

**SUBJECT: ROCKY POINT SCHOOL DISTRICT'S COMPREHENSIVE
ATTENDANCE PLAN****Objectives**

Attendance is a critical factor in school success for students. Studies have shown that consistent school attendance, academic success, and school completion have a positive correlation. The educational process requires continuity of instruction and students need to experience classroom discussions, debate, and independent study in order to increase achievement. The purpose of Rocky Point School District's Attendance policy is to ensure the maintenance of an adequate record of verifying the attendance of all children during days of instruction and to establish a mechanism by which the patterns of pupil absence can be examined to develop effective intervention strategies. This procedure will permit each school to know the whereabouts of every student for safety and school management reasons and will help students succeed at meeting the New York State learning standards.

School attendance is both a right and responsibility in New York State. Children have the right to attend school between the ages of 5 and 21. Parents are expected to make sure that their children attend school on a regular basis. To implement a successful attendance policy, the District needs the cooperation of all members of the educational community, including parents, students, teachers, administrators, and support staff. Through the implementation of this policy the District expects to reduce the current level of unexcused absences, lateness, and early dismissals.

Strategies Employed to Accomplish Objectives

Rocky Point School District will employ the following strategies to ensure the effectiveness of this attendance policy.

Increase awareness of policy among students by:

- a) Including a copy in the student agenda book for 6th through 12th grade students.
- b) Request signatures from students in grades 6 through 12 indicating that they have read and understand the goals and consequences established for them in the District's Attendance Policy.
- c) Including a copy of policy on the district's Web site. (www.rockypointschools.org)

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Increase awareness of policy among parents by:

- a) Including a summary of the policy with the mailing/ConnectEd inviting parents to Open School Night.
- b) Request a parent signature on policy indicating that they have read and understand what is expected of his/her child.
- c) Including a summary of attendance requirements in the school district's calendar.
- d) Reminding them of attendance requirements when daily phone calls are made to verify student absence.
- e) Including a copy of policy on the district's Web site. (www.rockypointschools.org)

General Procedures

Each absence, late, and early dismissal will be recorded as excused or unexcused along with a code noting specific reason for absence. Excused absences are defined as: an absence due to personal illness, illness or death in the family, religious observance, quarantine, required court appearances, approved college visits, approved cooperative work programs, or military obligations. All other absences, lateness, or early dismissals will be considered unexcused.

On the secondary level, grades 6 through 12, attendance will be taken during each class period and compiled in a central location within each school. A designated staff member responsible for attendance will cross reference class absence with daily absentee list. A mechanism for transferring classroom attendance data to the building level has been developed.

On the elementary level (grades K through 5), attendance will be taken on a subject by subject basis (ELA/Math/Social Studies/Science) during each assigned period.

Any absence, lateness, or early dismissal must be accounted for. It is the parents' responsibility to notify the school within 24 hours of the absence AND to provide a written excuse upon the student's return to school. The written note should include student's name, date of absence, reason for the absence, and parent's signature. This note should be brought to the main office when he/she returns to school. Each day a child is absent a phone call from the parent is requested; however, all absences will be recorded as unexcused until a written note is received. At the secondary level it is the student's responsibility to provide documentation for all in-school appointments that will prevent a student from attending class prior to dismissal from class.

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Parents will be notified if their child is absent, late, or departs early from school. Students in grades 9 through 12, who enter school late with an unexcused reason, will be assigned after school detention. When a student is out of school for ten or more consecutive days or is hospitalized for any period of time, the parent or guardian must contact the health office prior to the student returning to school to set up a re-entry interview.

Minimum Attendance Requirements for 9th through 12th Grade Students

The high school attendance requirement states, in part, that to be granted academic credit for any course, a student must earn a passing grade in the course and attend each class a minimum of eighty five percent (85%) of the time.

Students will not receive course credit if absent more than:

- Full-year course 28 days
- Full-year alternating day course 14 days
- Half-year course 14 days

In each course, when a student exceeds the maximum number of absences, this student's work will no longer be evaluated. A notation of "no grade" for all subsequent reporting periods and exams will be entered on the report card. Students who have failed to meet the attendance requirements will be denied academic credit but will be responsible to complete course assignments while they audit the course. If a student is eligible to take a Regents examination, pursuant to Commissioner's Regulations, the score will be noted on the student's permanent record.

Applicability

- a) This policy shall apply to students in grades 9 through 12 and for accelerated 8th grade students enrolled in courses where they earn high school credit.
- b) This policy shall apply to each course independently.
- c) This policy shall apply to students with a handicapping condition unless otherwise noted in their individualized educational program or 504 plan.
- d) Students attending classes at other facilities, such as a BOCES center, shall be subject to the attendance policies at those other facilities. In addition, this policy shall apply for the portion of the students' program for which they are enrolled at Rocky Point High School.
- e) New students to the high school, who enroll after the first semester, shall be entitled to half the number of allowable absences for each scheduled course.
- f) Students who transfer from one class to another during the school year will have their class attendance transfer to the new class.

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Absences

- a) All absences from class will be covered by this policy. No distinction will be made between the classification of excused or unexcused when determining the total number of days absent from each course.
- b) Students shall not be considered absent when they are authorized by school officials to be somewhere other than in their regularly scheduled class. For example, if school personnel expect a student to report elsewhere during their regularly scheduled class time for such activities as meetings, conferences with school personnel, testing, physical exams, music lessons, or field trips, the student shall not be considered absent. It is the responsibility of the student and/or the designated staff member to provide the teacher with written documentation to attend these sessions before they are permitted to leave the class.
- c) Absences resulting from the student being assigned to the alternative learning program will not count as a class absence. Absences resulting from a student assigned to out-of-school suspension will not count as an absence.
- d) Students who, for any reason, are removed from the Regular Attendance Register and placed on Homebound Instruction shall not be considered absent from their regular classes during that time.

Notification Sequence

The following refers to the notification process pertaining to the number of absences in a single course. A student may be notified several different times if excessive absences exist in more than one class.

- a) As soon as possible after the fourteenth, twenty-first, and twenty-eighth absence from a full year course, the high school administration shall send written notification to the student's parent(s) and guidance counselor. The letters shall notify the parent(s) as follows:
 - After the 14th absence: The student has been absent half the number of maximum absences and may lose credit if absences continue.
 - After the 21st absence: The student has only seven absences remaining and will lose credit if absences exceed the limit.
 - After the 28th absence: The student will not receive credit due to excessive absenteeism.
- b) Similarly, as soon as possible after the sixth, tenth, and fourteenth absence from a half-year course, or a full-year alternating day course, the high school administration shall send written notification to the student's parent(s) and guidance counselor. The letters shall notify the parent(s) as follow:

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After the 6th absence:	The student has been absent nearly half the number of maximum absences and may lose credit if absences continue.
After the 10th absence:	The student has only four absences remaining and will lose credit if absences exceed the limit.
After the 14th absence:	The student will not receive credit due to excessive absenteeism.

In every letter to a student's parent(s), a request will be made for the parent to meet with the child's counselor. A phone call from the child's guidance counselor will follow this request. The impact of excessive absences on the student's education, possible intervention strategies to eliminate the problem, and the consequences associated with the student's absenteeism will be discussed. If contact between the parent(s) and the school is not made, the school may contact outside agencies for additional support in addressing the attendance problem. The parent(s) will have an opportunity to confer with the school staff; however, a conference with the parent(s) is not a prerequisite to denying academic credit to a student who has failed to meet the attendance requirements. The prime responsibility for the student's attendance in class rests with the student.

Appeals Process

For extenuating circumstances only, a parent has the right to file a written appeal for review by the appeals committee. The appeals committee will consist of an administrator, one counselor, and one teacher. The written appeal, including all supporting documentation, must be received by the Building Principal within ten (10) days of the date of the loss of credit letter. The committee will then rule on whether the student will continue as a regular student in the class or be placed on audit. The final decision will rest with the Principal. Any further absence during the appeals process may result in dismissal of appeal and loss of credit.

Minimum Attendance Requirements for 6th-8th Grade Students

The Middle School attendance requirement is consistent with the District's Attendance Policy. All students must attend each class a minimum of eighty-five percent (85%) of the time. This shall apply to all students in grades 6 through 8, unless otherwise stated on a classified student's individual educational plan or 504 plan. Eighth grade students taking courses for high school credit must maintain the minimum attendance requirements for students in grades 9 through 12. The High School definition of absences applies for all Middle School students.

Notification Sequence and Consequences

After 5th absence: Main office notification letter home.

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- After 10th absence: Letter and phone call requesting parental meeting with guidance counselor and student.
- After 15th absence: Letter and phone call requiring parental meeting with Assistant Principal.
- After 20th absence: Require meeting with Principal.
Require medical documentation.
PINS consideration and/or outside agency consideration.
- After 25th absence: Require meeting with Principal.
PINS if no medical documentation is provided.
Outside agency contacted if no medical documentation provided.
- After 28th absence: PINS and outside agency may be contacted.
Principal's decision on retention regardless of academic standing.

Minimum Attendance Requirement for Pre-K through 5th Grade Students

The Elementary Schools' attendance requirement is consistent with the District's Attendance Policy. All students must attend class a minimum of eighty-five percent (85%) of the time. This shall apply to all students in grades Pre-K through 5. The school staff will discuss the importance of school attendance and offer assistance to parents and guardians of students who are excessively absent.

Notification Sequence

- a) As soon as possible after the tenth day of absence and/or tardiness, the school administration shall send written notification of the number of absences to the student's parent(s) or guardian(s) reminding them of the importance of regular attendance.
- b) As soon as possible after the twentieth day of absence and/or tardiness, the school administration shall send written notification of the number of absences to the student's parent(s) or guardian(s) expressing concern about the impact of excessive absences on the student's education. (*request a conference*)
- c) As soon as possible after the twenty-fifth day of absence and/or tardiness, the school administration shall arrange for a conference with the parent(s) or guardian(s) and shall consider contacting outside agencies to protect the interest of the child.

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Consequences of Excessive Absenteeism at the Elementary Level

- a) A doctor's note may be required.
- b) A child must demonstrate competence for promotion to next grade level by performance on district's standardized tests.
- c) Referrals will be made to outside agencies for additional support towards attendance problem.

Incentives and Consequences for Attendance Patterns

Each school, where administration deems appropriate, may use the following list of incentives to encourage good attendance.

- a) Community donated gifts are given or raffled to students who meet attendance standards.
- b) Students who meet the attendance standard can eat in a special area or with a special person in the school.
- c) Field trip arranged for students who meet the attendance standards.
- d) Participation in extra curricula activities for students who meet attendance standards.
- e) Recognition award for one hundred percent (100%) attendance each term.
- f) Students with perfect attendance selected to park in choice locations.
- g) Attendance record used when considering issuance of working papers.

Each school, where the administration deems appropriate, may use the following list of sanctions to discourage poor attendance.

- a) Loss of the right to play sports.
 - b) Loss of the right to participate in extra-curricula activities.
 - c) Loss of the right to attend school-related trips.
 - d) Loss of parking privileges.
 - e) Revocation of student's employment permit.
 - f) Attendance at meeting with parents, administration and counselor to discuss impact of excessive absences.
 - g) Repetition of course or grade level due to excessive absences.
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Adoption Date 3/23/09

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