

## **STUDENT ATTENDANCE**

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

### Notice

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.

- A plain language summary of this attendance policy will be included in student/parent handbooks and will be reviewed with students at the start of the school year.
- 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 of the specific ATED, remind them of the attendance policy, and review ATED intervention procedures with them.
- A back to school event will be held at the beginning of each school year to emphasize that every day of attendance counts, explain this policy, and stress the parent’s responsibility for their ensuring their children’s attendance.
- School 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. New staff will receive a copy upon their employment.
- 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.
- Copies of this policy will also be made available to any community member, upon request.
- The district will share this policy with local Child Protective Services (CPS) to ensure a common understanding of excused and unexcused ATED’s and to work toward identifying and addressing cases of educational neglect.

### 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 or weather, religious observance, 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 appropriate building administrator (including, but not limited to, absences due to circumstances related to homelessness).

Students whose parent or legal guardian has been called for military deployment, is on leave from, or is returning from a combat zone or combat support may be excused an additional 5 days, but work must be made up according to the rules applicable to other excused absences. Parents must notify the building principal no less than three 3 days before the intended absences and each case will be approved on a case by case basis by the building principal.

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 24 hours of the ATED and to provide a written excuse upon the student's return to school. For homeless students, the homeless liaison will assist the student in providing or obtaining documentation if needed.

### General Procedures/Data Collection

- Attendance will be taken during each class period.
- 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.
- Student ATED data shall be available to and should be reviewed by the designated school personnel in an expeditious manner.
- 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. If patterns emerge, district resources will be targeted to understand and eliminate barriers to attendance.
- 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.
- Continuous monitoring will be conducted to identify students who are absent, tardy, or leave class or school early. A student will be considered chronically absent if they miss ten percent or more of the school year. Satisfactory attendance is missing five percent or less of school over the course of the year. If a pattern of ATED's for an individual student is identified a designated staff person(s) will follow-up in accordance with this policy.

### Attendance Incentives

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

- An attendance honor roll may be maintained and published quarterly 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 or before school breaks.

- 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.

### Consequences of Excessive ATEDs

A designated staff member(s) will contact the student's parents and the student's guidance counselor in the event that a student's record reveals excessive ATED's, excused and/or unexcused. Excessive ATED's is defined as: 5 ATED's for each of the first 3 marking periods and 3 for the last marking period for a total of 18 for the year. Such staff member(s) shall remind parents of the attendance policy, explain the ramifications of excessive ATEDs, stress the importance of class attendance and discuss appropriate intervention strategies to correct the situation. Students identified as chronically absent will be considered for a mentor program.

Unexcused ATEDs may result in disciplinary action consistent with the district's code of conduct. Those penalties may include, for example, detention or denial of the privilege of participating in or attending extracurricular events. However, absences related to homelessness shall not result in negative consequences where the district determines that it would be in the best interests of the student in retaining the student in school.

In addition, the designated staff member will contact local Child Protective Services (CPS) if they suspect that the child is being educationally neglected. The designated staff member will provide CPS with the information necessary to initiate a report. If other staff members suspect education neglect, they must follow the procedures outlined in Board policy and regulation 5460, Child Abuse in a Domestic Setting, report to CPS and advise the building principle.

### Attendance/Grade Policy

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

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), may arrange with their teachers to make up any work missed. This also applies to any student who 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.

Those students with excused 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. Unexcused

ATEDs are given the opportunity to make up a test or other missed work and/or turn in a late assignment at the discretion of the building principal. 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.

Cross ref: 4710, Grading Systems  
5151, Homeless Children  
5300, Code of Conduct  
5460, Child Abuse in a Domestic Setting

Ref: 42 USC §11432(g)(1)(I) (McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act)  
Education Law §§1709; 3024; 3025; 3202; 3205-3213; 3225  
8 NYCRR §§104.1; 175.6  
Social Service Law §34-a

First Reading: April 16, 2019  
Second Reading: April 16, 2019  
Adoption date: April 16, 2019