

SUBJECT: COMPREHENSIVE STUDENT ATTENDANCE POLICY**Definitions**

For purposes of this Comprehensive Student Attendance Policy, the following definitions apply:

- a) Classroom Absence. A student's failure to be present for more than fifty percent (50%) of the class period.
- b) Compulsory Education Age. A student who turns sixteen (16) years of age during a school year must continue in attendance until the end of the school year. According to state law, the school year begins July 1.
- c) District. Depew Union Free School District ("D.U.F.S.D.") or the "District".
- d) Faculty. A member of the administrative, teaching, school counseling, instructional staff, or staff who provide educationally-related services to students, including psychologists, speech therapists, physical therapists, occupational therapists, and other health-related personnel, employed by the Depew Union Free School District.
- e) Parent. A parent, guardian, or person in parental relation to a student.
- f) Register of Attendance. Any written or electronic record maintained for the purpose of recording the attendance, absence, tardiness, or early departure of a student.
- g) Student. A child enrolled in Cayuga Heights Elementary School ("Cayuga"), Depew Middle School ("DMS"), or Depew High School ("DHS").
- h) Support Staff. A suitable person other than a faculty member employed by the District.

Statement of Overall Objectives

School attendance is both a right and responsibility. Education law requires that students enrolled in the Depew Union Free School District attend school on every school day unless excused. Attendance policies at this District are based on the following principles:

- a) Improved school attendance generally increases school achievement;
- b) Daily interaction with teachers and peers form a major component of academic success; and
- c) Early identification of attendance problems and intervention strategies are vital to academic performance.

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Because this District recognizes that every student has a right to educational opportunities that will enable the student to develop to his/her fullest potential, this District will review and, if necessary, revise a Comprehensive Student Attendance Policy to meet the following objectives:

- a) To increase school completion for all students;
- b) To raise student achievement and close gaps in student performance;
- c) To identify attendance patterns in order to design attendance improvement efforts;
- d) To know the whereabouts of every student for safety and other reasons;
- e) To verify that individual students are complying with education laws relating to compulsory attendance;
- f) To determine the District's average daily attendance for State aid purposes.

The Board of Education recognizes that a successful attendance policy requires cooperation among all members of the education community, including parents, faculty, administrators, and support staff.

A Description of the Strategies to Accomplish Objectives

The School District will:

- a) Develop a Comprehensive Student Attendance Policy based upon the recommendations of a multifaceted District Policy Development Team that includes representation from the Board of Education, administrators, students, faculty, and parents. The District will hold at least one (1) public hearing prior to adoption.
- b) Create and maintain a positive school building culture by fostering a positive physical and psychological environment where the presence of strong adult role models encourages respectful and nurturing interactions between adults and students.
- c) Maintain accurate record keeping via a Register of Attendance to record attendance, absence, tardiness or early departure of each student.
- d) Utilize data analysis systems for tracking individual student attendance and individual and group trends in student attendance problems.
- e) Develop intervention strategies to improve school attendance for all students.

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SUBJECT: COMPREHENSIVE STUDENT ATTENDANCE POLICY (Cont'd.)**Determination of Excused and Unexcused Absences, Tardiness and Early Departures****Note: School Attendance is Required for All Children Who are of Compulsory Attendance Age****School Regulations: Student Absences/Tardiness/Early Departures**

Student must present a signed note from parent giving child's full name, date, days of absence, and reason for absence, on the day of return, to the designated person.

Based upon our District's education and community needs, values and priorities, the School District has determined the absences, tardiness and early departures will be considered excused or unexcused according to the following standards:

- a) An absence, tardiness or early departures from school may be excused if due to personal illness, death in family, illness in the family, medical appointments, dental appointments, attendance at health clinics, quarantine, impassable roads due to inclement weather, required to be in court, religious observance, approved college visits, military obligations, educational experience/trip pre-approved by Building Principal or his/her designee. Administrative Approval/Emergency Situations covers unexpected events, which keep a student from attendance. These cases will be considered individually by the Principal or by his/her designee, need approval of the Superintendent/designee, and require final authorization by the Board of Education.
- b) An absence, tardiness or early departure is considered unexcused if the reason for the lack of attendance does not fall into the above categories. Examples of unexcused absences include: overslept/missed bus, visitations (family/social), baby-sitting, needed at home, truancy (absence or other leave from school without parental permission), miscellaneous appointments: haircut, learner's permit/road test, etc. A trip with or without parents for recreational purposes will be deemed unexcused when it does not coincide with the school calendar. Exceptions need approval of the Superintendent or his/her designee and require final authorization by the Board of Education.
- c) Submission of a note signed by a medical provider will be required of students who have an extended illness in excess of five (5) consecutive days. In addition, the District reserves the right to request a note signed by a medical provider in cases where patterns of excessive, but not successive, absences appear.

Extended Illness and Home Instruction

Students who have an extended illness may be placed on home instruction and will not be counted as absent during the extended illness.

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- a) A doctor's statement indicating the reason for home instruction must be submitted by the parent before approval by the administration. The dates and the length of the home instruction must be included in the statement.
- b) The request for home instruction will be forwarded to the Superintendent or his/her designee for approval, who will make the arrangements for the home instruction.
- c) Under the direction of the home-instructor, the student will complete all missed assignments and continue assigned course work. When the assignments are satisfactorily completed and approved by the teacher, the student will then be marked in attendance for the days missed due to illness.

Truancy and Tardiness

Any student **not** in his/her assigned homeroom/first period class after the start of the scheduled school day is considered absent. If a student arrives at school after homeroom has begun, he/she will be considered tardy and should report immediately to the designated office to sign in. A written excuse is required explaining why the student is late. If the student does not have an excuse explaining his/her tardiness, he/she must submit a note from his/her parents the following school day explaining the reason for his/her tardiness.

Student absence without **prior knowledge or consent** of a parent is considered truancy, an unexcused absence. Truancy will be dealt with as outlined in the District's Code of Conduct.

Skip Days: Occasionally students get together and organize a day or part of a day off from school. The Depew Union Free School District does not condone these activities. Students participating in such activities will be subject to truancy regulations as outlined in the District's Code of Conduct.

Student Attendance Recordkeeping/Data Collection

The record of each student's presence, absence, tardiness and early departure shall be kept in a register of attendance in a manner consistent with Commissioner's Regulations. An absence, tardiness, or early departure will be entered as "excused" or "unexcused" along with the District code for the reason.

Attendance shall be taken and recorded in accordance with the following:

- a) For students in departmentalized schools at any grade level (i.e., students pass individually to different classes throughout the day), each student's presence or absence shall be recorded after the taking of attendance in each period of scheduled instruction. Where students do not change classrooms for each period of scheduled instruction, attendance shall be taken in accordance with paragraph "b."

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- b) For students in non-departmentalized (i.e., self-contained classrooms and supervised group movement to other scheduled school activities such as physical education in the gym, assembly, etc.), such student's presence or absence shall be recorded after the taking of attendance once per school day, provided that students are not dismissed from school grounds during a lunch period. Where students are dismissed for lunch, their presence or absence shall also be recorded after the taking of attendance a second time upon the student's return from lunch.
- c) Any absence for a school day or portion thereof shall be recorded as excused or unexcused in accordance with the standards articulated in this policy.
- d) In the event that a student at any instructional level from 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 policy.

A record shall be kept of each scheduled day of instruction during which the school is closed for all or part of the day because of extraordinary circumstances. These include adverse weather conditions, impairment of heating facilities, insufficiency of water supply, shortage of fuel, destruction of or damage to a school building, or such other cause as may be found satisfactory to the Commissioner of Education.

Attendance records shall also indicate the date when a student withdraws from enrollment or is dropped from enrollment in accordance with Education Law Section 3202(1-a).

At the conclusion of each class period or school day, all attendance information shall be compiled and provided to the designated school personnel who are responsible for attendance. The nature of the absence, tardiness or early departure shall be coded on a student's record in accordance with the established District/building procedures.

Students who are absent, tardy, or depart early without parental consent or knowledge shall be subject to the penalties in accordance with the Code of Conduct.

Summer School

Students enrolled in the summer school program who are absent for more than three (3) days for any reason will be dropped from summer school.

Notice of Minimum Attendance Standard/Intervention Strategies

A faculty member or a designated support staff member shall notify the parent of a student who is absent, tardy, or departs early without proper excuse. The faculty member or designated support staff member shall refer the parent to the District's Comprehensive Student Attendance Policy.

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SUBJECT: COMPREHENSIVE STUDENT ATTENDANCE POLICY (Cont'd.)**Attendance Incentives**

In order to encourage student attendance, the District will develop and implement grade-appropriate/building-level strategies and programs including, but not limited to:

- a) Attendance honor rolls to be posted in prominent places in District buildings and included in District newsletters, and with parent consent, in community publications;
- b) Periodic drawings for prizes at each grade level to reward outstanding attendance;
- c) Special events (e.g., assemblies, guest speakers, field days) scheduled on days that historically have high absenteeism (e.g., Mondays, Fridays, day before vacation);
- d) Grade-level rewards at each building for outstanding attendance;
- e) Building/Classroom acknowledgement of the importance of good attendance (e.g., individual certificates, recognition chart, bulletin boards, announcements);
- f) Annual poster/essay contest on importance of good attendance;
- g) Assemblies collaboratively developed and promoted by Student Council, administration, PTO(s), and other community groups to promote good attendance.

Intervention Strategy Process

In order to effectively intervene when an identified pattern of absences, tardiness, or early departures occur, District personnel will:

- a) Identify specific element(s) of the pattern (e.g., grade level, building, time frame, type of absences, tardiness, or early departures);
- b) Explore strategies for intervention, such as holding a conference with the parent(s), making referrals to child study team and/or to outside agencies, etc.;
- c) Recommend intervention to Superintendent or his/her designee if the intervention relates to an alternative placement and/or a change in District policy or procedure;
- d) Implement changes, as approved by appropriate administration;
- e) Monitor short and long term effects of intervention and make recommendations regarding necessary modifications.

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SUBJECT: COMPREHENSIVE STUDENT ATTENDANCE POLICY (Cont'd.)**Disciplinary Sanctions**

Unexcused absences, tardiness, and early departures will result in disciplinary sanctions as described in the District's Code of Conduct. Sanctions may include, but are not limited to, in-school suspension, detention and denial of participation in interscholastic and extracurricular activities. Parents will be notified by District personnel at periodic intervals to address their child's absences, tardiness, or early departures and the importance of class attendance and appropriate interventions. Individual buildings/grade levels will address procedures to implement the notification process to the parent.

Appeal Process

A parent may appeal the attendance policy by requesting a conference with the Principal or his/her designee. All appeals to the Principal or his/her designee must be made in writing twenty (20) calendar days from the date of notification of intervention/sanction. The student's attendance records will be reviewed and a determination will be made. Further appeal from the Principal's decision shall be made to the Superintendent or his/her designee.

Building Review of Attendance Records

The Building Principal will work in conjunction with the building attendance clerk and/or other designated staff in reviewing attendance records at the end of each term. This review is conducted to identify individual and group attendance patterns and to initiate appropriate action to address the problem of unexcused absences, tardiness, and early departures.

Annual Review by the Board of Education

The Board of Education shall annually review the building level student attendance records and if such records show a decline in student attendance, the Board shall make any revisions to the Policy and Plan deemed necessary to improve student attendance.

Community Awareness

The Board of Education shall promote necessary community awareness of the District's Comprehensive Student Attendance Policy by:

- a) Providing a plain language summary of the policy to parents and students at the beginning of each school year and promoting the understanding of such a policy to students and their parents;
- b) Providing each teacher with a copy of the policy, at the beginning of the school year or upon employment; and

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- c) Providing copies of the policy to any other member of the community upon request.

Education Law Sections 3024, 3025, 3202, 3205, 3206, 3210, 3211 and 3213
8 New York Code of Rules and Regulations (NYCRR) Sections 104.1, 109.2 and 175.6