

5100 ATTENDANCE

I. Purpose

In accordance with New York State Education Law, the Board of Education requires that students attend school full time from the age of six (6) years old until the last day of the school year in which they turn sixteen (16), unless the student has completed an approved four-year high school course of study. Moreover, the Board of Education recognizes that attendance is an integral part of a student's performance and ability to meet New York State's academic mandates.

As such, the Board is committed to the following objectives:

- Improving student achievement;
- Fostering good attendance habits;
- Preparing students for post-graduation experience by encouraging responsibility;
- Ensuring the maintenance of an adequate record verifying the attendance of all children at instruction;
- Establishing a mechanism by which the patterns of student absence can be examined to develop effective intervention strategies to improve student attendance;
- Promoting the safety of the District's students throughout the school day; and
- Providing an intervention process to assist students and their families in improving student attendance.

II. Excused and Unexcused Absences

If a student is tardy, departs early, or is absent from school for all or part of the school day, the student must provide a reason for the absence to the building principal or his/her designee. The building principal or his/her designee shall then determine whether the absence is considered excused or unexcused.

1. Excused Absences:

A. The District recognizes the following absences as "excused" absences:

- i. Family death, illness, or emergency beyond the family's control;
- ii. Student Illness: If a student becomes ill during school he/she must report to the nurses' office;
- iii. Chronic/Extended Illness: For students who are absent due to a chronic/extended illness or disability, or due to a need for homebound services, the parent must complete a notification form with the principal at the time of the student's enrollment or upon the onset of the student's condition. Supporting documentation from the student's physician will also be required. The principal or designee, where appropriate, shall refer the student to the District's Section 504 Team or Committee on Special Education ("CSE") to address the student's education possible need for a health plan and/or IDEA and 504 eligibility, in light of his/her condition. 504 Plans, health plans and IEP's are subject to periodic review;

iv. Pre-arranged Appointments with the court, social service agencies or other state agencies as well as appointments with health care providers that cannot be scheduled outside of school hours. Supporting documentation of the appointment will be required to verify the student's absence;

v. Inclement weather that results in unsafe travel conditions;

vi. Religious observances;

vii. Suspensions;

viii. Approved College Visits, for seniors preparing for college entrance, limited to two (2) days with written request from parent one (1) week in advance;

ix. Approved School-Sponsored Trips and Activities;

x. Pre-arranged and Approved Guidance Appointments;

xi. Exceptional Circumstances: The principal may approve a pre-arranged absence where the absence from attendance is in the best interests of the student and his/her family. Approval for such absences must be requested of the principal, in writing. In extenuating circumstances that are supported by adequate documentation, the principal may approve an exceptional circumstances absence after it has occurred.

No more than two (2) absences per student may be approved by the principal for exceptional circumstances during a school year. For requests of greater than two (2) days the absence must be approved by the Superintendent of Schools.

B. Documentation of Absences:

Absences for any of the aforementioned reasons may be considered "excused" by the building principal or assistant principal(s) upon receipt of a written, signed explanation from the student's parent(s)/person(s) in parental relation, together with any supporting documentation that may be required. This information should be submitted to the school by the student upon return from his/her absence. [Notes must include the date(s) and reason for the absence and must be signed by a parent/guardian. No notes will be accepted after three (3) school days following date of a student's return to school. Failure to submit a note will constitute an unexcused absence regardless of the reason.]

A student's parent(s)/person(s) in parental relation should notify the school, in writing, and receive approval in advance of any scheduled absence (i.e., court appearance, medical appointment that cannot be scheduled outside of school hours, religious observance, etc.). Such absences must be documented with official written verification (from courts, physicians, etc.).

Upon returning to school, or before leaving school, each student must report to the attendance office for the appropriate pass. This pass must be shown to the subject teacher to verify the absence as excused.

C. Notification of Excessive Excused Absences:

The building principal or assistant principal shall also notify a student's parent(s)/person(s) in parental relation, of the accrual of excused absences or a pattern of excused absences that appear to be affecting the child's academic performance. The District will take efforts to identify the reasons for the excessive absenteeism and formulate measures to address it.

2. Unexcused Absences:

A. Types of Unexcused Absences:

Absences for any reason other than those set forth as "excused absences" under this policy, shall be considered "unexcused" and may be subject to disciplinary action in accordance with law and the District's Code of Conduct.

B. Lateness to Class: At the 6-12 Grade Levels:

i. Any unexcused lateness to class or early departure from class beyond fifteen (15) minutes shall equal one (1) unexcused absence.

ii. Three (3) unexcused lateness or early departure from a single class which are under fifteen (15) minutes will equal one (1) unexcused absence.

C. Notification:

Parents will be notified of a student's absences in a manner consistent with the procedures set forth in this policy.

III. Attendance Incentives and Nonattendance Disciplinary Sanctions

The District shall employ the following intervention strategies, incentives, and disciplinary measures to foster attendance and discourage student non-attendance.

1. Notification of Absences/Denial of Course Credit: (Pertains to grades 9-12 only)

A student's final grade in a class may be based on class participation, homework, quizzes, exams, etc. Due to the importance of class participation, students in grades 9-12 must meet a minimum standard of attendance in order to be eligible for course credit. Students must maintain at least an 89% attendance rate to earn course credit.

All absences (excused and unexcused) are counted toward the attendance threshold for purposes of denying course credit. A maximum of two (2) college visitations which are subject to prior approval at the discretion of the principal or assistant, in accordance with this policy, shall not be counted toward the attendance threshold for purposes of denying course credit, if the student has satisfactorily completed make-up work for the missed time, by a date set by the student's teacher(s).

A. Notification Sequence:

One-Credit Courses: Course credit lost after 20 absences

1. After five (5) absences before the end of the 1st marking period, the subject teachers will speak to the student, a letter will be sent to the parent/guardian and a copy of the letter will be sent to the subject teacher and guidance counselor. The subject teacher will call the parent/guardian.

2. After ten (10) absences before the end of the 2nd making period, the subject teacher will speak to the student, a letter will be sent to the parent/guardian and a copy of the letter will be sent to the subject teacher and guidance counselor. The guidance counselor will call the parent/guardian to discuss the student's attendance and the policy.
3. After fifteen (15) absences in one academic year the subject teacher will speak to the student, a letter will be sent to the parent/guardian and a copy of the letter will be sent to the subject teacher, guidance counselor, and assistant principal. The guidance counselor will call the parent/guardian to discuss the student's attendance and the policy.
4. After eighteen (18) absences in one academic year the subject teacher will speak to the student, a letter will be sent to the parent/guardian, and a copy of the letter will be sent to the subject teacher, guidance counselor, and assistant principal. The student and parent/guardian will be requested to meet with appropriate staff, which may include the students' teacher, guidance counselor, other support staff and a member of the administration. The Assistant Principal will call the parent/guardian to discuss the student's attendance and the policy.
5. After twenty (20) absences in one academic year the subject teacher will speak with the student, and a certified letter will be sent to the parent/guardian informing them that course credit is being denied. Copies of the letter will be sent to the subject teacher, guidance counselor and assistant principal. The student and parent/guardian will be requested to attend a conference with appropriate staff, which may include the student's teacher, guidance counselor, other support staff and a member of the administration. The Principal or his/her designee will call the parent/guardian to discuss the student's attendance and the policy.

Half-Credit Courses: Course credit lost after 10 absences

1. After three (3) absences the subject teacher will speak to the student, a letter will be sent to the parent/guardian and a copy of the letter will be sent to the subject teacher and guidance counselor. The subject teacher will call the parent/guardian.
2. After six (6) absences the subject teacher will speak to the student, a letter will be sent to the parent/guardian and a copy of the letter will be sent to the subject teacher and guidance counselor. The guidance counselor will call the parent/guardian to discuss the student's attendance and the policy.
3. After eight (8) absences the subject teacher will speak to the student and a letter will be sent to the parent/guardian and a copy of the letter will be sent to the subject teacher, guidance counselor, and assistant principal. The student and parent/guardian will be requested to meet with appropriate staff, which may include the student's teachers, guidance counselor, other support staff and a member of administration.
4. After ten (10) absences the subject teacher will speak with the student and a letter will be sent to the parent/guardian, informing them that course credit is being denied. Copies of the letter will be sent to the subject teacher, guidance counselor and assistant principal. The student and a parent/guardian will be requested to attend a conference with appropriate staff, which may include the student's teachers, guidance counselor, other support staff and a member of the administration.

IV. Student's Responsibility for Make-up Work/Tests for Excused Absences:

Students absent from school are expected to make-up all missed work. It is the responsibility of the student to arrange make-up work/tests with their teachers. All work missed must be satisfactorily completed within five (5) school days, unless otherwise approved by the principal or his/her designee.

V. Appeals Committee:

Students faced with loss of credit in a course due to absence have the right to appeal before the Principal, Assistant Principal, Department Chairperson/Supervisor and classroom teacher no later than five (5) school days after being informed of the decision to withhold credit. The Principal as part of the appeals process may also consult the student's guidance counselor and other pertinent personnel. The Building Appeals Committee retains the right to waive the maximum allowable absence limit for "extenuating circumstances" upon the submission of satisfactory proof to the Appeals Committee. Final determination of the committee's recommendation will be made by the building principal and conveyed to the student and his/her parent(s)/person(s) in parental relations in writing. The student has the right to present a statement and position to the Committee.

An appeal of the committee's decision may be made by the student's parent(s)/person(s) in parental relation to the Superintendent within five (5) school days of being informed of the committee's decision. An appeal of the Superintendent's decision may be made by the student's parent(s)/person(s) in parental relation, to the Board of Education within five (5) school days of being informed of the Superintendent's Decision.

VI. Detention or In-School Suspension:

The District may impose after-school detention or in-school suspension as warranted and in accordance with the District's Code of Conduct and law. Students may also be denied the privilege of participating in or attending extracurricular events.