

### R 5200 ATTENDANCE

- A. The Board of Education believes that the regular attendance of students in each class and in school in general is critical to its educational mission. The district shall endeavor to achieve the ninety percent attendance rate required by the New Jersey Quality Single Accountability Continuum (NJQSAC). Continuity of instruction is an essential element in student performance and allows students the greatest opportunity to succeed at meeting the State learning standards in the Core Curriculum Content Standards. The Superintendent shall oversee the development of effective strategies that maximize student attendance at all scheduled periods of actual instruction or supervised study activities and strive to:
1. Encourage good attendance;
  2. Discourage unexcused absences;
  3. Identify patterns of absence, tardiness and early departures from school; and
  4. Intervene to prevent and correct problems with attendance.
- B. Definitions

"Attendance" is a student's presence in school and in the classroom to which he or she is assigned at the times scheduled for instruction or other school activities. A school day shall consist of not less than four hours of actual instruction. An approved Kindergarten school day shall consist of one continuous session of two and a half hours may be considered as a full day.

The mere presence of a student at roll call shall not be regarded as sufficient to be considered in attendance for a school day. A student shall be present at least one hour during both the forenoon and the afternoon in order to be recorded as present for the full day. In a school which is in session during either the forenoon or the afternoon, a student shall be present at least two hours in the session in order to be recorded as present for the full day.

A student not present in school because of his or her participation in an approved school activity, such as a field trip, meeting, cooperative education assignment, or athletic competition will be considered to be in attendance.



"Excused absence" is a student's absence from school for a full day or a portion of a day for one or more of the following reasons:

1. The student's illness;
2. Requirements of a student's individual health care plan;
3. A death or critical illness in the student's immediate family, or others with permission of Principal;
4. Quarantine;
5. Observance of the student's religion on a day approved for that purpose by the State Board of Education;
6. The student's suspension from school;
7. Requirements of the student's Individualized Education Program (IEP);
8. Alternate short or long term accommodations for students with disabilities;
9. The student's required attendance in court;
10. Interviews with an admissions officer of an educational institution;
11. Necessary and unavoidable medical or dental appointments that cannot be scheduled at a time other than the school day;
12. Such good cause as may be acceptable to the Principal.

### Mandated

Attendance need not always be within the school facilities. A student will be considered to be in attendance if he/she is present at any place where school is in session by authority of the Board. The Board shall consider each student assigned to a program of independent study, with parent/guardian permission, to be in regular attendance for that program, provided that he/she is under the guidance of a staff member so assigned, reports daily or weekly, as prescribed, to such staff member the place in which he/she is conducting his/her study, and regularly demonstrates progress toward the objectives of his/her course of study.



"Unexcused absence" is a student's absence for all or part of a school day for any reason other than those listed in paragraph "Excused Absences" above. Absence is expressly not excused for any of the following purposes (this list is intended to be illustrative and is not inclusive):

1. Family travel;
2. Performance of household or babysitting duties; and
3. Other daytime activities unrelated to the school program.

"Truancy" is a student's absence from all or a part of the school day without the knowledge of the student's parent. A student between the ages of six and sixteen will also be considered truant if he or she:

1. Has accumulated unexcused absences of ten or more;
2. Leaves school without permission when school is still in session;
3. Leaves class because of illness and does not report to the school nurse as directed;  
or
4. Is present in school but is absent from class without approval. Such truancy from class is a "class cut."

### C. Tardiness

The orderly conduct of class activity depends upon the prompt and precise beginning of the program. Tardiness hinders the proper conduct of school activity. Students are expected to arrive to school and class on time. A student who is tardy to any class will be subject to disciplinary action as outlined in Board policy and the student code of conduct. Consequences for accumulated occurrences of tardiness may include detention, loss of credit and an unexcused school day absence.

### D. Attendance

In order for the Board of Education to fulfill its responsibility for providing a thorough and efficient education for each student, the complete cooperation of parents/guardians and students is required to maintain a high level of school attendance.



The frequent absence of students from classroom learning experiences disrupts the continuity of the instructional process and limits the ability of students to complete the prescribed curriculum requirements successfully. The following rules shall apply for student absences:

1. A student shall be considered absent from class for tardiness in excess of one half of the total class period.
2. A student shall be considered absent from school for participation in less than four instructional hours during the school day.

A student must be in attendance for one hundred sixty-five or more school days in order to be considered to have successfully completed the instructional program requirements of the grade/course to which he/she is assigned.

A waiver of these attendance requirements may be granted for good cause by the school Principal upon recommendation of a review committee, appointed by him/her, and consisting of representative staff, including student service personnel and classroom teachers.

In recommending the granting of a waiver of this attendance requirement, the review committee shall consider the nature and causes of all absences rather than only those in excess of the fifteen days. Documentation of the nature and causes of these absences shall be the responsibility of the student and parent/guardian.

Parents/guardians are responsible for notifying the school early in the day when a child will be absent and for informing the school of the reason for the absence.

### E. Unexcused Absences

When a student fails to report to class or school the district shall:

1. Make a reasonable attempt to notify the student's parents/guardians of each unexcused absence the day of the unexcused absence;
2. Attempt to contact the parents/guardians by telephone, email and/or cellular phone to determine the cause of the unexcused absence.

If contact through these means is unsuccessful the district may follow-up with another attempt to contact the parents/guardians or send a letter reporting the unexcused absence and requesting the parent/guardian to contact the school.



If at any time it is suspected that there is a potential of abuse, neglect and/or a student is potentially missing the district shall implement all procedures required by law including reporting protocols, notification of parents/guardians and cooperation with law enforcement and other authorities and agencies, as appropriate.

- F. School District Response To Unexcused Absences During the School Year That Count Toward Truancy
1. For up to four cumulative unexcused absences that count toward truancy, the Principal or designee shall:
    - a. Make a reasonable attempt to notify the student's parent of each unexcused absence prior to the start of the following school day;
    - b. Make a reasonable attempt to determine the cause of the unexcused absence, including through contact with the student's parent;
    - c. Identify, in consultation with the student's parents, needed action designed to address patterns of unexcused absences, if any, and to have the child return to school and maintain regular attendance;
    - d. Proceed in accordance with the provisions of N.J.S.A. 9:6-1 et seq. and N.J.A.C. 6A:16-10, if a potentially missing or abused child situation is detected; and
    - e. Cooperate with law enforcement and other authorities and agencies, as appropriate.
  2. For between five and nine cumulative unexcused absences that count toward truancy, the Principal or designee shall:
    - a. Make a reasonable attempt to notify the student's parent of each unexcused absence prior to the start of the following school day;
    - b. Make a reasonable attempt to determine the cause of the unexcused absence, including through contact with the student's parent;
    - c. Evaluate the appropriateness of action taken pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:16-7.6(a)4.i.(3) and H.1.c. above;



- d. Develop an action plan to establish outcomes based upon the student's patterns of unexcused absences and to specify the interventions for supporting the student's return to school and regular attendance, which may include any or all of the following:
    - (1) Refer or consult with the building's Intervention and Referral Services Team, pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:16-8;
    - (2) Conduct testing, assessments, or evaluations of the student's academic, behavioral, and health needs;
    - (3) Consider an alternate educational placement;
    - (4) Make a referral to or coordinate with a community-based social and health provider agency or other community resource;
    - (5) Refer to a court or court program pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:16-7.6(a)4.iv. and H.4. below;
    - (6) Proceed in accordance with N.J.S.A. 9:6-1 et seq. and N.J.A.C. 6A:16-10, if a potential missing or abused child situation is detected; and
    - (7) Engage the student's family.
  - e. Cooperate with law enforcement and other authorities and agencies, as appropriate.
3. For ten or more cumulative unexcused absences that count toward truancy, a student between the ages of six and sixteen is truant, pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:38-25, and the Principal or designee shall:
    - a. Make a determination regarding the need for a court referral for the truancy, per N.J.A.C. 6A:16-7.6(a)4.iv. and H.4. below;
    - b. Continue to consult with the parent and the involved agencies to support the student's return to school and regular attendance;
    - c. Cooperate with law enforcement and other authorities and agencies, as appropriate; and



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- d. Proceed in accordance with N.J.S.A. 18A:38-28 through 31, Article 3B, Compelling Attendance at School, and other applicable State and Federal statutes, as required.
4. A court referral may be made as follows:
    - a. When unexcused absences that count toward truancy are determined by school officials to be violations of the compulsory education law, pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:38-25, and the Board of Education's policies, in accordance with N.J.A.C. 6A:16-7.6(a), the parent may be referred to Municipal Court.
      - (1) A written report of the actions the school has taken regarding the student's attendance shall be forwarded to the Municipal Court; or
    - b. When there is evidence of a juvenile-family crisis, pursuant to N.J.S.A. 2A:4A-22.g, the student may be referred to Superior Court, Chancery Division, Family Part.
      - (1) A written report of the actions the school has taken regarding the student's attendance shall be forwarded to the Juvenile-Family Crisis Intervention Unit.
  5. For a student with a disability, the attendance plan and its punitive and remedial procedures shall be applied, where applicable, in accordance with the student's IEP, pursuant to 20 U.S.C. §§ 1400 et seq., the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act; the procedural protections set forth in N.J.A.C. 6A:14; accommodation plan under 29 U.S.C. §§794 and 705(20); and individualized health care plan and individualized emergency healthcare plan pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:16-2.3(b)5.xii.
  6. All receiving schools pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:14-7.1(a), shall act in accordance with N.J.A.C. 6A:16-7.6(a)4.i. and H.1. above for each student with up to four cumulative unexcused absences that count toward truancy.
    - a. For each student attending a receiving school with five or more cumulative unexcused absences that count toward truancy, the absences shall be reported to the sending school district.



- (1) The sending school district shall proceed in accordance with the Board of Education's policies and procedures pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:16-7.6(a) and H.5. above and the provisions of N.J.A.C. 6A:16-7.6(a)4.ii. through iv. and H.2. through H.5. above, as appropriate.

## G. Discipline

All discipline regarding the attendance of students shall be consistent with the Board policy and the code of student conduct. Consequences for absences may include:

1. Students may be denied participation in co-curricular activities if their attendance fails to meet the standards set forth herein;
2. Students may be denied participation in athletic competition if their attendance fails to meet the standards set forth herein;
3. Loss of partial or total course credit;
4. Detention or suspension.

No student who is absent from school for observance of a religious holiday or other excused absence shall be disciplined and/or deprived of any award or of eligibility for or opportunity to compete for any award because of the absence.

Students, parents and guardians shall be notified of disciplinary actions for attendance including loss of credit and may appeal this determination through the district's student Grievance Policy.

## H. Unexcused Absences for Students in Special Education

The attendance guidelines, discipline and remedial measures set forth in this policy shall apply to classified students where appropriate and in accordance with the student's:

1. Individualized Education Program (IEP);
2. Procedural protections set forth in N.J.A.C. 6A:14;
3. Alternate short or long term accommodations for students with disabilities as required by law;
4. Requirements of a student's individual health care plan.





I. District Sending and Receiving Relationships

The receiving school shall report attendance problems to the sending district responsible for the student. Following five or more cumulative unexcused absences school officials shall proceed in accordance with the sending district's Board attendance policy and procedure.

J. Regular Release of Students Before the End of the Normal School Day

There are varying situations which may justify release of certain students from school before the normal time for closing. Such situations are justifiable only if the release does not jeopardize the student's educational program and the reasons for such release can be shown to have positive benefits for the student.

K. Late Arrival and Early Dismissal

The Board recognizes that from time to time compelling circumstances will require that a student be late to school or dismissed before the end of the school day.

As agent responsible for the education of the children of this district, the Board shall require that the school be notified in advance of such absences by written request of the student's parent/guardian, which shall state the reason for the tardiness or early dismissal. Justifiable reasons may include:

1. Medical or dental appointments which cannot be scheduled outside of school hours;
2. Requirements of a student's individual health care plan;
3. Requirements of the student's Individualized Education Program (IEP);
4. Alternate short or long term accommodations for students with disabilities;
5. Medical disability;
6. Motor vehicle driver's test;
7. Interview for college entrance or employment;
8. Family emergency;
9. Court appearance;
10. Such good cause as may be acceptable to the administration.



No student in grades Kindergarten through eight shall be permitted to leave the school before the close of the school day unless he/she is met in the school office by his/her parent/guardian or a person authorized by the parent/guardian to act in his/her behalf.

Tardiness not covered by the causes listed shall be cumulative, and may affect course credit.

### L. Legal Custody

A record shall be kept indicating the legal custodian of each student. Such custodian shall be responsible for informing the Board of any change in the student's custodian. The Principal may take such steps as seem necessary to ensure that the child is released only to the proper legal custodian.

### M. Potentially Missing Children

1. If daily attendance records indicate a child is absent, and the parent/guardian has not called, a designated person shall attempt to contact them;
2. If no telephone contact can be made, the attendance officer shall investigate;
3. If the attendance officer cannot locate the child, he/she shall inform the Principal, who shall inform the appropriate local authorities;
4. If a child who was present in the morning is absent after lunch, the same procedure shall be followed.

### N. Marking Missing Child's School Record

Whenever the Superintendent receives notice from the Missing Persons Unit that a child has been reported missing, he/she shall mark the child's records in such a way that whenever a copy of or information regarding the record is requested, district personnel will be aware that the record is that of a missing child. If a copy of a marked school record is requested, the Superintendent shall supply the record to the requestor without alerting him/her to the fact that the record has been marked, according to provisions in code and statute on accessing student records. After the Superintendent has complied with the request for copies of records or information, he/she shall immediately report the inquiry or any knowledge as to the whereabouts of the missing child to the Missing Persons Unit.



The Superintendent shall develop procedures for the attendance of students which:

1. Ensure a school session which is in conformity with requirements of the rules of the State Board;
  2. Identify potentially missing and/or abused students;
  3. Govern the keeping of attendance records in accordance with rules of the State Board at N.J.A.C. 6A:16-1.1 et seq., including students serving in- or out-of-school suspensions, or excluded for health and cleanliness reasons;
  4. Impose on truant students such disciplinary measures as may be appropriate for infractions of school regulations, but no such penalty may have an irredeemable negative effect on the student's record of achievement beyond that which naturally follows his/her absence from school activities;
  5. Identify the habitual truant, investigate the causes of his/her behavior, and consider modification of his/her educational program to meet his/her particular needs and interests;
  6. Address tardiness and class cutting in terms of the intent of this policy;
  7. Ensure that students absent for any reason have an opportunity to make up work they missed;
  8. Recognize exemplary attendance.
- O. Dissemination and Implementation

The Superintendent shall take all necessary steps to publicize this policy and may include these rules in district handbooks and/or on the district website. Parents/Guardians and students shall be notified annually of the attendance policy.

The Superintendent shall ensure that the rules for this policy are applied consistently and uniformly, and that all disciplinary sanctions are carried out with necessary due process.

The Board shall review the attendance policy on a regular basis.

Adopted: 21 July 2016

