

COMPREHENSIVE ATTENDANCE POLICY

Statement of Local Objectives

The Board of Education recognizes that regular school attendance is a major component of academic and career success. Through implementation of this policy, the Board expects to encourage full attendance by all students, maintain an adequate attendance and record keeping systems, identify patterns of student absences and develop effective intervention strategies to improve school attendance.

Strategies to Meet Objectives

To be successful in this endeavor, it is imperative that all members of the school community are aware of this policy, its purposes, 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:

- The district will provide a copy of the attendance policy and any amendments to faculty and staff. New staff will receive a copy upon their employment. The policy will be reviewed with faculty and staff at the beginning of each school year
- The attendance policy will be included in student handbooks and will be reviewed with students at the start of the school year.
- Parents will receive a copy of this policy at the start of the school year.
- Copies of this policy will also be made available to any community member upon request
- Attendance will be taken at the beginning of each day in all schools
- Attendance will be taken during each class period in classes from grades 6 to 12
- Attendance will be maintained on the district's student information system

Excused and Unexcused Absences

The Board of Education recognizes the following reasons for student absences from school as excused:

- illness
- illness or death in the family
- impassible roads
- religious observance
- doctor appointment
- dental appointment
- attendance at health clinics
- quarantine
- required court appearance
- approved college visits
- military obligations
- approved cooperative work programs
- approved field trips
- in-school sanctioned activities
- drivers road test
- other reasons approved by the Commissioner of Education

Any reason not listed as excused shall be deemed unexcused unless the principal determines otherwise. Examples of unexcused absences include:

- shopping
- traveling
- oversleeping
- missing the bus
- skipping class
- babysitting
- needed at home to help

For the purposes of this policy, suspension from school or assignment to In School Suspension does not constitute an absence.

For the purposes of this policy, the following definitions also apply:

Scheduled Instruction: Every period that a student is scheduled to attend instructional or supervised study activities during the course of a school day during the school year

Absent: The student is not present for one-third or more of the student's scheduled instruction

Tardy: The student arrives later than the starting time of the student's scheduled instruction

Early Departure: The student leaves prior to the end of the student's scheduled instruction

Classroom Attendance Policy

The Newfield School District requires students to attend 85% of the scheduled classes of a course of study in order to be eligible for course credit.

- 85% of the regularly scheduled class periods is defined as no more than 28 absences for a full year course; no more than 14 absences for a half-year course; and no more than 7 absences for a course that meets for one semester or all year every other day.
- Three tardies per class is equivalent to one absence for that specific class
- This policy will be reviewed as needed.
- Extenuating circumstances may be reviewed by the Principal on a case-by-case basis. His or her decision may be appealed to the Superintendent, whose decision will be final.

Classroom Attendance Notification/Intervention Strategies

Guidelines for Elementary/Middle School Students with Attendance Problems

1. Develop list of students with 15% absenteeism at 5 week period.
2. Letter is sent to parent and includes copy of absence record
3. Review list at 10 weeks. If attendance problem continues, social worker and/or nurse will make a home visit or invite parent for school meeting (if there is a caseworker or probation officer involved with the family they will be invited to the meeting)
4. Review list at 15 week point of school year. If absenteeism continues, letter is sent to parents and Social Service or Probation worker is asked to contact the family
5. If no improvement is noted despite above steps, a Child Protective Service referral is made.

Guidelines for High School Students with Attendance Problems

- A. Steps for a full-year course under the traditional 9 period schedule
1. After seven (7) absences, the classroom teacher notifies the student, a counselor and the administrator of the problem
 2. An administrator/teacher calls the home after seven (7) missed days. This phone call is documented by correspondence to the parent/guardian
 3. At twelve (12) absences, a planning conference occurs involving the student, parents, teachers and administrators; a specific plan is devised to address the student's absenteeism; a certified letter outlining the understandings and outcomes of this meeting is sent home to the parent /guardian.
 4. At twenty (20) absences, a parent/student/school conference is required notifying the parents that the continued absences beyond twenty-seven (27) days will result in the student being removed from class(es). A follow up letter confirming this information will be sent home.
 5. At twenty-seven (27) days of absence, the student will meet with the building principal or her/his designee to be notified of ineligibility for credit. Parents will also be notified by letter.
 6. At twenty-seven (27) days of absence, the student will be removed from each (or all) class/subject in which absences have occurred and credit will be denied.
 - For semester classes in a two period block schedule, the steps would apply after three (3) days absence, after five (5) days absence; at seven (7) absences. A parent/student/school phone conference is required notifying the parents that the student is ineligible for credit for that course(s). The information discussed at this conference will be summarized and documented by a letter sent to parents.
 - For ¼ credit course that meets for one semester, one period alternate days (ie: Physical Education), no more than seven (7) absences are allowed

Understandings associated with this policy

- School sponsored events are equivalent to a class: field trips, school sponsored competitions, music lessons, study center, school sponsored college visits, home tutoring, etc.
- Upon medical notation, home tutoring is set up by the end of five (5) consecutive days of absence
- Home tutoring for students 16 and under pursuant to the Compulsary Education Law may also be established for other reasons such as suspensions
- Teachers will be available to respond to questions from students about work missed during a student's absence regardless of the reason for the absence. However, the district is not obligated to extend to every student who misses a class, test, etc., a make up opportunity. Such opportunities do not have to be extended for unexcused absences or truancy
- If make-up work is given, it is done in lieu of that which was done in class: it may not necessarily have the same format, but will include the same content
- Some work is impossible to make up, i.e. class participation, oral class work that was graded, work that was scored and then reviewed in class
- Teachers may require that some class work (labs, etc) be made up during school time, for example, when the teacher is available to help the student; all make-up work may not be able to be done at home.

Annual Review

The Board shall periodically review building-level student attendance records and, if such records show a decline in student attendance, the Board shall make any revisions to the plan it deems necessary to improve student attendance.

Adoption date: December 20, 2001

Revised: July 24, 2003

Revised: January 20, 2011 and February 17, 2011

Ref.: NYS Compulsory Attendance Law.