence shall be recorded after the taking of attendance once per school day. The Principal or his/her designee is responsible for monitoring student attendance. At the conclusion of each school day, all attendance information will be compiled and provided to the designated staff member(s) responsible for attendance. The nature of all ATEDS will be coded on a student's record. Student ATED data shall be available to and should be reviewed by the designated school personnel in an expeditious manner. Attendance data will be analyzed periodically to identify patterns or trends in student absences. Continuous monitoring will be conducted to identify students who are absent, tardy, or leave class or school early. The Board of Education shall annually review the building level student attendance records and if such records show a decline in pupil attendance, the Board of Education will review this policy and attendance plan as deemed necessary to improve student attendance.

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, quarantine, required court appearances, attendance at health clinics, or such other reasons as may be approved by building administrator (including, but not limited, to absences due to circumstances related to homelessness).

All other ATEDs are considered unexcused absences.

Days of Religious Observance

Students may be excused on days of religious observance upon receipt of a signed, written request from the parent. The School District will see that students who stay at home to meet religious obligations are guaranteed the freedom to do so and that students who attend school will be offered regular uninterrupted instruction. Work is to continue in classes at all levels and students who are absent are required to make up the work, with the assistance of the teachers in those classrooms. Teachers will provide students who have missed school as a result of a day of religious observance with an opportunity to make up any missed work. Teachers will be directed to refrain from administering examinations until students who have been observing a religious holiday return to school.

Early Dismissal

In order to ensure the safety of the student body, if a parent/person in parental relation requests that their child be allowed to leave early from school or scheduled classes, it is desirable but not mandatory that the parent/person in parental relation come to the school to sign out their child. If no parent/person in parental relation can come to school to sign out their child, the school will utilize the child's emergency contact card to contact persons authorized to pick up the child. If no

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one is able to be contacted, the student will be released from school if he/she has a note from a parent/person in parental relation specifying the date and time for the early dismissal or the Attendance Office has received a phone call from the parent/person in parental relation prior to the early dismissal. In the latter case, a parent/person in parental relation note must be sent to the Attendance Office within three (3) school days. All notes must contain the approximate time the child left early, the date and the reason for the early dismissal. The note should also include the signature of the parent/person in parental relation, and a phone number where the note can be verified if necessary.

Special circumstances/emergencies will be handled and determined by the Administration on a case-by-case basis. Any student who leaves school without prior notification to the Attendance Office will be deemed to have left unexcused. In case of divorced parents, the student may be released to either parent unless there is a legally binding instrument that indicates that the child should not be released to the non-custodial parent.

Any student who does not have a completed Emergency Contact Card on file will not be permitted to be released from school for early dismissal or illness.

Should a student miss class during an unexcused early dismissal, it may be treated as a **cut** and **disciplinary actions** may be taken.

Students who are ill and wish to go home must report to the Nurse's Office. The nurse will decide whether or not a student will be allowed to go home. If the nurse determines that the student is ill enough to leave school, the parents/persons in parental relation will be contacted. In most cases students are to be picked up by a parent/person in parental relation or a designee assigned by them on an emergency contact card. If no one is able to be contacted, the school nurse in consultation with a building administrator will decide if a student can go home.

Parents or persons in parental relation are responsible for their children when dismissal is at the parent's or person in parental relation's request for any reason.

All ATEDs must be accounted for. It is the parent's responsibility to notify the school office within 24 hours of the ATED and provide a written excuse via email, absence management application, or written note upon the student's return to school. With regard to personal illness, excused absences will require a note from a doctor if the illness exceeds three (3) days. A written excuse will be required within 24 hours of the student returning to school. For homeless students, the homeless liaison will assist the student in providing or obtaining documentation if needed.

Specific Interventions to Address Attendance Problems

Since a student's school attendance is often a function of the relationship between the student, his or her teachers and parents/persons in parental relation, the school organization, and outside agencies, any intervention to address attendance problems must coordinate the efforts of these various stakeholders.

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Historically, the vast majority of East Quogue students attend school regularly and provide proper documentation when an absence or lateness occurs.

In the event that a persistent attendance problem arises for an individual student, the following people may be involved in preparing a plan to address the problem:

1. The student will be held accountable for any unexcused absences or latenesses. Disciplinary consequences will be consistent with the School District's Code of Conduct and may be implemented by the appropriate administrator.
2. As soon as a persistent attendance problem is detected, the student's parents/persons in parental relation, teachers, and school counselor will be involved in the effort to understand the cause(s) of the problem and design an intervention strategy.
3. Formal groups of teachers (e.g., the child's Interdisciplinary Team, the Pupil Personnel Team, etc.) will meet with the school counselor and other mental health professionals to coordinate a response.
4. The school psychologist and/or social worker will be involved as necessary to provide any additional assessment information or to supplement in-school mental health services.
5. The School District Committee on Special Education may become involved where appropriate.
6. All of the above stakeholders will work closely with any outside agencies (e.g., Child Protective Services, psychiatrists, outside therapists, the courts instituting a PINS petition, etc. that may be necessary in the treatment of severe cases.
7. In the event that an attendance problem arises for a specific group of children for whom a common cause can be determined, a School District or building task force should be created immediately to address this issue.

Students with excused ATEDs will be given the opportunity to make up a test or other missed work and/or submit a late assignment for inclusion in their marking period grade. Make-up opportunities must be completed by a date specified by the student's teacher. Class participation may be counted as a percentage of the student's overall grade.

Satisfactory attendance is missing five percent (5) 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.

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Attendance Incentives

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

- An attendance honor roll shall be maintained identifying those students with perfect attendance as well as those students whose attendance has improved significantly, subject to parental consent and applicable confidentiality rules.
- At the building and classroom levels, Building Principals and teachers are encouraged to schedule special events for days of chronically high absenteeism, like Mondays and Fridays.
- 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.
- At the classroom levels, teachers are encouraged to assign special responsibilities (distribute and collect materials, lead groups, assist the teacher, etc.) to students who may need extra motivation to come to school.
- At the classroom level, monthly awards will be presented to those classes with the highest attendance rate for the month.

Consequences of Excessive ATEDs

Unexcused ATEDs of 10% or more of school days, may result in the loss of credit for completion of the grade level work and/or retention of the student at that grade level. In addition, disciplinary action may be taken in accordance with the School District's Code of Conduct. Staff will contact the school social worker to review absence patterns. If there is a pattern of excessive absences, the school social worker/administrator will contact the parent/person in parental relation. Students may also be denied the privilege of participating in or attending extracurricular events. However, absences related to homelessness will not result in negative consequences where the School District determines that it would be in the best interests of the student in retaining the student in school.

Such staff member(s) shall remind parents/persons in parental relation of the attendance policy, explain the ramifications of unexcused ATEDs, stress the importance of class attendance and discuss appropriate intervention strategies to correct the situation.

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.

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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's 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.

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 missed work. 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. Students absent more than five (5) continuous days without a documented note from a doctor will not be provided work from their teacher.

Annual Review

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

A plain language summary of this policy will be available in Spanish upon request.

Adopted: January 20, 1998

Revised: August 26, 2024