

ATTENDANCE POLICY

The Board of Education recognizes that regular school attendance is a major component of academic success. Students learn most effectively when they receive instruction on a continuous basis throughout the school year. The daily interaction between teacher and student and among the students themselves is vital to the educational process. 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”). It is intended to encourage full attendance by all students, identify patterns of student ATEDs and develop effective intervention strategies to improve school attendance. This will be accomplished by developing and maintaining an appropriate and adequate attendance recordkeeping system, identifying patterns of student ATEDs and by developing effective intervention strategies to improve school attendance.

ADOPTION BY B.O.E.- 12/17/02

ADOPTED REVISED VERSION: JUNE 13, 2011

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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.

- The attendance policy will be included in student handbooks and will be reviewed with students at the start of the school year.
 - Parents will receive a plain language summary of this policy by mail at the start of the school year. High School parents will be asked to sign and return a statement indicating that they have read and understand the policy.
 - 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 and mail of the specific ATED, remind them of the attendance policy, and review ATED intervention procedures with them.
 - At Back-to-School Nights held at the beginning of each school year, the policy will be explained. Teachers will stress the parent responsibility for ensuring their children’s attendance.

- School District calendars, newsletters and publications will include periodic reminders of the components of this policy.
- The district will provide a copy of the attendance policy and any amendments thereto to faculty and staff.
- All faculty and staff will meet at the beginning of each school year to review the attendance policy to clarify individual roles in its implementation. The policy will also be reviewed periodically at staff meetings.
- Copies of this policy will also 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 death in the family, school-sponsored field trips, in and out-of-school suspensions, confirmed bus delays, extracurricular activities (as approved), religious observances (as prescribed yearly), chronic illness (documented), hospitalization and mandated court appearances.

All other ATEDs are considered unexcused absences. All ATEDs must be accounted for. It is the parent's responsibility to notify the school office within at least 24 hours of the ATED and to provide a written excuse upon the student's return to school. Parents are encouraged to notify the school of their children's absences. Written excuses from parents are required by law.

General Procedures/Data Collection

- Attendance will be taken during each class period in grades 9-12 and once daily in grades K-8.
- 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. The code is:

<u>Code</u>	<u>ATED</u>
ABS-UNX (ABU)	Unexcused Absence
ABS-EXC (ABE)	Excused Absence
TDY-UNX (TDU)	Unexcused Tardy
TDY-EXC (TDE)	Excused Tardy
LATE-HMRM (LHR)	Late for Homeroom
ASC (ASC)	In-School Suspension
AA (AA)	Out-of-School Suspension
HOME INS (HI)	Home Instruction
EC. TRIP (ET)	Educational Trip
COURT (CRT)	Court Appearance
RELIGIOUS (REL)	Religious Observation
Unverified (UNV)	Unverified

- Student ATED data shall be available to and should be reviewed by the designated school personnel in an expeditious manner. In grades K-4, the building principal and school nurse are responsible for review. In grades 5-12, the student's guidance counselor and/or attendance supervisor and/or dean are responsible for review.
- Where additional information is received that requires corrections to be made to a student's attendance records, such correction will be made immediately. Notice of such a change will be sent to appropriate school personnel subject to applicable confidentiality rules.
- Attendance data will be analyzed periodically to identify patterns or trends in student absences.
- 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, administrator or dean responsible for student attendance.
- Continuous monitoring will be conducted to identify students who are absent, tardy or leave class or school early.

Attendance Incentives

The district will implement systems to acknowledge a student's efforts to maintain or improve school attendance. For example:

- An attendance honor roll can be maintained and published monthly identifying those students with perfect attendance as well as those students whose attendance has improved significantly, subject to parental consent and applicable confidentiality rules.
- At the building and classroom levels, building principals and teachers are encouraged to schedule special events (quizzes, game days, debates, etc.) for days of chronically high absenteeism, like Mondays and Fridays.
- At the building level, building principals are encouraged to recognize classes and individual students for perfect attendance.
- 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

Unexcused ATEDs will result in disciplinary action consistent with the District's Code of Conduct. Those penalties include: detention or in-school suspension. Students may also be denied the privilege of participating in or attending extracurricular events.

In addition, teachers and other appropriate school personnel are responsible for contacting the student's parents and the student's guidance counselor and/or dean. Such staff member(s) shall remind parents of the attendance policy, explain the ramifications of unexcused ATEDs, stress the importance of class attendance and discuss appropriate intervention strategies to correct the situation.

Attendance/Grade Policy

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

Beginning in the 2002-03 school year each department will develop a grading policy. These policies will be discussed with students and parents. Copies of the departmental policies will be made available. Consistent with the importance of classroom participation, unexcused ATEDs will affect a student's class participation grade for the marking period in grades 9-12.

At the high school level, any student with more than 10 unexcused ATEDs for one-half year or 20 unexcused ATEDs for a full year will not receive credit for that course. To ensure that parents and students are aware of the implications of this minimum attendance requirement, the teacher/dean/guidance counselor or administrator, as prescribed by building procedures, will advise the student and contact the parent(s) by telephone and mail at appropriate intervals prior to the student reaching 10 or 20 unexcused ATEDs.

In implementing the policy set forth above, 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), shall arrange with their teachers to make up any work missed. This also applies to any student is absent, tardy or leaves early from school or a class due to illness or any other excused reason.

All students with an excused ATED are expected, upon their return, to consult with their teachers regarding missed work. Teachers are responsible for providing a means for students to make-up missed work, as set forth in the department's policy. Make up opportunities must be completed by a date specified by the student's teacher for the class in question.

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.

Final 12/17/02

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