

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 unexcused absences, tardiness, and early departures, encourage full attendance by all students, maintain an adequate attendance recordkeeping system, identify patterns of student absences and develop effective intervention strategies to improve school attendance.

Notice

Effective implementation of any attendance policy requires all participants to be informed and to fully understand its purpose, procedures, and the consequences of noncompliance. To ensure that students, parents, teachers and administrators are notified of and understand this policy, the following procedures shall be implemented.

- Student Notification – A student/parent handbook will be distributed to each student during the first week of school in September. The attendance policy will be summarized in the student/parent handbook. A complete copy of the attendance policy will be made available on the District’s website. In grades 7 through 12, the Athletic Director or designee will reinforce the policy, at the beginning of each sports season, to the athletes and their parents. Also, all class and extracurricular advisors will reinforce the policy with their participants.
- Parent Notification – The attendance policy will be included in the school calendar. A district telephone number will be provided for parents to get further information on the policy.
- Faculty and Staff Notification – The district will provide a copy of the attendance policy and any amendments thereto to the 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 and go over the policy and clarify individual roles in its implementation. The district will provide faculty and staff with in-service training on attendance during each school year, if necessary.
- Community Notification – Copies will be available to community members at all school buildings’ main offices upon request.
- Child Protective Services - The district will share this policy with local Child Protective Services (CPS) to ensure a common understanding of excused and unexcused absences and to work toward identifying and addressing cases of educational neglect.

Excused and Unexcused Absences

Absences will be considered either excused or unexcused according to the following:

Excused

Personal/family Illness
 Appointments (medical, court)
 College visits
 Car accident
 Field trip, VICA
 Military, Quarantine
 Religious Observance
 Home Teaching
 Take your child to work day, etc.

Unexcused

Vacation
 Road test
 Out of town
 Transportation problems
 Truancy/Overslept
 Missed bus
 Defensive Driving Training
 Visiting, Work, Away
 Babysitting, shopping
 Hair appointments, etc.

All absences must be accounted for. It is the parent's responsibility to notify the school office within 24 hours of the absence and to provide a written excuse upon the student's return to school.

General Procedures/Data Collection

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. Attendance shall be taken at least once a day for state aid purposes. All attendance information is recorded and stored electronically.

- Morrisonville and Saranac Elementary Schools shall take attendance daily, at the beginning of the day. Attendance is also recorded for each different instructional period during the day (math, reading, physical education, music, etc.)
- Saranac Middle and High Schools will take attendance during each period that students pass without supervision to a different period of instruction or supervised activity (e.g., study hall, assembly, etc.).
- The nature of each absence shall be coded on a student's record.
- Student absence 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.
- 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 by the building administrator or designee to identify students who are absent, tardy, or leave class or school early. If a pattern of absences for an individual student is identified, a designated staff person(s) will follow-up in accordance with this policy.

- Attendance data at the building level should be used by the building administrator and other designated individuals to identify individuals and group attendance patterns and to initiate appropriate actions to address attendance problems to improve student attendance.

Incentives and Sanctions to be Used

All students who have exemplary attendance will receive an Exemplary Attendance Certificate by their school building administrator.

In grades kindergarten through five each school administrator will address chronic school absences, tardiness, or early departures and appropriate action will be taken. Consequences of excessive absences include, but are not limited to parent notification, involvement of the preventative case worker, reports to the Hotline or Person in Need of Supervision (PINS).

In grades six, seven and eight, a school administrator will address chronic school absences, tardiness, or early departures and appropriate action will be taken. Consequences of excess absences, tardiness, or early departures may include, but are not limited to, parent notification, detention, and reports to the Hotline or Persons in Need of Supervision (PINS).

In grades nine through 12, a school administrator will address chronic school absences, tardiness, or early departures and appropriate action will be taken. Consequences of excess absences, tardiness, or early departures may include, but are not limited to, parent notification, detention, PINs if appropriate, revocation of driving privileges, and revocation or no issuance of working card.

In addition to the above, a 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, and advise the Building Principal.

Parent Notification

A parent contact will be made to notify parent each day a student is absent. Parent contact information will be taken from the Emergency Contact Form.

In grades K through 8, a letter will be sent home to the parent when a student has missed 4 and then 8 days of school during the school quarter explaining the importance of school attendance.

In grades 9 through 12, class attendance data is included in quarterly report cards, attendance data is also available online and is updated every two weeks and attendance reports are mailed home to the parents of all students at risk of not receiving credit due to excessive absence.

At the beginning of each school year, a letter will be sent to parents of students who were chronically absent during the preceding year (20 days or more) stressing the importance of school and class attendance.

Grade/Course Credit

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, unexcused absences will affect a student's class participation grade for the marking period.

A student who misses class for any reason must arrange with the teacher involved to make up any work missed. Completion of this work will give the student any grades missed. Make up opportunities must be completed by a date specified by the student's teacher for the class in question. The time frame will range from 1-10 days or the end of the quarter, whichever comes first. Students are responsible:

- To contact their teachers for missed work immediately upon the student's return from an absence; and
- To give teachers advance notification of an absence due to school-related activity (e.g., music lessons, field trips) in order for work to be provided.

At the high school level, any student with more than 12 absences in a semester course or more than 24 absences in a full year course will result in a student not receiving credit for the course. Absences for course credit are defined as any and all absences regardless of cause. Thus, there is no distinction or discretion regarding excused or unexcused absences.

A student who exceeds the absence limit and has completed all required assignments may appeal to the High School Principal during the last week of the semester or school year, whichever applies. The student is responsible for providing any supporting documentation, such as hospital or court records. The principal may award credit if there exists extenuating circumstances that caused the absences or may make other arrangements by which the student may earn course credit (assignments, course audits, etc.). The decision of the principal is final.

Annual Review

Each year, the Superintendent will review the attendance data from the building-level student attendance records to determine how successful the comprehensive attendance policy is in maintaining or improving attendance in each of its school buildings. If building level attendance records show a decline, the Superintendent will advise the Board and determine if it is necessary to revise the policy to make changes to improve overall student attendance in the coming year.

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

Ref: Education Law §§1709; 3024; 3025; 3202; 3205-3213; 3225
8 NYCRR §§104.1; 175.6
Social Service Law §34-a
Thomas v. Board of Education, Granville Central School Dist., 607 F 2d 1043 (1979)
Trachtman v. Anker, et al., 563 F 2d 512 (1977)
Frasca v. Andrew et al., 463 F Supp 1043 (1979)
Matter of Beil and Scariati, 26 EDR 109(1986)

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