

## STUDENT ATTENDANCE

### *Attendance*

The Board of Education recognizes that regular school attendance is a major requisite to academic success. Through implementation of this policy, the Board expects to reduce the current level of unexcused absences, tardiness, and early departures (referred to in this policy as “ATEDs”), encourage full attendance by all students, maintain an adequate attendance record-keeping system, identify patterns of student ATEDs and develop effective intervention strategies to improve school attendance.

### *Notice*

To attain our objectives, 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.

- The attendance policy will be included in student handbooks and will be reviewed with students at the start of each school year.
- Parents will receive a plain language summary of this policy by mail at the start of the school year. Parents will be asked to sign and return a statement indicating that they have read and understand the policy. The signed statement will be filed in each student’s permanent folder.

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(s) by phone or mail of the specific ATED, remind them of the attendance policy, and review ATED intervention procedures with them.

During a back-to-school event at the beginning of each school year this policy and the parent’s responsibility for their ensuring their children’s attendance will be explained and stressed.

School newsletters and district publications will include periodic reminders of the components of this policy.

- The district will include a copy of the attendance policy and any amendments thereto in faculty and staff handbooks. New staff will have this section emphasized upon beginning employment.

All faculty and staff will meet review the attendance policy and clarify their roles in its implementation during operating staff meetings.

- Copies of this policy will be made available to any community member, upon request.

### *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 due to inclement weather, religious observance or education, quarantine,

required court appearances attendance at health clinics, approved college visits, approved cooperative work programs, military obligations, or such other reasons as may be approved by the Building Principal.

All other ATEDs, e.g.; baby-sitting, working, being tired or oversleeping, shopping, needed at home, cold weather or missing the bus, are considered unexcused absences. Any reason not listed as excused shall be deemed unexcused unless the Principal determines otherwise.

All ATEDs must be accounted for. It is the parent's responsibility to notify the school office (within at least 24 hours) of an ATED. If this is not done, the school will notify the parent by the most expeditious means available. The parent must provide a written excuse for the ATED upon the student's return to school.

#### *General Procedures/Data Collection*

- Attendance will be taken during each class period when students have changed rooms. Otherwise, student attendance in grades K-8 must be taken at least once per day.
- 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 the Building Principal or their designee.
- 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.
- Where additional information is received that requires corrections to be made to a student's attendance records, such corrections will be made immediately. Notice of such a change will be sent to appropriate school personnel subject to applicable confidentiality rules.
- The nature of an ATED shall be coded on a student's record. Minimum coding required includes: A, T, E, IA, IT, IE, ISS, OSS. All T & E designations should include a physical time reference.
- Student ATED data shall be available to and should be reviewed by the designated school personnel in an expeditious manner.
- Continuous monitoring will be conducted to identify students who frequently are absent, tardy, or leave class or school early.
- Attendance data will be analyzed periodically to identify patterns or trends in student absences.
- Monitoring and analysis of student ATED data, both individual and collective, will result in the implementation of actions designated to reinforce excellence and improvement in attendance and diminish or extinguish poor attendance.

#### *Attendance Incentives*

The district will support building strategies which prove to successfully acknowledge student's efforts to maintain or improve school attendance. Each building will be responsible for designing and utilizing those means which provide the greatest incentive for their students. Successful strategies currently used include but are not limited to:

- Perfect attendance certificates issued on a quarterly basis.
- Public recognition for excellent attendance.

- Student of the month nominations resulting from exemplary or greatly improved attendance.
- Annual Perfect Attendance certificates and award ceremonies.
- Four year cumulative certificates.
- Campus parking and lunch privileges.
- Special activities for students achieving exemplary attendance.
- Letters of commendation to parents for students with exemplary attendance or who demonstrate significant positive changes in attendance patterns.
- An attendance honor roll for students with perfect attendance and those students whose attendance has improved significantly.
- 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.

### *Disciplinary Consequences*

Similarly, buildings are responsible for developing strategies and actions which diminish or extinguish poor individual or collective student attendance. Unexcused ATEDs will result in disciplinary action consistent with the district's code of conduct. Those penalties may include but are not limited to, detention, extended detention, suspension of sport and/or extracurricular event participation, revocation of privileges, in-school and out of school suspension, and PINS action.

In addition, designated staff member(s) will contact the student's parents to:

- a. remind them of the attendance policy;
- b. insure their understanding of the ramifications of unexcused ATEDs;
- c. stress the importance of class attendance; and
- d. discuss appropriate intervention strategies to correct the situation.

### *Attendance/Grade Policy*

The Board of Education recognizes the important relationship between class attendance and student achievement. Consequently, each marking period a student's final grade may be based on classroom participation as well as a student's performance on homework, tests, papers, projects, etc.

Students are expected to attend all scheduled classes. Consistent with the importance of classroom participation, unexcused ATEDs will affect a student's class participation grade for that marking period.

At the high school level, any student with more than nine unexcused ATEDs for one semester or 18 unexcused ATEDs for a full year will not receive credit for that course. Only those students unexcused ATEDs will be given the opportunity to make up a test or other missed work and/or turn in a late assignment for inclusion in their final grade. For example, students who are unable to attend school or a class on a given day due to their participation in a school sponsored activity (i.e., music lessons, field trips), may arrange with their teachers to make up any work missed. This similarly applies to any student who misses a class due to illness or any other excused reason.

However, students with properly excused ATEDs are expected, upon their return, to consult with their teachers regarding missed work. Excused ATEDs will not count toward the minimum attendance standard, if make ups are completed by a date specified by the student's teacher for the class in question.

To ensure that parents and students are aware of the implications of this minimum attendance requirement, the teacher or other designated staff member(s) will advise the student and contact the parent(s) by telephone and mail at appropriate intervals prior to the student reaching 9 or 18 unexcused ATEDs.

#### *Annual Review*

The Board shall be provided with an annual review of building-level student attendance. If the data shows a decline in student attendance, the Board shall direct the Principal to revise their procedures within this policy to improve student attendance. If the problem is found to be systemic, it is incumbent upon the Board to review and revise this policy to improve its effectiveness in achieving high student attendance.

Ref: Education Law §§1709, 3024; 3025 – 3213; 3225  
8 NYCRR §§ 104.1; 175.6

Adoption date: June 4, 2002

Effective: July 1, 2002