

STUDENT ATTENDANCE

Objectives

School attendance is both a right and responsibility. The School District is an active partner with students and families in the task of ensuring that all students meet or exceed the New York State Learning Standards. The Board of Education, in accordance with New York State Education Law, requires that each minor regularly attend school fulltime.

Attendance is important, and research supports its relationship to student achievement and completion of a high school diploma. Regular and uninterrupted classroom attendance is vital to the learning process, and a major factor in the success of any child in both school and subsequent career pursuits. Regular and timely attendance is necessary for learning, and to establish the whereabouts of every student for safety and school management reasons. Attendance data will be utilized to identify student attendance patterns for the purpose of planning timely and appropriate interventions, incentives, rewards, and sanctions. Average daily attendance will be employed to compute state aid.

Notice/Strategies

To be successful, 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, families, teachers and administrators are notified of, and understand, this policy, the following procedures shall be implemented:

1. Provide a plain language summary of this policy to families and students;
2. At the beginning of each school year, all faculty and staff will meet to review the attendance policy to clarify individual roles in its implementation. New staff will receive a copy upon their employment;
3. The District will share this policy with local Child Protective Services (CPS) to ensure a common understanding of excused and unexcused ATEDs [Absences, Tardiness, and Early Departures] and to work toward identifying and addressing cases of educational neglect;
4. School newsletters, publications, and the district website will include periodic reminders of the components of this policy;
5. Attendance data will be analyzed for the purpose of tracking individual and group trends, and identifying student attendance problems. If patterns emerge, district resources will be targeted to understand and eliminate barriers to attendance;
6. Early intervention strategies will be developed to improve school attendance for all students;
7. Early interventions will be reviewed at each building level at least annually; and
8. A District Attendance Review Committee will be established and meet regularly to review student attendance data.

Determination of Excused and Unexcused Absences, Tardiness and Early Departures

Based upon our District's education and community needs, values and priorities, the School District has determined that absences, tardiness and early departures will be considered excused or unexcused according to the following standards:

Excused absences shall include: Personal illness, death in the family, school-approved education trips, religious observations, impassable roads or weather, quarantine, required court appearances, music lessons, approved college visitations, emergency doctor or dental appointments, approved cooperative work programs, or such other reasons as may be approved by the appropriate building administrator.

Family vacations require prior approval by administration, may not exceed ten days, and will not be approved during periods of state testing. At the discretion of the teacher, projects may be assigned during family vacations, in lieu of regularly assigned homework.

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 five [5] days, but work must be made up according to the rules applicable to other excused absences. Parents are asked to notify the Building Principal no less than three [3] days before the intended absences.

Unexcused absences shall include: Any unauthorized absence (full day or class absence), leaving school without permission, or absence without a valid or written documentation submitted to the main or attendance office. Any absence, tardiness, or early departure will be considered unexcused unless valid written documentation is provided according to the administrative regulations for student attendance. Note: In-school suspension and night school suspension are counted as days of attendance for students.

General Procedures/Data Collection

1. Attendance will be taken each school day, and period-by-period at the secondary level. At the conclusion of each class period or school day, all attendance information shall be compiled and provided to the designated staff member responsible for attendance;
2. The nature of an ATED shall be coded on a student's record;
3. 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;
4. Where consistent with other school practices, teachers and staff shall detain students in the hall ways who are absent from a class period without excuse and refer the students to the Building Principal;
5. Any 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 ATEDs for an individual student is identified, a designated staff person will follow-up in accordance with this policy; and
6. If a student is absent from school or a class without an excuse, the parent/guardian will be notified. In addition, the parent/guardian will be notified if the student will not receive credit due to excessive absenteeism.

Intervention Strategies

Students who exhibit an excessive number of days absent, class cuts, or tardiness will be referred by the teacher to the school student service professional team, i.e., guidance counselor, social worker and/or psychologist, to identify the cause, and seek solutions to the problem.

Parents/guardians will be part of the discussion and implementation of all intervention strategies.

Attendance incentives will be designed and implemented to acknowledge a student's efforts to maintain or improve attendance, and to achieve a goal of attendance as an inherent value and life skill.

Consequences of Excessive ATEDs

A designated staff member will contact the student's parents/guardians and the student's guidance counselor in the event that a student's record reveals excessive ATEDs, excused and/or unexcused. Excessive ATEDs are defined as: Four consecutive absences, and/or total absences, or tardies. Such staff member(s) shall remind parents/guardians 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.

Unexcused ATEDs may result in disciplinary action consistent with the district's code of conduct.

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 or Educational Setting*, and notify the building principal of said report.

Course Completion and Awarding of 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 performance on homework, tests, papers, projects, etc.

The following attendance and course completion guidelines shall govern the awarding of course credit at Kingston High School, and for those students who are taking credit-bearing courses in the middle schools:

1. Students are expected to attend all scheduled classes. Students are expected to consult with their teacher, and make up all class work/tests that are missed due to excused absences. Make-up opportunities must be completed by a date specified by the student's teacher for the class in question. Opportunities to make up work will not be made available for unexcused absences. Consistent with the importance of classroom participation, unexcused absences, tardiness, and

early departures will affect a student's grade, including credit for classroom participation, for the marking period.

2. Any student who is in excess of 18 days of unexcused absences for a full year secondary course will not receive credit for the course. Any student who is in excess of 9 days unexcused absences for a half year secondary course will not receive credit for the course. To ensure that parents/guardians and students are aware of the implication of this minimum attendance requirement, the teacher or other designated staff member will advise the student and contact the parents/guardians by telephone and mail at appropriate intervals prior to the student reaching nine or eighteen unexcused absences [see above].
3. Students receiving instruction at home or in a hospital due to illness, Superintendent's suspension or out of school placement shall be considered to be present for instruction. No student shall be accounted for as absent on a day when he/she is entitled to home or hospital instruction and the District fails to provide the instruction. However, if alternative instruction is offered by the district and the student fails to attend, the student shall be marked absent.
4. The option for *Credit Recovery* will be detailed in all course completion statements. This option will only be available to a student when all eligibility criteria have been met, and upon teacher recommendation.

Appeals

An appeal process shall be established in regulations to resolve a challenge from a student or parent/guardian related to a student's eligibility for course credit.

Summer School Attendance Regulations

The attendance requirements for students in a summer school program will be set by the educational agency providing the service, e.g., BOCES. Eligibility for summer school may be denied because of excessive absences during the regular school year, and enrollment may be dependent upon administrative recommendation.

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
 5300 Code of Conduct
 5305 KHS Jefferson Code
 5460 Child Abuse in a Domestic or Educational Setting

Ref: Education Law §§1709; 3024; 3025; 3202; 3205-3213; 3225
 8 NYCRR §§104.1; 175.6
 Social Service Law §34-a

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