

5200 ATTENDANCE

The Board of Education requires that the pupils enrolled in the schools of the district attend school regularly in accordance with the laws of the State of New Jersey. The educational program offered by the district is predicated on the presence of the pupil and requires continuity of instruction and classroom participation. The regular contact of pupils with one another in the classroom and their participation in a well-planned instructional activity under the tutelage of a competent teacher are vital to this purpose.

The Superintendent shall calculate and monitor the daily attendance rate for each school and the district as a whole. Whenever the average daily attendance rate is below ninety percent for the district or below eighty-five percent in any one school, the Superintendent shall develop and implement an attendance improvement plan.

Absences

The State of New Jersey has changed pupil attendance reporting requirements. It is the policy of the Board that all pupils enrolled in district schools shall be expected to attend all classes/sessions, including homeroom, in which the pupil is registered. In accordance with the laws of the State of New Jersey, all absences for all reasons are recorded.

Absences from school for the following reasons are recorded but not counted towards a pupil's attendance record:

1. By the observance of the pupil's religion on a day approved by the New Jersey Department of Education as a religious holiday or observance,
2. College visit – limited to a maximum of 3 days for pupils in grades 11 and 12 only;
3. Take Your Child to Work Day

A pupil 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. All other absences are chargeable and count towards a pupil's attendance record.

Wherever practicable, the parent or legal guardian of an absent pupil is expected to contact the school office before the start of the school day. Board regulations dictate procedures for when pupils return to school after an absence.

Prolonged or repeated absences, excused or unexcused, from school or from class, deprive the pupil of the classroom experience deemed essential to learning and may result in retention at grade level or loss of credit toward the high school diploma in accordance with policies of this Board.

A warning notice shall be given to any pupil and to the parent or legal guardian of any minor pupil enrolled in elementary or intermediate school who has been absent eight days, consecutively or cumulatively in any one marking period.

A warning notice shall be given to any pupil and to the parent or legal guardian of any minor pupil, enrolled in high school who is approaching the attendance absentee limits of 18 days in a full year course, 9 days in a semester course and 5 days in a marking period course.

Truancy

Truancy is defined by the State of New Jersey as ten (10) or more cumulative unexcused absences.

Unexcused absences from school or from classes within the school day constitute truanies and shall be subject to the disciplinary rules of the Board. The Board recognizes the complexity of factors inherent in habitual truancy and class cutting. It will strive to devise and implement programs which would in effect significantly reduce the incidence of such acts, keeping the best interests of the pupils central to such programs.

Any unexcused absence from school shall be regarded as truancy. This specifically includes, but is not limited to, any absence from all, or part, of the school day, without a phone call or signed note of explanation from a parent or legal guardian. All undocumented absences, regardless of whether or not such absence would have been classified as an excused absence, had parental notification been presented in the manner provided for by Board regulations and/or school policy, shall be deemed unexcused.

Unauthorized absence from any class or activity during the day for which the pupil is scheduled is cutting. Class cutting is always an unexcused absence, and disciplinary action shall be taken in accordance with the Code of Conduct.

Repeated truanies interfere with efforts of this Board and its staff in the maintenance of good order and the continuity of classroom instruction. Repeated truanies may result in the suspension or expulsion of any pupil from the course of study during which absences have occurred. However, before any such action is taken, every effort shall be made to identify the cause or causes of the behavior, and consider the modification of the pupil's educational program.

In all cases of truancy, disciplinary action will be taken in accordance with the Code of Conduct. Continued violations of the attendance requirements will result in suspension and/or other penalties provided by district regulations and New Jersey law.

Missed Assignments

Pupils absent from school, for any reason, shall be responsible for the timely completion of all assignments, assessments and examinations missed because of their absence.

The material covered in each class session is an integral part of the course. Therefore, each pupil is required to complete make-up assignments for all absences. Assignments, classwork and tests are to be made-up by the pupils within a reasonable length of time. Arrangements to make up work must be initiated by the pupil in grade 6 and above and approved by the teacher.

The regular time for make-up work is immediately following an absence. Teachers will then be able to assist pupils with whatever needs to be made up. Teachers shall retain discretion in determining deadlines for submitting missed assignments. Teachers are encouraged, but not required, to provide advance work for pupils in the case of extended absences and with prior notice of an anticipated excusable absence.

No pupil excused for a religious holiday or observance shall be deprived of an award or eligibility to compete for an award or the opportunity to make up a test given on the religious holiday or observance, or be otherwise penalized, provided notice is given to the teacher prior to such absence.

N.J.S.A. 18A:36-14.; 18A:38-25
N.J.S.A. 34:2-21.1 et seq.
N.J.A.C. 6A:16- 7.6; 6A32-8.3

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R 5200 ATTENDANCE

Definitions

- A. "Attendance" is a pupil'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.
1. A pupil in grades 1-12 will be considered to have attended school if he or she has been present at least two (2) hours during the school day (one hour in the morning session and one hour in the afternoon session).
 2. A kindergarten pupil will be considered to have attended school if he or she has been present at least one (1) hour during the kindergarten session to which the pupil is assigned.
 3. A pupil 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.
- B. "Excused Absence" is a pupil's absence from school for a full day or a portion of a day for one or more of the reasons listed below. The absence is recorded but not counted towards a pupil's attendance record.
1. By the observance of the pupil's religion on a day approved by the New Jersey Department of Education as a religious holiday or observance;
 2. College visit – limited to a maximum of three (3) days for pupils in grades 11 and 12 only;
 3. Take Your Child to Work Day
- C. "Chargeable absence" is a pupil's absence from school for a full day or a portion of a day for one or more of the reasons listed below. The absence is recorded and counted towards a pupil's attendance record.
1. When the demonstrated mental or physical condition of the pupil is such as to interfere with learning or prevent attendance;
 2. Where appropriate, when consistent with Individualized Education Programs, the Individuals with Disabilities Act, accommodation plans under 29 U.S.C. § 794 and 705(20), and individualized health care plans

3. By such circumstances as the building principal may determine constitute good cause, which may include:
 - a. exposure to a communicable disease or condition that poses a health risk to pupils and staff, as determined by the district medical inspector;
 - b. a death or critical illness in the pupil's immediate family;
 - c. the pupil's required attendance in court or other legal obligation;*
 - d. interviews with a prospective employer or with an admissions officer of an institution of higher education;*
 - e. examination for a driver's license;*
 - f. necessary and unavoidable medical or dental appointments that cannot be scheduled at a time other than the school day;*
 - g. family visitation;
 - h. senior project obligations; or
 - i. an absence for a reason not listed above, but deemed excused by the Building Principal, upon a written request by the pupil's parent or legal guardian to the Building Principal or designee stating the reason for the absence and requesting permission for the absence to be an excused absence.

Excuses marked with an asterisk (*) will be considered legitimate only when a note or email is presented in advance of the absence. Any absence due to school suspension also will be recorded and counted towards a pupil's attendance record.

With the exception of illness, all notes for the excuses listed above will be confirmed by an office staff member.

- D. "Unexcused absence that counts towards truancy" is a pupil's absence for all or part of a school day for any reason other than those listed 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, and
 2. performance of household or baby-sitting duties.

- E. "Truancy" is a pupil's absence from all or a part of the school day for ten (10) or more cumulative unexcused absences without the knowledge of the pupil's parent or legal guardian. A pupil will also be considered truant if he or she:
1. leaves school at lunch time without approval,
 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."
- 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:16-11, 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 F.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 F.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
 - 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.

Elementary and Intermediate Schools

A. Notice to School of a Pupil's Absence

1. A parent or legal guardian or adult pupil is requested to call the school office before 8:40 a.m. of the morning of the pupil's absence. If the parent does not call the school, the school will contact the parent/guardian.
2. The parent or legal guardian of a pupil who attended morning session but will not attend afternoon session should call the school office before 12:30 p.m. to give notice of the pupil's absence.
3. A parent or legal guardian who anticipates a future absence or anticipates that an absence will be prolonged should notify the school office, which will assist in the arrangement of make-up work. If the absence is to be a long-term absence (ten (10) consecutive school days), home instruction may be arranged where requested by the pupil's parent or legal guardian and deemed appropriate by the district.

B. Readmission to School After an Absence

1. A pupil returning from an absence of any length must present to the teacher a written statement, dated and signed by the parent or legal guardian or adult pupil, of the reasons for the absence.

2. A note explaining a pupil's absence for non-communicable illness for a period of more than five (5) consecutive days must be accompanied by a physician's statement of the pupil's illness.
3. A pupil who has been absent by reason of having or being suspected of having a communicable disease must present to the nurse written evidence of being free of communicable disease, in accordance with Policy No. 8451.

C. Instruction

1. Teachers are required to provide advance work for pupils in cases of extended illness. Teachers are encouraged but not required to provide advance work for other excused absences.
2. A pupil who anticipates an excused absence of more than ten (10) consecutive school days may be eligible for home instruction in accordance with Policy No. 2412. The parent or legal guardian or adult pupil must request home instruction.
3. Pupils absent for any reason are expected to make up the work missed. In grade six (6) and above, the pupil is responsible for requesting missed assignments and any assistance required. Teachers will provide make-up assignments as necessary.
4. Teachers shall make reasonable accommodations to extend time for pupils to make up missed assignments.
5. A pupil who missed a test because of an excused absence shall be offered an opportunity to take the test or an alternate test; in no case will a pupil who missed a test because of his or her observance of a religious holiday be denied an opportunity to make up the test.

D. Denial of Course Credit

1. The teacher will determine the credit to be awarded a pupil for make-up work, subject to the rules set forth in this section. Where class participation is a factor in the learning process, the teacher may not consider a pupil's excused absence in determining a final grade. The teacher may record an incomplete grade, in accordance with Regulation No. 2624, for a pupil who has not had full opportunity to make up missed work.

An elementary or intermediate pupil may be retained at grade level, in accordance with Policy No. 5410, when he or she has been absent 20 or more school days, excluding absences for the observance of religious holidays and during a pupil's

suspension will not count toward the total. Pupils will be advanced to the next grade if they can demonstrate, through completion of home assignments and/or home instruction, that they have mastered the proficiencies established for the assigned courses of study.

E. Notice to Pupils and Parents or Legal Guardians

1. When a pupil has been absent eight (8) days, consecutively or cumulatively, in any one marking period the nurse will notify the pupil's parent or legal guardian in writing of the number and dates of the absences. A copy of the notice will be given to the student support counselor/guidance counselor for follow-up.
2. Whenever a pupil is absent and the parent/guardian has failed to notify the school about the reason of the absence, every effort will be made to contact the parent/guardian.

F. Discipline

1. Pupils may be denied participation in co-curricular activities if their attendance fails to meet the standards set forth in Policy No. 2430.
2. Pupils may be denied participation in athletic competition if their attendance fails to meet the standards set forth in Policy No. 2431.
3. No pupil who is absent from school for observance of a religious holiday may be deprived of any award or of eligibility for or opportunity to compete for any award because of the absence.
4. Truancies will be handled as follows:
 - a. Whenever a pupil is truant, the parents will be immediately notified. The principal will meet with the truant child's parents immediately upon return to school to insure regular attendance.
 - b. Pupils who are chronically truant will be subject to suspension and/or other disciplinary action.
5. When a pupil under the age of sixteen is absent without excuse more than twenty (20) days in any one school year, the principal shall inform the Superintendent for possible prosecution in municipal court pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:38-27 et seq.
6. The absence of a pupil missing from school for unexplained reasons will be handled in accordance with Regulation No. 8464.

G. Recording Attendance

1. Teachers must accurately record the pupils present, tardy, and absent each day in each session or each class. Attendance records must also record pupils' attendance at out-of-school curricular events such as field trips.

2. Teachers must classify and record each absence as excused, unexcused, or truant.
3. A report card will record the number of times the pupil was absent and tardy in each marking period.
4. The attendance roster will be inputted each day, no later than 8:30 a.m. for intermediate schools and 9:30 a.m. for elementary schools, for the attendance secretary, who will verify pupil absences.

H. Appeal

1. A pupil who has been suspended or expelled for trancies may appeal that action in accordance with Policy No. 5610 (Suspension).
2. A pupil who has been retained at grade level for excessive absences may appeal that action in accordance with Policy No. 5410.
3. The pupil may appeal an adverse decision to the Superintendent, the Board of Education, and the Commissioner of Education, in that order and in accordance with Policy No. 5710.

High School

In accordance with guidelines established by the Board of Education of the State of New Jersey, Westfield High School has set a 90 percent attendance requirement for pupils. All absences for all reasons, inclusive of full-day and individual class absences, are recorded and charged toward a pupil's attendance record. Absences occasioned by religious holiday observance, school sponsored activities, college visits (limited to a maximum of three (3) days for students in grades 11 and 12 only) and Take Your Child to Work Day are recorded but are not charged toward a pupil's attendance record.

A. Chargeable Absences and Unexcused Absences

A written note signed by a parent or guardian, or a phone call-specifying a legitimate reason must be received by the Attendance Office within 48 hours of the absence. Chargeable absences are recorded and count towards a pupil's attendance record.

Unexcused absences (class cutting) are penalized and are also recorded and charged toward a pupil's attendance record. At any step in the attendance procedure the pupil and/or parent may appeal on the appropriate form any charged absence.

B. Course Credit

1. More than eighteen chargeable absences from a full-year course, more than nine chargeable absences from a semester course, more than five chargeable absences from health or physical education marking period courses, or the sixth absence in any course during the fourth quarter, may result in denial of credit for the course. On the eighth and fifteenth chargeable absence from a full-year course, on the third and sixth chargeable

- absence from a semester course, and on the third chargeable absence in health or physical education marking period courses, a warning or notice to parents/guardians indicating the attendance status and the potential consequences of continued absences will be sent home. At the tenth absence in a full year course and the sixth absence in a semester course, parents and pupil will be required to meet with their Assistant Principal to review the attendance policy. Failure to do so will make the pupil ineligible for the appeal process.
2. The Attendance Review Committee will consider requests for appeals of the policy when absences are occasioned by cases of extended illness or extenuating family circumstances. The presence of unexcused class absences (class cuts) in an attendance record under appeal/review will adversely affect the committee's decision. It is strongly recommended that medical-dental appointments, college visitations, or other non-school-sponsored matters be arranged in such a way as to avoid absence from class.

C. Unexcused Class Absences

1. An absence from class (including homeroom) will be recorded as unexcused (cut) and charged toward the pupil's attendance record when:
 - a. parents/guardians have not been aware of such an absence or understand the absence to be unexcused;
 - b. a note is presented which is not acceptable to the administration;
 - c. a pupil arrives twenty minutes late to class.
2. Unexcused and chargeable absences (cuts) will activate the following SARC (Student Attendance Review Committee) procedures:
 - a. 1st Cut:
 - 1) Two hours of central detention will be assigned by the teacher of the class which has been cut.
 - 2) Parents/guardians will be notified by telephone or in writing of the class cut.
 - b. 2nd Cut:
 - 1) Pupil will be referred to SARC for assignment of Saturday Detention.
 - 2) Parents/guardians and counselor will be notified by SARC.
 - c. 3rd Cut:
 - 1) Pupil referred to SARC for two Saturday Detentions.
 - 2) Denial of credit in semester courses.
 - 3) Parents/guardians and counselor will be notified by SARC.
 - d. 4th Cut:
 - 1) Pupil referred to SARC for discipline process.

- 2) Confirmation letter sent to parents that fourth cut has occurred and warning that a fifth cut will result in denial of credit for the entire course.

e. 5th Cut:

- 1) Denial of credit for full year course will occur.
- 2) Pupil referred to SARC for discipline process.
- 3) Options for the balance of course:
 - i. Remain in class and meet all course requirements to be eligible for summer school, provided pupil has no additional cuts in the class and does not exceed 90 percent class attendance requirements;
 - ii. Be scheduled for a semester course for the next semester if the master schedule permits;
 - iii. Written appeal exclusively through the Assistant Principal on the appropriate form.

D. Student Attendance Review Committee

1. When a pupil misses a class for other than a legal reason, he/she will be asked to explain his/her absence to a faculty-administration committee. He/she will then be counseled, made aware of the seriousness of his/her offense, given detention, sent to his/her guidance counselor to have his/her schedule adjusted, or in the case of repeated offenses, suspended.
2. Pupils denied credit by the Attendance Review Committee and the high school administration will have the right to appeal that decision to the Superintendent, the Board of Education and the Commissioner of Education, in that order and in accordance with Policy 5710.

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