

STUDENT ATTENDANCE

The Board of Education recognizes that consistent attendance is a critical factor in a student's ability to achieve his/her fullest academic potential. Students have a right and responsibility to attend school on a daily basis. Consistent attendance contributes to a positive school climate while inconsistent attendance diminishes the student's ability to effectively use school resources, as well as having a negative effect on the entire school community.

Attendance is a critical factor for the educational success of both the District and its pupils. Regular attendance and punctuality will improve a pupil's grades, enthusiasm for education, involvement in school activities, and social life. Consistent school attendance, improved academic performance, and school completion will contribute to the District's efforts to reach the higher standards established by the Board of Education.

This policy shall ensure the maintenance of an adequate record verifying the attendance of all children at instruction in accordance with the Education Law of the State of New York and in accordance with the regulations of the Commissioner. This policy will also permit the District to examine patterns of pupil absence and develop effective intervention strategies to improve school attendance.

A. REGISTER OF ATTENDANCE

In order to keep a record of a pupil's presence, absence, tardiness, or early departure from instruction, each Building Principal, or his/her designee, shall maintain a register of attendance in each District school. The entries in the register shall be verified by the oath or affirmation of the person making such entries.

The register shall include the following information for each pupil:

1. name
2. date of birth
3. address where pupil resides
4. full names of parents, or persons in parental relation
5. phone numbers where the parents, or persons in parental relation, may be contacted,
6. date of pupil's enrollment
7. record of attendance on each day of scheduled instruction
8. a record of each scheduled day of instruction during which the school was closed for all or part of the school day due to extraordinary circumstances
9. the date of withdrawal or drop from enrollment

B. EXCUSED AND UNEXCUSED EVENTS

The following reasons for absence, tardiness or early departure will be deemed excused absences for the purpose of the attendance register:

1. Death in the immediate family. Immediate family is defined as a parent, grandparent, sibling, aunt, uncle, or cousin
2. Religious observances
3. Quarantine
4. Court appearances or another documented appropriate legal reason
5. Seniors with prior approval for college visits or entrance testing
6. Medical, dental, optical, or other health-related appointments, with excuses in writing from the medical provider
7. Home instruction approved through the Counseling Center (upon completion of appropriate forms)
8. Late to class with a pass. The pass must have been authorized by administrator, teacher, Counseling Center, social worker or health office
9. Absence from class period when student is in health office, provided that absence is documented by health office
10. School authorized field trips
11. Absences approved by Building Principal (including but not limited to absences due to circumstances related to homelessness)

All other reasons not listed above are unexcused. Sickness is an excused event for the elementary and middle schools only.

It is the obligation of the parent or person in parental relation to provide a written explanation for any excused absence, tardiness, or early departure. Written notice must be provided within three (3) days of the absence, tardiness, or early departure to the Building Principal, or his/her designee. If timely written notice is not provided, the absence will be treated as an unexcused absence and the pupil will be subject to the range of consequences hereinafter set forth. In addition, schoolwork not finished due to absence, tardiness, or early departure – whether excused or unexcused – must be completed by the student.

C. ATTENDANCE INCENTIVES

1. At the building and classroom levels, Building Principals and teachers are encouraged to schedule special events (quizzes, game days, debates, etc.) for days of chronically high absenteeism, like Mondays and Fridays.
2. 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.
3. 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.
4. Engaging students and families, determine whether systemic barriers to attendance exist for students, and develop solutions to remove those barriers.

D. PRE-KINDERGARTEN THROUGH GRADE FOUR

Each pupil’s presence or absence shall be recorded by the classroom teacher after attendance is taken once per school day. Since pupils are not dismissed from school grounds during the lunch period, attendance will only be recorded once per school day.

E. GRADES FIVE THROUGH TWELVE

Each pupil’s presence or absence shall be recorded after attendance is taken during each period of scheduled instruction. Should pupils not change classrooms for each period of scheduled instruction, attendance shall be taken once per school day.

F. DISCIPLINARY ACTION

1. Pre-Kindergarten through Grade Four

Excessive absences, tardiness, or early departure will be handled by the Building Principal.

Range of Consequences:

- Discussion with the student or parent (or parent in parental relation) for the purpose of identifying the problem and developing a solution
- Telephone call to a parent, or person in parental relation
- Conference with a parent, or person in parental relation, at school
- Written notice to a parent, or person in parental relation
- Referral for counseling
- Referral to Child Protective Services

2. Grades Five through Eight

a. Truancy:

Definition: Unexcused absence from school without the knowledge or consent of a parent or guardian. Tardiness in excess of fifteen (15) minutes constitutes an act of truancy.

Range of Consequences:

- Discussion with the student or parent (or parent in parental relation) for the purpose of identifying the problem and developing a solution.
- Internal suspension not to exceed three (3) days.
- Notification of parents and discussion of PINS petition to Family Court.
- Counseling, if it is deemed necessary.
- Repeated offense will result in Principal’s conference. Student is expected to make up work missed.

b. Tardiness

Definition: Failure of student to report on time to homeroom/classroom or to attendance office without a valid excuse. Any tardiness in excess of fifteen (15) minutes constitutes an absence.

Range of Consequences:

- Discussion with the student or parent (or parent in parental relation) for the purpose of identifying the problem and developing a solution.
- Three (3) tardies will result in administrative action which may include the development of a behavioral contract.
- Tardiness in excess of three (3) occurrences requires parental notification, and if necessary, PINS petition to Family Court.
- Repeated offenses will result in Principal's conference. Student is expected to make up for work missed.

c. Cutting Class

Definition: Failure of student to attend a class, without a proper excuse.

Range of Consequences:

- Discussion with the student or parent (or parent in parental relation) for the purpose of identifying the problem and developing a solution.
- First Offense: Development of a behavioral contract. Parent conference. Student is expected to make up for missed work.
- Second Offense: Possible release to parental supervision. Parent conference. Student is expected to make up for missed work.
- Third Offense: Immediate suspension. Parent conference and counseling referral. Student is expected to make up for missed work.
- Fourth Offense: Immediate suspension. Parent conference and counseling referral. File PINS petition with Family Court. Student is expected to make up for missed work.

d. Early Departure

Definition: Student leaves the building without permission prior to the end of the school day.

Range of Consequences:

- Discussion with the student or parent (or parent in parental relation) for the purpose of identifying the problem and developing a solution.
- First Offense: Mandatory parent conference. Student may be given an internal suspension.
- Second Offense: Mandatory parent conference and referral to counseling. Student may be given an internal suspension.
- Third Offense: Mandatory parent conference.
- Fourth Offense: Mandatory parent conference.

3. Grades Nine through Twelve

a. Truancy

Definition: Unexcused absence from school without the knowledge or consent of a parent or guardian. Tardiness in excess of fifteen (15) minutes constitutes an act of truancy.

Range of Consequences:

- Discussion with the student or parent (or parent in parental relation) for the purpose of identifying the problem and developing a solution.
- Saturday detention at the discretion of the administrator.
- Parental notification and possible counseling, and if necessary, PINS petition to Family Court.
- Loss of privileges and/or social probation.
- Repeated offenses will result in a Principal's Conference. Student expected to make for missed work.

b. Tardiness

Definition: Failure of student to report on time to homeroom/classroom or to attendance office without a valid excuse. Any tardiness in excess of fifteen (15) minutes is an absence.

Range of Consequences:

- Discussion with the student or parent (or parent in parental relation) for the purpose of identifying the problem and developing a solution.
- Five (5) tardies – one (1) afternoon of detention
- Ten (10) tardies – two (2) afternoons of detention
- Fifteen (15) tardies – three (3) afternoons of detention
- Twenty (20) tardies – Saturday detention
- Twenty-one (21) tardies – Three (3) day internal suspension
- Twenty-two (22) tardies – Principal’s conference and internal suspension
- Student expected to make up work missed.
- Saturday detention or internal suspension.

c. Cutting Class

Definition: Failure of student to attend a class, without a proper excuse.

Range of Consequences:

- Discussion with the student or parent (or parent in parental relation) for the purpose of identifying the problem and developing a solution.
- First Offense: The teacher will verify the unexcused absence by a discussion with the student and will contact a parent, or person in parental relation, by phone. The teacher will then forward a Behavior Referral to the Building Principal. The Principal will then:
 - Notify the parents, or persons in parental relation, in writing, concerning the cut.
 - Assign the student to detention.
 - Send a copy of the referral to the student’s guidance counselor for discussion.
 - Consider loss of student privileges.
- Second Offense: The Principal will assign the student to Saturday detention or internal suspension and notify the parents, or persons in parental relation, in writing, of the unavoidable consequences of a third cut.
- Third Offense: A third incident establishes a pattern of continued abuse. The student will be denied credit in the course and the student will receive a grade of “NM” (“No Mark”) for the course. The student must remain actively involved in the course and meet minimum academic requirements to attend summer school. The Principal will notify the parents, or persons in parental relation, in writing, of this action.
- Fourth Offense: Principal’s Conference

G. ONLINE/DISTANCE/REMOTE LEARNING

Students learning remotely will need to show daily school participation, which is to be recorded by teachers and reported under the provisions of this policy. Such participation will vary depending on the type of remote learning taking place. This can include (*select as appropriate*: documented participation in online or virtual classes, completion of assignments, documentation of daily school activities and learning, or correspondence via online platform, email, and telephone). Teachers are also expected to pay particular attention to the educational progress of students learning remotely and initiate appropriate interventions with the student and their family if a student does not show adequate engagement or growth.

H. ATTENDANCE REVIEW COMMITTEE

The District has established an Attendance Review Committee for each school building to monitor student attendance, evaluate attendance problems, and recommend action to the principal of each building. The Committee may recommend the following action(s):

1. referral to outside agencies
2. guidance counseling
3. denial of academic credit
4. administrative intervention
5. filing a PINS petition in Family Court
6. involvement of school attendance officer
7. invite student to meet with committee
8. invite parent to meet with committee
9. implement attendance reduction contract
10. any other action that would accomplish the goal of improving attendance

The Attendance Review Committee for each building shall be made of up the Building Principal, the guidance counselor, and the teacher of the class in which the student has failed to attend.

I. ATTENDANCE REDUCTION CONTRACT FOR HIGH SCHOOL

When a student reaches ten (10) absences in a semester course or twenty (20) absences in a full-year course, the parents, or persons in parental relation, will be afforded an opportunity to appear before the Attendance Review Committee. The student will be offered the opportunity to complete an attendance reduction contract. The contract enables a student to gain a two (2) day reduction from his/her absence total. To fulfill the contract, the student must meet with the teacher and complete course work that is equivalent to two (2) class periods. However, this contract will only be offered once during any course.

If a student is denied credit in a course, he/she will receive a grade of “NM” for the course. The student must remain actively involved in the course and meet minimum academic requirements to attend summer school.

J. COURSE CREDIT FOR HIGH SCHOOL

Students who do not attend a minimum number of scheduled classes in Middle School and High School, regardless of the reason for the absence, may be denied academic credit in the following manner:

Semester Courses: ten (10) absences
Full-Year Courses: twenty (20) absences

Exceptions to the attendance requirements may be made for students with extended and excused sickness who have completed other academic requirements.

Reporting Schedule for High School

In order to ensure that students, parents, teachers, and administrators are aware of any actual or potential attendance problems, the District has established a reporting schedule by which teachers will submit behavior referrals once a student has accumulated a specified number of absences.

1. Level I: one (1) to five (5) absences in either a semester or full-year course:

The teacher shall confer with the student to inform him/her of the attendance problem and determine a schedule for the completion of the missed work. Upon the fifth absence, the teacher shall inform, in writing, a parent, or person in parental relation, that the student has missed five (5) classes.

2. Level II: six (6) absences in a semester course or eight (8) absences in a full year course:

The teacher shall send a behavior referral to the Building Principal who, in turn, shall contact, in writing, a parent or person in parental relation to discuss the possible consequences of continuing attendance problems. The guidance counselor shall also contact the student if any academic problems occur as a result of the poor attendance.

3. Level III: twelve (12) absences in a full-year course:

The teacher shall send a behavior referral to the Building Principal. The guidance counselor shall contact the student and a parent, or person in parental relation, to discuss the continuing problem.

4. Level IV: eight (8) absences in a semester course or sixteen (16) absences in a full-year course:

The teacher shall send a behavior referral to the Building Principal. The Principal shall notify, in writing, the student and a parent, or person in parental relation, of the imminent loss of course credit.

5. Level V: ten (10) absences in a semester course or twenty (20) absences in a full-year course.

The teacher shall send a behavior referral to the Building Principal. The student shall appear before the Attendance Review Committee with his parents, or persons in parental relation, to discuss options by which the student might be able to still receive course credit. If the student fails to attempt or comply with any of these options, the Principal will send the student and his parents, or persons in parental relation, a loss of credit letter.

K. ANNUAL REVIEW

The Attendance Review Board shall annually review the records of pupil attendance at each District building. If such records show a decline in pupil attendance, the Attendance Review Board shall review the comprehensive attendance policy and make any revisions to the plan necessary to improve pupil attendance.

L. PUBLIC AWARENESS

The Board of Education shall promote necessary community awareness of its Comprehensive Attendance policy, and any revisions thereto as soon as practicable.

To accomplish this, the Board of Education shall take the following steps:

1. Provide a plain language summary of the policy to the parents, or persons in parental relation, of pupils at the beginning of the school year and offer further assistance to ensure the policy is understood by pupils and parents, or persons in parental relation.
2. Provide each teacher with a copy of the policy at the beginning of the school year, or upon the employment of a teacher during the school year.
3. Make copies of the policy available to any other member of the community, upon request.

Cross-Reference: 4710, Grading Systems
 5151, Homeless Children
 5300, Student Code of Conduct
 5460, Child Abuse in a Domestic Setting

Reference: 42 USC §11432(g)(1)(I) (McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act)
 Education Law §§1709; 3024; 3025; 3202; 3205-3213; 3225
 8 NYCRR §§104.1; 175.6
 Social Service Law §34-a

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