

STUDENT ATTENDANCE

- I. Purpose/Statement of Objectives: Good attendance is a central component of the educational process. The educational program offered by the District is predicated upon student presence and requires continuity of instruction and classroom participation. This Board of Education attendance policy has been developed and implemented to ensure the maintenance of an adequate record verifying the attendance of all children at instruction in accordance with Education Law §§ 3205 and 3210 and establishes a mechanism by which the patterns of pupil absence can be examined to develop effective intervention strategies to improve school attendance.

- II. Strategies to be Employed: The District will employ the following strategies to ensure good attendance of all of its students:
 - A. Development of this policy and appropriate record-keeping mechanisms to ensure that the attendance of all students is tracked and analyzed.
 - B. Development of mechanisms to intervene on the individual student level when a student's attendance record demonstrates a need for improvement.
 - C. Development of a District-wide program to encourage good attendance and improve the attendance of all District students.

- III. Excused and Unexcused Absences:
 - A. Appropriate Grounds for Excused Absences or Tardiness. The student and his/her parent or person in parental relation are responsible for providing written notification of the reason for such absences upon the student's return to school. Whenever possible, parents or persons in parental relation are encouraged to contact the school in writing or by telephone prior to the absence. The following list represents legal and appropriate bases for being absent from school or tardy.
 1. Personal Illness
 2. Sickness or death in family
 3. Medical Appointments
 4. Court Appearances
 5. Religious Observance
 6. Quarantine
 7. Supervised Education Project
 8. Approved cooperative work program
 9. Impassable Roads or Adverse Weather Conditions
 10. Military Obligation
 11. Pre-approved college visits for H.S. juniors and seniors
 12. Such other reasons as may be approved or permitted by the Commissioner of Education

- B. Grounds for Unexcused Absences or Tardiness. Absence for any reason not included in the list set forth in Section III, A is an unexcused absence. Absences for reasons set forth in section III, A for which a student does not have pre-approval from the District or for which the student does not provide an appropriate note or documentation within three (3) school days of his/her return to school will also be recorded as an unexcused absence.

At the request of a building principal or his/her designee, a student who has been absent for more than five consecutive school days, or more than 10 days per quarter, due to reported illness may be required to submit a doctor's note to substantiate those absences as excused.

Parental requests excusing their child from school for reasons not included above (i.e., to take a driver's test, to get a haircut, to go shopping, to go on a family trip, to care for a younger sibling, or not stating a specific reason) are unexcused absences under state law. Excuses that a student "overslept" or had "car trouble" are also unacceptable and will constitute an unexcused absence or tardy.

IV. Record Keeping:

A. When Attendance will be Taken:

1. Elementary Buildings (non-departmentalized). Attendance shall be taken each morning at the beginning of the school day. Each classroom teacher shall record the students' presence or absence in a classroom record and shall report all absence or tardiness to the building office on an attendance report form. If any students are dismissed from the school building for lunch, attendance shall be taken in the same manner at the start of afternoon classes as well.
2. Middle School/High School Buildings (departmentalized). Attendance shall be taken at the beginning of each period of scheduled instruction. Each classroom teacher shall record the students' presence or absence in a classroom record and shall report all absence or tardiness to the building office on an attendance report form.

- B. Content/Form of District Attendance Records. The District maintains a permanent record of attendance for all students enrolled in instruction. The attendance record will be prepared by teachers and maintained electronically and in paper form on a building-level basis by the building principal or another employee designated by the Board of Education. A District-wide record shall also be compiled by the Superintendent from the building-level records. The record shall

include the following information for each student; name, date of birth, names of parents or person in parental relation; address where student resides, phone numbers where parents or persons in parental relation can be reached, date of enrollment, a record of the student's attendance on each day of scheduled instruction recorded in conformity with the chart below, a record of each scheduled day of instruction during which the school is closed for all or part of the day due to extraordinary circumstances.

<u>Code</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Status</u>	<u>Excused</u>
UA	Unexcused Absence	Absence	No
UT	Unexcused Tardy	Tardiness	No
EA	Excused Absence	Absence	Yes
ET	Excused Tardy	Tardiness	Yes
OS	Out-of-school Suspension(w/o tutoring)	Absence	Yes
IS	In-school Suspension	Present	Yes
SP	Suspended (Out-of-school w/tutoring)	Present	Yes
TR	Truancy	Absence	No
ED	Educational Absence	Absence	Yes
RA	Religious Absence	Absence	Yes
EP	Educational Program	Present	Yes
SC	School closed (extraordinary circumstance)	Present	Yes

Entries on the attendance record shall be made only by a teacher, the building principal, or an employee designated by the Board of Education and shall be verified as accurate under oath or affirmation.

- C. Contacting parents. In the event that a student is absent from school without a previous notification to the teacher or building principal, the school will call the student's home to confirm the student's absence. If no parent or person in parental relation is home, the District will contact a parent or person in parental relationship at their place of employment or number listed on the student's emergency contact form. In both situations, if contact is not made with a parent or person in parental relation, a message will be left for the parent or person in parental relation to call the school immediately.

V. Student's Attendance Requirement for Rewards, Discipline, and Receipt of Course Credit:

- A. Rewards for Good Attendance. In addition to the likelihood of enhanced educational progress, good attendance will be the basis for student recognition awards. Any student who attends 95% or more of his or her scheduled instructional periods will be eligible for good attendance recognition. Any student who has perfect

attendance shall be eligible for perfect attendance recognition. In addition, good attendance will be a positive endorsement factor in any letter of recommendation written by a school employee.

- B. Penalties for Poor Attendance. Chronic unexcused absences and tardiness are disruptive to the educational process and will not be tolerated. The following procedures are in place to deal with excessive unexcused absences.
- a. 10 days absent – letter parents;
 - b. 15 days absent – letter to parents, attendance office called to visit home; absence reported to superintendent; student may be banned from participating in any school-sponsored activity requiring them to miss classes;
 - c. 20 days absent – letter to parents advising that a PINS petition may be filed, if the student is less than 16 years of age;
 - d. 30 days absent – District may file a PINS petition, if the student is less than 16 years of age;

The District retains discretion whether or not to file a PINS petition. PINS petitions may be filed earlier than these guidelines if the situation warrants such action.

- C. Make-up work and course credit. Students who have been absent shall be afforded an opportunity to make-up missed class assignments, tests, and homework, regardless of whether the absence was excused or unexcused. If make-up work is not completed by the deadline specified by the teacher, (consistent with any applicable building-level guidelines) the teacher shall have the discretion to reduce the student's grade, or refuse to accept and grade the work. Course credit shall not be denied solely due to absences. If, however, a student who has been absent fails to timely complete required make-up work, and such missing or late class assignments, tests, or homework assignments result in the student receiving a failing grade for the course, course credit shall be denied.
- D. Unexcused tardiness and absences will also subject a student to the range of penalties specified in the District's Code of Conduct, except that a student shall not be suspended due to unexcused absences.
- E. Development of an Attendance Intervention Strategy:
The Superintendent, through a committee of teachers, parents, and school administrators, will develop an attendance intervention strategy consistent with this policy in the event that regular reviews of the District's attendance record suggests that overall student attendance is declining or should be improved.

F. Policy Review and Assessment:

This policy shall be annually reviewed by the Board of Education at the same time the building level attendance records are reviewed. If the attendance records show a decline in attendance, the Board shall revise this policy as is necessary to improve attendance.

VI. Distribution and Public Awareness:

- A. Public Meeting. This Policy shall be adopted only after it has been presented at a public meeting of the Board of Education, duly noticed, that provides for the participation of school personnel, parents, students, and any other interested persons.
- B. Plain Language Summary. The Superintendent shall create a plain language summary of this Policy which shall be distributed to parents and persons in parental relationship to all District students at the beginning of each school year.
- C. Distribution to Staff. Each teacher and administrator shall be provided with a copy of this policy upon adoption or subsequent amendment. Each new teacher or administrator shall be provided a copy of this policy upon employment.
- D. This policy shall be made available to any member of the community upon request.

References: 8 N.Y.C.R.R. § 104.1
39 Ed. Dep't Rep. 248 (2000)
36 Ed. Dep't Rep. 290 (1997)