

ATTENDANCE POLICY

The Board of Education recognizes that regular school attendance is a major component of academic success. Through implementation of this policy, the Board expects to minimize the number 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, teachers and administrators are notified of and understand this policy, the following procedures shall be implemented:

- A plain language summary of this attendance policy will be included in student/parent and guardian handbooks and will be reviewed with students at the start of the school year.
- Parents and guardians can access the district attendance policy on the website.
- 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 or guardian of the specific ATED and reminding them of the attendance policy.
- A back-to-school event will be held at the beginning of each school year where the attendance policy will be made available to emphasize that every day of attendance counts, explain this policy, and stress the parent and guardian’s responsibility for their ensuring their children’s attendance.
- School correspondence may include periodic reminders of the components of this policy.
- The attendance policy and any amendments thereto will be available to faculty and staff on the district website. New staff will receive a copy upon their employment.
- Copies of this policy will also be made available to any community member, upon request.
- The district will share this policy with local Child Protective Services (CPS) and other local agencies to ensure a common understanding of excused and unexcused ATED’s and to work toward identifying and addressing cases of educational neglect.

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, approved college visits, approved field trips, military obligations, or such other reasons as may be approved by the appropriate building administrator (including, but not limited to, absences due to circumstances related to homelessness).

All other ATEDs are considered unexcused absences (examples are but not limited to personal vacations, student employment, non-essential personal appointments and oversleeping/missed bus).

All ATEDs must be accounted for. It is the parent and guardian’s responsibility to notify the school office within 24 hours of the ATED and to provide a written excuse upon the student’s return to school. For homeless students, the homeless liaison will assist the student in providing or obtaining documentation if needed.

General Procedures/Data Collection

- Attendance will be taken during each class period for MS/HS classes and at the beginning of the day for PreK-5 classes.
- At the conclusion of each class period or school day, all attendance information shall be compiled and provided to the designated staff member(s) responsible for attendance.
- The nature of an ATED shall be coded on a student's record.
- Student ATED data shall be available to and should be reviewed by the designated school personnel.
- Where additional information is received that requires corrections to be made to a student's attendance records, such correction will be made immediately.
- Attendance data will be analyzed periodically to identify patterns or trends in student absences. If patterns emerge, district resources will be targeted to understand and eliminate barriers to attendance.
- Where consistent with other school practices, teachers and staff shall detain students in the hallways who are absent from a class period without excuse and refer the students to a building administrator or dean of students.
- Continuous monitoring will be conducted to identify students who are absent, tardy, or leave class or school early. A student will be considered chronically absent if they miss ten percent or more of the school year or as described by the law. Satisfactory attendance is missing five percent 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.

Incentives and Sanctions to Used

All students who have exemplary attendance will receive recognition of such attendance.

A designated staff member(s) will contact the student's parents and guardians and the student's school counselor in the event that a student's record reveals excessive ATED's, excused and/or unexcused. Excessive ATED's is defined as 18 ATED's in a school year and/or nine (9) in a semester.

In grades pre-k through twelve, each school administrator will address ATED's and appropriate action will be taken. Consequences of ATED's may include, but are not limited to, parent and guardian notification, involvement of a preventative caseworker, detention, reports to Child Protective Services (CPS), Person In Need of Supervision (PINS), revocation of driving privileges, and revocation or no issuance of working card. Such staff member(s) shall remind parents of the attendance policy via district correspondence (Exhibits) which explains the ramifications of excessive ATEDs, stress the importance of class attendance and discuss appropriate intervention strategies to correct the situation.

Unexcused ATEDs may result in disciplinary action consistent with the district's code of conduct. Those penalties may include, for example, detention or denial of the privilege of participating in or attending extracurricular events. However, absences related to homelessness shall not result in negative consequences where the district determines that it would be in the best interests of the student in retaining the student in school.

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. If other staff members suspect education neglect, they must follow the procedures outlined in Board policy and regulation 5460, Child Abuse in a Domestic Setting, and advise the Building Principal.

Parent/Guardian Notification

A parent and/or guardian will be contacted each day a student is absent. The parent and/or guardian must provide updated information for the school's database (Schooltool) via Student Profile Sheet sent home annually or when contact information changes.

In grades pre-k through twelve, a letter will be sent home to a parent and/or guardian when a child has reached 4, 8, 12, and 16 absences explaining the importance of school attendance.

Class attendance data is included on quarter report cards. In grades 6-12, student attendance data is live in Schooltool daily. In grades 9-12, attendance reports are mailed home to the parents and/or guardians of all students at risk of not receiving credit due to excessive absences.

At the beginning of each school year, a letter may be sent to parents and/or guardians of students who were chronically absent during the preceding year (20 days or more) stressing the importance of school and class attendance.

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 performance on homework, tests, papers, projects, etc.

Students are expected to attend all scheduled classes. Consistent with the importance of classroom participation, unexcused ATEDs may affect the percentage of a student's class participation grade relative to the whole grade for the marking period. A student who misses class for any reason must arrange with the teacher involved to make up any work missed. Completion of this work will give the student any grades missed. Make up opportunities must be completed by a date specified by the student's teacher for the class in question. The time frame will range from 1-10 days or the end of the quarter, whichever comes first. Students are responsible:

- To contact their teachers for missed work immediately upon the student's return from an absence; and
- To give teachers advance notification of an excused absence due to school-related activity (e.g., music lessons, field trips) in order for work to be provided.

At the high school level, any student with more than 9 absences in a semester course or more than 18 absences in a full year course will result in a student not receiving credit for the course. Absences for course credit are defined as any and all absences regardless of cause. Thus, there is no distinction or discretion regarding excused or unexcused absences.

A student who exceeds the absence limit and has completed all required assignments may appeal to the High School Principal during the last week of the semester or school year, whichever applies. The student is responsible for providing any supporting documentation, such as hospital or court records. The principal may award credit if there exists extenuating circumstances that caused the absences or may make other arrangements by which the student may earn course credit (assignments, course audits, etc.). The decision of the principal is final.

Annual Review

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

Ref: 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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