

**CHEEKTOWAGA-MARYVALE
UNION FREE SCHOOL DISTRICT**

COMPREHENSIVE ATTENDANCE POLICY

Revised June 2023

I. Objectives to be Accomplished through this Policy

Every student has a right to educational opportunities that will enable the student to develop his or her fullest potential. Attendance policies are based on the principles that regular school attendance maximizes the student's interaction with his or her teachers and peers and is a major component of academic success. Improved school attendance generally increases student achievement and graduation rate. Established policies will account for all children enrolled in schools and for the whereabouts of those children throughout each school day. Attendance policies that provide for the early identification of attendance problems and effective methods to address them are most likely to succeed. Successful implementation of any attendance policy requires cooperation among all members of the education community, including parents or persons acting in a parental capacity, students, teachers, administrators and support staff.

II. Description of Strategies to Meet Objectives

In order for the District to accomplish the objectives of this policy, the District has developed this Comprehensive Attendance Policy based on the recommendations of a committee composed of administrators, teachers, counselors, a Board of Education member, parents and a student. The District will hold at least one public hearing prior to the adoption of this policy and, upon its adoption, will be enforced and effective July 1, 2023. The District will also maintain accurate record keeping through a Register of Attendance to record attendance, absence, tardiness or early dismissal of a student. This information will be used to track individual student attendance and student attendance problems in general. The District has also developed early intervention strategies, through this policy, to improve school attendance for all students.

III. Records and Reporting Attendance

A. A pupil's presence, absence, tardiness and early dismissals in Pre-Kindergarten through grade twelve shall be recorded after the taking of attendance in homeroom and in each period of scheduled instruction thereafter.

At the conclusion of each class period (6-12) or school day (Pre-Kindergarten-5) all attendance shall be compiled and provided to the appropriate individual(s) responsible for attendance. Student attendance data shall be available on the following school day and should be reviewed by teachers, social workers, counselors, school psychologists or other appropriate school personnel.

B. Any absence for a school day or portion thereof shall be recorded as excused or unexcused in accordance with the standards articulated in this comprehensive attendance policy (see section IV).

C. In the event that a pupil at any instructional level from Pre-kindergarten through grade twelve arrives late for or departs early from scheduled instruction, such tardiness or early departure shall be recorded as excused or unexcused in accordance with the standards articulated in this comprehensive attendance policy (see section IV).

D. A written excuse note must be provided by the parent/guardian of a student stating the pupil's name, date of absence, tardiness or early dismissal, and reason for absence, tardiness or early dismissal. The note must be signed by a parent or legal guardian. Notes should be sent to school immediately, but no later than three (3) school days following child's return to school, or the school will consider such absence, tardiness or early dismissal as unexcused. Failure to provide a note may result in disciplinary action and/or academic consequences for the student. The school has the right to ask for a doctor's note or appointment card for verification purposes if the absence is related to a doctor's/dentist's visit during the school day. Following an absence of 5 consecutive school days, parents will be required to provide a doctor's note or the absence will be documented unexcused.

E. A record shall be made of each scheduled day of instruction during which the school is closed for all or part of the day because of extraordinary circumstances as may be found satisfactory to the Commissioner.

F. A record shall be made concerning the date on which a pupil withdraws from enrollment or is dropped from enrollment in accordance with Education Law section 3202 (1-a).

G. All entries in a register of attendance shall be made either by a teacher or by an employee other than a teacher designated by the Board of Education.

H. The building principal shall supervise the keeping of the register of attendance.

I. The entries in the register of attendance shall be verified by the oath or affirmation of the person making the entries in the register of attendance.

J. Pupil attendance records shall be reviewed by the Principal of every public school building for the purpose of initiating appropriate action to address unexcused pupil absence, tardiness and early departure consistent with this comprehensive attendance policy.

K. A student beyond the mandatory age of attendance shall be dropped from enrollment after 20 consecutive days of absence.

IV. Definitions of Excused and Unexcused Absence

A. All registered students are expected to attend all classes as scheduled. Parents have the obligation to inform the school that their child will be absent, tardy or dismissed from school early. All absences, tardiness and early dismissals from school will be classified as excused or unexcused.

B. An **excused** absence, tardiness or early dismissal includes one of the following reasons: personal illness, medical/dental appointment, death/illness in the family, family emergency, incarceration, court date, impassable roads due to inclement weather, delay in transportation by the district, approved cooperative work program, music lessons provided by the District, military obligations, religious observance, "student to work day", approved field trip, approved in school activity, approved college visit or Teacher removal of a disruptive student from class to a designated area as per SAVE legislation.

C. An **unexcused** absence, tardiness or early dismissal includes one of the following reasons: lack of required immunization without a medical exemption, employment, babysitting duties, illegally detained by a parent, lack of transportation, illegal pickup by parent, shopping, family vacation, overslept, missed bus, violation of dress code, lack of written excuses for absences or truancy.

D. Any student arriving after the official start of the school day will be considered tardy. Any student leaving before the official end of the school day will be counted as having an early dismissal. Tardy students are required to sign in at the appropriate office on arrival if classes have already started. Students who are leaving early must sign out at the appropriate office before leaving school grounds.

V. Attendance Codes for Daily Attendance

The following codes will be utilized to record daily attendance:

| | | | |
|------|--------------------------------|-------|--------------------------------|
| * | Un-Explained | MUSL | Music Lessons - District |
| FLD | Field Trip | MILO | Military Obligation |
| OSS | Out of School Suspension | NURSE | Nurse |
| ISS | In School Suspension | OVRN | Overslept |
| UTDY | Unexcused Tardy | ORTH | Orthodontist Appointment |
| ETDY | Excused Tardy | PERS | Personal |
| UABS | Unexcused Absence | PICK | Pick-up by Parent-Other |
| EABS | Excused Absence | REL | Religious Observance |
| ACAD | Academic Testing | ROAD | Road Test |
| ALC | ALC | SENT | Sent Home by Nurse |
| APTE | Appointment - Excused | SPOR | Sporting Event-SchoolSponsored |
| APTU | Appointment - Unexcused | SS | Student Services Counseling |
| ACWP | Approved Cooperative Work Prog | WORK | Student to Work Day |
| FUNR | Attending Funeral | OSSU | OSS - Refused instruction |
| AWYE | Away-Exc out of town | SAVE | SAVE - Removal by Teacher |
| AWYU | Away-Unexc Out of town | TRU | Truancy |

| | | | |
|------|--------------------------------|------|--------------------------------|
| BBYS | Babysitting | HI | Home Instruction |
| CAR | Car Trouble | APT | AP Test |
| COLL | College Visitation | PT | Physical Therapy |
| COUR | Court | OT | Occupational Therapy |
| DENT | Dentist Appointment | Spe | Speech |
| DOC | Doctor Appointment | RS | Reading Support - EL. ED. |
| DFA | Death in Family | MS | Math Support- EL. ED. |
| DISC | Discipline Action | RR | Resource Room - EL. ED |
| DFR | Death of Friend | OFF | Office |
| FEMG | Family Emergency | ESL | ESL |
| FEVT | Family Event | EDTU | Early Dismissal - Teacher Use |
| FVAC | Family Vacation | INTS | Internship |
| FNR | Funeral | ISA | In School Activity |
| HOSP | Hospital | Help | With Another Teacher For Help |
| HOSI | Hospital Instruction | Skip | Skip Class |
| IMPR | Impassable Roads-Weather | LHR | Late to HR No Pass |
| INCA | Incarceration | LBA | Late Bus Arrival |
| INCI | Incarceration with Instruction | LRQI | Lack Req Immun w-out exemption |
| ILL | Illness | LTRA | Lack of Transportation |
| ILLO | Illness-In Health Office | LPC | Lack Proper Clothing |
| IHYG | Improper Hygiene-Head Lice | LIBR | Library |
| IDET | Illegally Detained by Parent | MBUS | Missed Bus |
| IPUP | Illegal Pick up by Parent | | |

VI. Attendance and Promotion

Any absence from school or class, whether excused or not, detracts from the learning process. Therefore, all absences of any nature shall be included in this policy. Students who are absent more than 20 days per school year may be subject to grade level retention or an incomplete for their course completion (10 days for semester courses). A portion of the student's grade at the secondary level is based on participation within the classroom setting. Class absences will directly impact the student's ability to be successful in that course.

Appeal Process

Parent/guardian(s) may request a building level review of their child's attendance record. It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian(s) to request an appeal in writing to the building principal. Students and their parents may appeal to challenge the number of absences on record, to ensure that no violation of State or Federal Laws have occurred and/or to provide an opportunity to waive the maximum allowable absence limit for "extenuating circumstances."

Truancy

A truant is a student whose parents/guardian expects him/her to be in school and does not attend for all or part of the school day. Truancy will result in disciplinary action.

Furthermore, truancy will also result in no credit for that day for each class missed.

Class Cuts or Skips

A “class cut” is an unexcused absence from class. A cut from a given class shall be calculated into the total number of absences from that class in determining the attendance requirement.

Tardiness

Missing a part of a class because of unauthorized tardiness requires that the pupil make up work missed. Three unauthorized tardiness of ten minutes or more from a given class will be counted as one absence from the class for purposes of this policy.

Student Vacations

Parents and pupils must be informed that absence from school for vacation is not authorized and must be treated by the school as unexcused.

Implementation

After 5 consecutive days of absence, if teachers are unable to reach parent or student, the school nurse and school social worker will be notified and will contact the family to check on the student’s health and wellness.

Tier 1: At the end of the month, if a student has reached the indicated number of absences/tardies for Tier 1, the student’s teacher(s) will make contact with the family to inquire about the reasons for the absences/tardiness. An attendance information letter will be sent home indicating how many days the student has missed school and the importance of regular school attendance.

Tier 2: At the end of the month, if a student has reached the indicated number of absences/tardiness for Tier 2, a letter signed by the principal will be sent home. School counselors/social workers will work with the family to complete an attendance improvement plan. This will be documented in the phone journal in eschool.

Tier 3: At the end of the month, if a student has reached the indicated number of absences/tardiness for Tier 3, a letter will be sent by the school requiring a meeting with parent(s)/guardian(s), teacher(s), social worker and/or school counselor and/or school psychologist, and principal. A coordinated school and interagency response action plan will be developed. Legal intervention could be implemented.

| DAYS ABSENT/ TARDINESS | At Risk for Chronic Absenteeism TIER 1 | Chronic Absenteeism TIER 2 | Severe Chronic Absenteeism TIER 3 |
|---------------------------------------|--|--|---|
| SEPTEMBER | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| OCTOBER | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| NOVEMBER | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| DECEMBER | 6 | 7 | 8 |
| JANUARY | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| FEBRUARY | 9 | 10 | 11 |
| MARCH | 11 | 12 | 13 |
| APRIL | 13 | 14 | 15 |
| MAY | 15 | 16 | 17 |
| JUNE | 17 | 18 | 20 |

VII. Incentives and Disciplinary Sanctions

Program incentives will be used to encourage healthy and responsible pupil attendance. These incentives may include but are not limited to: tangible awards, certificates, participation grades, course credit, year-end recognition, family recognition award, participation in school wide special programs, and high school diploma.

B. Disciplinary sanctions will be used to discourage unexcused absence, tardiness and early departure. These sanctions may include but are not limited to: students being denied participation in extracurricular activities, field trips, assemblies and special events, detention, in school suspension, number of incidents posted on report cards, and withholding promotion.

VIII. Notice to be Provided to Parents

When a student is absent, late or leaves early without excuse, the student's parent(s) will be notified by phone about the specific absence or early dismissal. Parents are encouraged to use the parent portal to monitor daily and period attendance.

IX. Intervention Strategies to Identify Patterns of Absences, Tardiness or Early Dismissals

- A. A variety of strategies will be employed when a pattern of excused and/or unexcused absences, tardiness or early departures have been identified.
- B. These strategies may include but are not limited to:
1. Communication with the parents by telephone, electronic mail and/or letter.
 2. Referral to appropriate school personnel (i.e. school counselors, social worker, nurse, Instruction Support Team).
 3. Referral to Child Protective Services for educational neglect.
 4. Involvement of the Cheektowaga Police Liaison Officers.
 5. Referral to the Family Services Team for Person in Need of Supervision (PINS) petition.

X. Personnel Responsible for Review and Initiation of Appropriate Actions

- A. The building principal is ultimately responsible for reviewing pupil attendance records and ensuring that strategies are initiated for students identified with patterns of excused and/or unexcused absences, tardiness or early dismissals.
- B. Additional building personnel, such as clerical staff assigned to attendance responsibilities, social workers, school counselors, school psychologists, and teachers will continue to be important sources of information in the identification process.

XI. 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 deemed necessary to improve pupil attendance.

XII. Notice of Policy

Effective implementation of any attendance policy requires all participants to be informed and to fully understand 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. Student Notice

1. An orientation session will be held for students upon adoption of the policy and at the beginning of each school year.
2. The policy will be referenced in the students' handbook.
3. If a student cuts class or is marked with an unexcused absence, the principal or designee will review the attendance policy with the student.

4. Copies of this policy will be made available upon request.

B. Parent/Guardian or Person in Parental Control Notice

1. The principal will present the policy at a “Back-To-School” event held during the first weeks of each school year. The presentation will stress the importance of student attendance, as well as parental responsibility for their children’s attendance. This presentation will also explain the distinctions between excused and unexcused absences.

2. A summary of the Comprehensive Attendance Policy written in plain language will be made available upon request to all parents of the District upon adoption of this policy. The full and plain language versions of this policy will also be posted on each school’s website.

3. Each student’s parent(s) or guardian(s) who are unable to attend the “Back-to-School” event will be afforded other opportunities to discuss the attendance policy.

4. Copies of this Comprehensive Attendance Policy will be made available for review by parents upon request.

5. School newsletters and publications will include periodic reminders of the components of the attendance policy.

C. Faculty/Staff Notice

1. The principal will provide a copy of the attendance policy to the faculty and staff of the District upon its adoption.

2. All faculty and staff will meet at the beginning of each school year to review the attendance policy and clarify individual roles in its implementation.

3. Any teacher employed after the school year has commenced will be given a copy of this policy upon employment.

D. Community Members

Copies of this policy will be made available upon request.