

5100.1 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 reduce the current level of absences, tardiness, and early departures, including those that are unexcused (referred to in this policy as "ATEDs"), encourage full attendance by all students, maintain an adequate attendance record keeping system, identify patterns of student ATEDs and develop effective intervention strategies to improve school attendance.

1. Notice

To be successful in this endeavor, it is imperative that all members of the school community are aware of the 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) The **attendance policy** will be included in student handbooks and will be reviewed with students at the start of the school year.
- b) Parents will receive a plain language summary of this policy by mail at the start of the school year. Parents will be asked to sign and return a statement indicating that they have read and understand the policy. Those parents who do not return this document will receive a copy, mailed by the Principal or his/her designee, and a phone call will be placed to confirm its receipt.

When a student is absent, tardy or leaves early from a class or school without excuse, designated staff members 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.

A back-to-school event will be held at the beginning of each school year to 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.

- c) The District will provide a copy of the **attendance policy** and any amendments thereto to faculty and staff on an annual basis. New staff will receive a copy upon their employment. All faculty and staff will meet at the beginning of the school year to review the **attendance policy** to clarify individual roles in its implementation.
- d) Copies of this policy will also be made available to any community member, upon request.

2. 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 observances, quarantine, required court appearances, attendance at health clinics, approved college visits, approved cooperative work programs, military obligations, medical visits that have been pre-approved by the Principal or his/her designee or other such reasons as may be approved by an Attendance Review Team to be established.

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 72 hours of the ATED and to provide a written excuse upon the child's return to school.

Excuses submitted after this 72-hour period will not be accepted nor will corrections be made to the record except as approved by the Attendance Review Team.

3. General Procedures/Data Collection

- a) Attendance will be taken during each class period
- b) At the conclusion of each class period or school day, all attendance information shall be compiled and provided to the designated staff members responsible for attendance.
- c) The nature of the ATED shall be coded on a student's record.
- d) Student ATED data shall be available to and should be reviewed by the designated school personnel in an expeditious manner.
- e) Where additional information is received that requires corrections to be made to a student's attendance records, such correction will be made promptly. Notice of such a change will be sent to appropriate school personnel subject to applicable confidentiality rules.
- f) Attendance data will be analyzed periodically to identify patterns or trends in student absences
- g) 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 student to the Building Principal and/or his/her designee.
- h) Continuous monitoring will be conducted to identify students who are absent, tardy or leave class or school early.
- i) For the purposes of reporting a tardy student, a student at the secondary level will be considered absent if they arrive more than 15 minutes after the period has begun without a valid excuse or pass.

4. Attendance Incentives

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

- a) Grade appropriate rewards and recognition will be awarded at various grade levels for perfect attendance. Students with perfect attendance on a quarterly basis will receive this recognition.
- b) An attendance honor roll shall be maintained and acknowledged identifying those students with perfect attendance as well as those students whose attendance has improved significantly.
- c) At the building and classroom levels, Building Principals and teachers are encouraged to schedule events (game days, quizzes, debates, etc.) for days of chronically high absenteeism, like Mondays and Fridays. This scheduling of events must be consistent with any testing policy that has been established in the school.
- d) 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.

5. Disciplinary Consequences

Unexcused ATEDs may result in disciplinary action consistent with the District's code of conduct. Those penalties may include, for example, suspension or in-school suspension. Students may also be denied the privilege of participating or attending extracurricular activities.

In addition, designated staff members will contact the student's parents and the student's guidance counselor. Such staff members 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.

6. 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's performance on homework, tests, papers, projects, etc.

Students are expected to attend all scheduled classes. Consistent with the importance of classroom participation, ATEDs may affect a student's class participation grade for the marking period.

At the High School level, any student with more than 14 unexcused ATEDs for one-half year or 28 unexcused ATEDs for a full year will not receive credit for that course. The Attendance Review Team may review denial of credit in order to evaluate extenuating circumstances. Extended periods of time during which a student receives instruction in an approved alternate setting are not unexcused absences, and therefore will not be considered as contributing towards the totals listed above.

To ensure that students and parents are aware of the implications of this minimum attendance requirement, the teacher or other designated staff member(s) will advise the student and contact the parent(s) by telephone and mail at appropriate intervals prior to the student reaching 14 or 28 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) 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 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.

Only 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. Make up opportunities must be completed by a date specified by the student's teacher for the class in question.

7. 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.