

## **GERMANTOWN CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT ATTENDANCE PROCEDURES**

The Germantown Central School District board of education, school administrators and faculty, firmly believe that good student attendance is vital to a student's academic achievement. Accordingly, GCS has adopted an attendance policy consistent with this belief.

### **Summary of Procedures**

At the 7-12 level, any student with more than 18 absences in a course may not receive credit for the course. For one semester courses, a student may not have more than 9 absences.

- If a student in a credit bearing class is absent 19 days or more, that student may lose credit for the class but may remain in the class with the notation of NC (no credit) entered on the student's record. No work will be graded by the teacher when credit has been lost. If the class is credit bearing, the student may not be able to attend summer school to redeem the credit.
- If a 7<sup>th</sup> or 8<sup>th</sup> grade student is absent 19 days or more (and is not in a credit bearing class), that student will remain in the class but may receive a NC (no credit) on their report card. The 7<sup>th</sup>/8<sup>th</sup> grader will be expected to continue to do homework, take tests, etc. and will be allowed to attend summer school.

If a student would otherwise reach 19 days of absence but has completed a sufficient number of Academic Buyback days, it is GCS policy that the student shall retain credit in the course, provided the student has performed any assigned Buyback work, assignments, and tests. Academic Buybacks may be done for all absences.

### **Absences, Tardiness and Early Departures**

GCS has determined that absences, tardiness and early departures will be considered excused or unexcused according to the following standards:

**Excused Absence:** An absence, tardiness or early departure may be excused for the following reasons:

- personal illness (parent note)
- illness or death in the family (parent note)
- impassable roads due to inclement weather (parent note)
- a fire call with permission from principal (note from fire house)
- religious observances (parent note)
- Quarantine (parent note and medical documentation)
- required court appearances (parent note and court documentation)
- medical appointments (doctor's note)
- attendance at health clinics (doctor's note)
- college visits (parent note and documentation of attendance from college)
- approved cooperative work programs (parent note and supervisor note)
- military obligations (parent note and military supervisor)
- taking a learners permit or road test (parent note and proof of attendance from DMV)
- approved Educational Project (parent and supervisor note)
- any other absence excused in the discretion of the Principal

Excused Absences from individual classes; maintained attendance in building

- scheduled music lessons (lesson calendar from teachers)
- performing arts rehearsals and performances (performance calendar from teachers)
- school related training sessions for students (verified by supervisor)
- school guidance appointments (note from guidance)
- scheduled visits to the health office (note from nurse)

- field trips (list from chaperone)
- Assemblies (scheduled via office)
- approved appointments with administration or counseling staff or specialized services (pass)
- CSE or 504 meetings (confirmed via CSE)
- scheduled assessments (pass from proctor)
- approved athletic trips (note from coach and parent)
- out of school suspension (referral)
- in school suspension (referral)

**Nurse:** A student who goes to the nurse's office and then goes home is given an excused absence from the class(es) they missed by going home on that day.

A student who misses more than half of a class due to visiting the nurse is considered absent (excused) from the class and may do Academic Buybacks for the class missed.

**Unexcused:** Any absence, tardiness or early departure is considered unexcused if the reason for the lack of attendance does not fall into the above categories (e.g., family vacation, hunting, babysitting, haircut, oversleeping, etc.)

## **Procedures**

**A. Absences:** If a student is absent for any reason, the parent should call the school before 8:30 a.m. to confirm the child's absence; it is the student's responsibility to bring a note to school verifying the reason for such absence. The student's absence will be recorded in the GCS Attendance Register, and if the absence is excusable, that fact shall be noted. A student who returns to school following an absence without proper documentation supporting the classification of the absence as excused shall have his or her absence recorded as unexcused.

An unexcused absence may be converted into an excused absence if the student provides acceptable documentation to the District Office within five school days of the next day the student attends school. An unexcused absence that is converted into an excused absence by this process will not relieve a student from his or her responsibilities.

If a student fails to provide such documentation to the District Office within five school days of returning to school, the absence will be recorded as unexcused, regardless of the reason. For this purpose, the first day a student returns to school after an absence marks the first day of the five-day period for providing documentation to the District Office. All documentation may be subject to verification by the District.

**B. Tardiness:** It is a GCS policy that a student who comes to school late for any reason classifiable as excused pursuant to this policy will be permitted to go directly to their class upon entering the building with a pass from the office. That tardy will be recorded as excused, and the student will not be penalized. Students who are tardy without a reason classifiable as excused will be permitted to go directly to their class upon entering the building with a pass from the office. That tardy will be recorded as unexcused. Three unexcused tardies may result in a detention.

**Per attendance policy, any student who misses more than half of a class will be considered absent, unless participating in a school activity.**

An unexcused tardy may be converted into an excused tardy if the student provides acceptable documentation to the Attendance Office within five school days of the next day the student attends school. An unexcused tardy that is converted into an excused tardy by this process will not relieve a student from their responsibilities.

If a student fails to provide such documentation to the Attendance Office within five school days, the tardy will be recorded as unexcused, regardless of the reason.

A student must attend school for their entire, official school day in order to attend extracurricular activities (practice, games, clubs etc.) If a student is tardy to school, they must have a written, legal excuse in order to attend extracurricular activities that day. They must still attend at least 6 periods during the school day to participate. Exceptions are at the discretion of the Principal.

**C. Early Departures:** If a student leaves school at any time before the end of the official school day, the student must provide proper documentation to the School Office verifying the reason for the early departure. A notation shall be made in the Attendance Register indicating whether the early departure is due to a reason classified as excused pursuant to this policy.

An unexcused early departure may be converted to an excused early departure if the student provides acceptable documentation to the School Office within five school days of the next day the student attends school. An unexcused early departure that is converted into an excused early departure by this process will not relieve a student from his or her responsibilities.

A student who departs early without acceptable documentation will be considered insubordinate as the school board has designated this a closed campus. This student is subject to the discipline policy and is not able to do Academic Make up or participate in athletics, extra-curricular or evening activities on that day.

If a student fails to provide such documentation to the Attendance Office within five school days, the early departure will be recorded as unexcused, regardless of the reason.

The rules concerning early departures shall not apply to seniors who have permission to leave school and who have completed their official school day. Seniors who have permission to leave school at the end of their official school day may return for detention and Academic Buybacks as well as athletics and extra-curricular activities.

### **Acceptable Documentation**

Examples of the types of acceptable documentation are as follows:

1. A note from a doctor (nurse practitioner or dentist) verifying attendance at an appointment. A note from a parent or guardian is not acceptable in this instance. Notes from medical professionals will be kept strictly confidential.
2. A note from a doctor, parent or legal guardian (whose name, address and telephone number are on file at GCS) verifying that an absence or tardiness is due to personal illness, illness or death in the family, or religious observance.
3. A note from a parent or guardian together with appropriate 3<sup>rd</sup> party documentation verifying that the absence, tardiness or early departure is due to any other reason classified as excused pursuant to this policy.

*The District has the right to require additional documentation. Additionally, all documentation may be subject to verification by the District.*

## Student Responsibilities

1. A student who misses a class for any reason must make arrangements with their teacher to obtain class notes and homework assignments the first day they return to school.
2. A student who misses a class for any reason must perform all missed assignments as directed by the student's teacher.
3. A student who misses a class (other than attendance at a school-sponsored activity or an appointment or attendance at half-day or full day ISS) may reduce the number of absences through Academic Buybacks. A student should request to do Academic Buybacks **before** reaching 15 excused absences.
4. A student may do Academic Buybacks for a maximum of 16 absences (9 for a one-semester course). Academic Buybacks must be completed in a timely manner.
5. Notwithstanding the foregoing, a student who has an unexcused absence due to cutting a class will be subject to the GCS discipline policy.

## Administrative Procedures:

1. A copy of the attendance policy will be mailed home, and students will be asked to sign an acknowledgement that they have received and reviewed the policy the first week of school.
2. When a student is absent, the parent/guardian should call the school to verify the absence. If no call is made, the school will call the parent ensuring the parent is aware of the student's absence.
3. Student attendance will be posted through the parent portal. Students and parents are responsible to check the parent portal for student attendance. Students who have been absent 10 days in a full year class or 5 days in a one semester class should begin to do Academic Buybacks(s).
4. Notifications regarding student absences will be mailed weekly. Prior to reaching the allotted number of maximum absences, a parent/guardian meeting will be set up with the attendance committee or subcommittee to discuss the student's progress and intervention strategies and/or Academic Buybacks.
5. A potential loss of credit notification will be mailed when a student reaches 19 absences in a full year class or 10 absences in a one semester class with Academic Buybacks included. The parent will have five days after receiving this notification by certified mail to call the principal and set up a meeting with the attendance committee in order to appeal the loss of credit due to extenuating circumstances and to present evidence regarding the extenuating circumstances.
6. The attendance committee will make a final determination within 5 school days of the appeal meeting, and the principal will send a letter to the parents/guardian not later than 24 hours after a decision has been made regarding a student's attendance /appeal. The letter will state whether the student will receive credit or not. It will be followed by a telephone call from Guidance letting parents know other options for classes, if there are any, and how the student's schedule will be affected for the present and the future.

When a student has lost credit, they will remain in class but will be given an N/C on the report card for the rest of the school year.

7. The Principal will notify all affected staff members in writing regarding the disposition of a student's appeal the day the decision is rendered.

### **Extenuating Circumstances:**

**Bereavement** shall be classifiable in the policy as an excused absence at the committee's discretion. The committee will evaluate each case to determine how many days, if any, may be classified as excusable.

**When a student is absent from school for more than five consecutive days due to illness, hospitalization, surgery, quarantine, convalescence, catastrophic personal loss,** the District shall provide the student with alternative instruction, in a manner and amount provided for under the law.

- The District shall have the right to require appropriate documentation setting forth the student's inability to attend school.
- The District shall have the right to cease providing alternative instruction to a student if the District determines that the student or their parents or guardians are contributing to the condition or situation that is causing the student to miss school.

### **Academic Buybacks**

#### **1. Academic Buybacks for all absences:**

A student who misses a class for an reason (other than attendance at a school sponsored activity or appointment, ISS, OSS or a class cut) may reduce the number of absences through the following Academic Buyback options:

- Do subject work with the subject teacher for 30 minutes. The student must pre-arrange this with the subject teacher.
- Do pre arranged subject work for 30 minutes during the school day in an area to be determined by the teacher in consultation with administration.
- Staying with the designated GCS staff after school and engaging in subject-area work. Students must have proper documentation filled out, signed by the appropriate teacher(s) and then on-file in the main office. All Academic Buyback paperwork may be found in the main office. Each 30 minutes will count as one academic buyback.
- Maximum number: A student may do Academic Buybacks for a maximum of 16 absences in a full year class or for a maximum of 9 absences in a one semester class.
- All Academic Buyback documentation must be signed and then submitted by the student or teacher to the main office for the Buybacks to be recorded.

#### **2. Other consequences**

- a. Administration will file a PINS petition for any student with excessive unexcused absences.
- b. A student with excessive absences, tardiness or early departures may lose their early dismissal privilege (seniors only), or the eligibility to play sports or participate in other extra-curricular activities.
- c. A student with excessive absences, tardiness or early departures may lose his/her parking privileges (see "Tardies" under Code of Conduct).
- d. A student with excessive absences, tardiness or early departures may be subject to such other consequences deemed appropriate in order to prevent further absences, tardiness or early departures.

**INSTRUCTIONAL MATERIALS:** If a student loses, destroys or renders such instructional materials and books unusable for school purposes, the parent/guardian, or student 18 years of age or older, must reimburse the District for each such item, in an amount to be determined by the District to allow the District to purchase replacement instructional materials. If the student or his/her parent/guardian refuses to do so, the student will not be allowed to participate in any extracurricular activities, such as athletics, clubs and after-school activities, which are privileges, until the book or other instructional material is returned in good condition or the fine is paid. In addition, during future school terms, the student will have access to textbooks and instructional equipment in school and in the school library, but may not be permitted to bring textbooks or equipment home or to any other off-campus location.

### **Chromebook Breakage**

The student will be responsible for the safekeeping and return of the chromebook they have received from the school. If their chromebook is broken the student will be responsible for bringing it to IT to get repaired. The first time they break their chromebook in a school year there will be no charge and they will receive a chromebook replacement. The second time they break their chromebook they will be charged \$25 and will get a chromebook replacement. The third time they break their chromebook they will be charged \$25 and get a Lenovo replacement. The fourth time they break their chromebook they will be charged \$25 and they will get a Lenovo replacement but will not be allowed to bring it outside of the school. At the end of the school year, if the chromebook charger is not returned, there will be a \$50 fee to replace it. If the chromebook is not returned, the charge will be \$219 to replace it.