

STUDENT ATTENDANCE

Overall Objectives

The District is an active partner with students and parents in the task of ensuring that all students meet or exceed the New York State Learning Standards. The Board of Education and the District recognize that consistent school attendance, academic success, and school completion have a positive correlation, and therefore have developed, and, if necessary, will revise a Student Attendance Policy to meet the following objectives:

- a) Increase school completion for all students;
- b) Raise student achievement and close gaps in student performance;
- c) Identify attendance patterns in order to design attendance improvement efforts;
- d) Know the whereabouts of every student for safety and other reasons;
- e) Verify that individual students are complying with education laws relating to compulsory attendance. Students are expected to attend all scheduled classes;
- f) Determine the District's average daily attendance for state aid purposes.
- g) Identify and minimize the number of Absences, Tardiness and Early Departures ("ATEDs").

Definitions

- **Attendance** – Measurement of student engagement and instructional activity through presence and/or engagement time through in-person or remote learning settings.
- **ATED** - Absences, Tardiness and Early Departures.
- **In-Person Instruction** - Student is physically present in the classroom/school building to receive instruction during the *scheduled* school day.
- **Remote Learning** – Student is NOT physically present in the classroom/school building and engages in learning outside the physically assigned learning environment, generally at home.
- **Synchronous Instruction** – Students are present for learning together (online virtual, by phone, or in-person) and receive instruction in real time from a teacher present in-person or by video or audio. Examples include:
 - Students are visibly and/or audibly present for learning.
 - Face-to-face time via video-conferencing for direct-instruction and engagement,

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- Use of digital platforms that allow for online/phone/in-person participation and engagement
- **Asynchronous Instruction** – Student is NOT present in the building and is engaged in learning experiences planned and supported by a teacher that may be done at any time during the day. Refers to forms of education, instruction and learning that do not occur in the same place or at the same time (online / virtual, by phone, or in-person). Examples include:
 - Activities, projects, time assigned to computer-based programs, or other activities that may be designed but are not facilitated directly by the teachers.
 - Student is present for learning independently with evidence of learning through online, phone, or in-person tasks or daily school activities and learning submission(s).
- **Instructional Modality** – Instruction by in-person, remote, or both on the same day.
- **Remote Instruction Snow Day** – Where permitted by NY SED, a day with remote instruction to all enrolled students, to provide continuity of instruction on what would otherwise be a day of school closure due to a snow and other weather, and non-weather emergencies. The District must continue to provide transportation and other required services to charter and nonpublic schools on such days if such schools remain open.
- **Excused ATEDs** – An absence, tardiness, or early departure may be excused if due to personal illness, illness or death in the family, impassable roads due to inclement weather, religious observance, quarantine, required court appearances, attendance at health clinics, approved college visits, approved cooperative work programs, military obligations, or other reasons as may be approved by the appropriate building administrator in consultation with the appropriate assistant superintendent (including, but not limited to, absences due to circumstances related to homelessness).
- **Unexcused ATEDs** – An absence, tardiness, or early departure is considered unexcused if the reason for the lack of attendance does not fall into the above categories (e.g., family vacation, hunting, babysitting, hair salon, obtaining learner's permit, road test, oversleeping).

Strategies to Meet Objectives

To be successful in this endeavor, it is imperative that all members of the school community be aware of this policy, its purpose, procedures and the consequences of non-compliance. The overall goal is to create and maintain a positive school building culture by fostering a positive physical and psychological environment where the presence of strong adult role models encourages respectful and nurturing interactions between adults and students.

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This positive school culture is aimed at encouraging a high level of student bonding to the school, which in turn should lead to increased attendance. To ensure that students, parents, teachers and administrators are notified of and understand this policy, the District will implement the following procedures:

- Post the attendance policy on the District website.
- Make accessible to students a plain language summary of this attendance policy through various means, including, but not limited to, student handbooks, website and school calendar, and will be reviewed with students at the start of the school year.
- Provide parent with a plain language summary of this policy by mail at the start of the school year.
- Ensure that parents provide correct and current contact information.
- Include periodic reminders of the components of this policy and the importance of student attendance for instructional success in school communications and publications.
- Create and maintain a positive school building culture by fostering a positive physical and psychological environment where the presence of strong adult role models encourages respectful and nurturing interactions between adults and students. This positive school culture is aimed at encouraging a high level of student bonding to the school, which in turn should lead to increased attendance.
- Maintain accurate recordkeeping to record attendance, absence, tardiness, or early departure of each student, including by instructional modality if needed.
- Utilize data analysis systems for tracking individual student attendance and individual and group trends in student attendance problems.
- Develop early intervention strategies to improve school attendance for all students.
- Designated staff member(s) to notify the parents of a student who is absent, tardy, or leaves early from class or school without excuse using communication tools including but not limited to, phone, email, and mail after three absences of the specific ATED, remind them of the attendance policy, and review ATED intervention procedures with them.
- Hold a back to school event at the beginning of each school year which will include the school emphasizing that every day of attendance counts, explanation of this policy, and an emphasis on the parent's responsibility for ensuring their children's attendance.
- Include periodic reminders of the components of this policy and the importance of student attendance for instructional success in school communications and publications.

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- Provide a copy of the student attendance policy and any amendments thereto to faculty and staff. New staff will receive and review this policy upon their employment.
- Hold a meeting for all school faculty and staff at the beginning of each school year to review the attendance policy to clarify individual roles and responsibilities in its implementation.

Determination of Excused and Unexcused Absences, Tardiness, and Early Departures

Based upon the District's education and community needs, values, and priorities, the District has determined that absences, tardiness, and early departures will be considered excused or unexcused according to the definitions previously given.

A written excuse, signed by a parent or person in parental relation, should be presented by the student when returning to school following each absence.

School administrators are responsible for determining the validity of an excuse due to homelessness, as they must do for any other type of excuse.

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 24 hours of the ATED and to provide a written excuse upon the student's return to school.
- For homeless students, the homeless liaison will assist the student in providing or obtaining documentation if needed. Parent/guardian signatures for homeless unaccompanied youth are addressed in policy 5151 and regulation 5151-R.
- A student leaving school within the first hour of arrival will be considered absent for the day.

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Student Attendance Recordkeeping/Data Collection

The record of each student's presence, absence, tardiness, and early departure will be kept in a register of attendance in a manner consistent with Commissioner's regulations. An absence, tardiness, or early departure will be entered as "excused" or "unexcused" along with the District code for the reason.

School staff will take and record student attendance in accordance with the following:

- Staff must record attendance through the District student information reporting system.
- The assigned teacher or staff designated by the Principal must enter attendance into the District student information reporting system.
- Staff must record attendance at least once daily by the end of first period for students in grades K-6. If students are dismissed from school grounds or dismissed remotely during a lunch period, then the teacher or designated staff member must record attendance a second time upon the student's scheduled return.
- For students in grades 7-12, teachers or designated staff must record attendance during each period of instruction.
- At the conclusion of each class period or school day the Principal will provide the assigned teacher or designated staff member(s) access to all attendance information compiled through the District student information reporting system
- Attendance problem follow up procedures/plan involve a multi-tiered system of support and must include, at a minimum, the following:
 - Direct conversation with student.
 - Direct conversation with parent/guardian.
 - Automated phone call notification of absence.
 - Email contact with home incorporating positive messaging.
 - Letter(s) home (certified letter after 3 unexcused absences) incorporating positive messaging and potential consequences of absence.
 - Involvement of support staff.
 - Referral to district-wide attendance personnel.
 - Referral to community agencies as deemed necessary by the appropriate administrator.

Attendance records must also indicate the date when a student withdraws from enrollment or is dropped from enrollment in accordance with Education Law Section 3202(1-a).

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The nature of an ATED will be coded in the District student information reporting system for student's record using the following codes:

<u>CODE</u>	<u>DEFINITION</u>
CUT	Skipped Class; Never arrived to class
ELC	Excused Late to Class
EXA	Excused Absence
EXT	Excused Tardy; Late arrival to School
FLD	Field Trip; School activity trip
HIN	Home Instruction
ISS	In School Suspension
LTC	Late to Class
LTE	Left Early; Signed out by parent/doctor's appointment
MED	Medical; Student is hospitalized
NON	Non-Attendance; Student is at a temporary facility (e.g., Four Winds, Daytop, or other medical/health facility)
OSS	Out of School Suspension
OIA	Other Illegal Absence
PRR	Permitted; Medical appointment, death in the family, impassible roads, religious observance, required court attendance, quarantine, college visitation, approved cooperative work program
SIC	Sick; Student illness
TAR	Unexcused Tardiness; Late arrival to school
UDT	Unlawful Detention; Pupil is absent with the knowledge and consent, state or implied, of parent for reason other than legal reason (i.e., vacation, visiting away, etc.)
UNA	Unexcused Absence; Student's whereabouts is unknown (i.e., no note, phone call to explain absence)

- The Superintendent is authorized to add Codes as necessary as well as to amend Codes set forth in this Policy to best ensure the Policy Goals are effectively implemented.
- Designated school personnel must review student ATED data on a weekly basis.
- In cases where the school received additional information that requires corrections to a student's attendance records, designated school personnel will make such corrections immediately and in no case later than 2 school days after the District learns of the need

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for correction. Notice of such a change will be sent to appropriate school personnel subject to applicable confidentiality rules.

- The school will analyze attendance data monthly to identify patterns or trends in student absences. As patterns emerge, the school will target resources through a multi-tiered system of support to understand and eliminate barriers to attendance.
- The school will monitor attendance data on a continuous basis to identify students who are absent, tardy, or leave class or school early.
- The District will consider a student “chronically absent” if s/he misses ten percent or more of the school year. The District will consider students nearing the chronic absent benchmarks as “at-risk.” Satisfactory attendance is attending more than 95% over the course of the year.
- If the school identifies a pattern of ATEDs for an individual student; designated staff person(s) will follow-up in accordance with this policy.

Online/Distance/Remote Learning

Students learning remotely will need to show daily school participation. The assigned teacher or staff member(s) designated by the Principal will record and report such participation under the provisions of this policy. Such participation will vary depending on the type of remote learning taking place. To assist with attendance, teachers will utilize the learning management system to organize and house student learning activities, tasks, and assignments.

Attendance Procedures & Expectations (Including Remote Learning)

- Teachers and designated staff members include a procedure/plan to make daily contact with students and/or parents/guardians in collecting and reporting daily teacher-student engagement or attendance in remote or hybrid settings.
- Teachers and designated staff members take attendance at the beginning of school day or at the beginning of each period.
- Principals establish and communicate school-based protocols for attendance confirmation.
- Teachers communicate school-based protocols to students and families on the method of daily attendance confirmation.
- Teachers pay particular attention to the educational progress of students learning remotely, and initiate appropriate interventions with the student and their family if a student does not show adequate engagement or growth.

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- Teachers maintain progress monitoring data as expected, per the provisions of this policy.

Attendance Incentives

To support ongoing teacher and administrative monitoring of student attendance and acknowledgement of positive behavior, the District will design and implement systems to acknowledge a student's efforts to maintain or improve school attendance. Some examples include:

- Certificates or other small recognitions (including fun activities) for perfect or improved attendance (not counting absences due to illness/injury).
- Positive messaging communications using digital platforms.
- An attendance honor roll that identifies those students with perfect attendance as well as those students whose attendance has improved significantly (not counting absences due to illness/injury), subject to parental consent and applicable confidentiality rules.
- Special events (quizzes, game days, debates, etc.) scheduled by building Principals and teachers for days of chronically high absenteeism, like Mondays and Fridays.
- Assigning special responsibilities (e.g., distribute and collect materials, lead groups, assist the teacher, etc.) to students who may need extra motivation to come to school.
- Improving the school climate through student surveys in order to provide a safe, supportive school environment and engage students in school.
- Engaging students and families to determine whether systemic barriers to attendance exist for students, and developing solutions to remove those barriers.

Consequences of Excessive ATEDs

A designated staff member(s) will contact the student's parents and the student's guidance counselor in the event that a student's record reveals excessive ATED's, excused and/or unexcused. Such staff member(s) will remind parents 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.

- After 3 unexcused absences, the Principal or designee will send parents a certified letter reminding them of the importance of attendance.
- After 6 unexcused absences, parents and an administrator will meet to discuss responsive supports and consequences of excessive absence and construct a plan for student success.
- The school will consider a personalized program and supports for students identified as chronically absent.

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- Unexcused ATEDs may result in actions consistent with the District's Code of Conduct.
- Absences related to homelessness will not result in negative consequences where the District determines that it would be in the best interests of the student to retain the student in school.
- A designated staff member will contact local Child Protective Services (CPS) if the school suspects 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 District attendance teacher.

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 performance on homework, tests, papers, projects, etc.

- Students are expected to attend all scheduled classes. Consistent with the importance of classroom participation, unexcused ATEDs will affect a student's class participation grade for the marking period.
- At the elementary school level, any student with more than 9 unexcused absences for one-half year or 18 unexcused absences for a full year will be in jeopardy of being detained in the grade.
- At the high school level, any student with more than 9 unexcused ATEDs for one-half year or 18 unexcused ATEDs for a full year will not receive credit for that course.
- Students with properly excused ATEDs may make up the work for each ATED, and those ATEDs will not count toward the minimum attendance standard.
- To ensure that parents and students 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 9 or 18 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 (e.g., 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 or a class 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.

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- 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.

Annual Review

The Board will annually review building-level student attendance records and, if such records show a decline in student attendance, the Board will revise this comprehensive attendance policy and make any revisions to the plan it deems necessary to improve student attendance.

Superintendent Regulations

The Board authorizes the Superintendent of Schools to develop regulations consistent with this Policy to carry out its goals and the provisions contained herein.

Cross ref: 4710 Grading Systems
5151 Homeless Children
5300 Code of Conduct
5460 Child Abuse in a Domestic Setting
4329 Remote Learning

Ref: 42 USC §11432(g)(1)(I) (McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act)
Education Law §§1709; 3024; 3025; 3202; 3205-3213; 3225
8 NYCRR §§104.1; 109.2, 175.6
Social Service Law §34-a

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