

Regulation

ATTENDANCE, ABSENCES AND EXCUSES

Definitions

- A. "Attendance" is a student's presence in school and in the classroom to which he/she is assigned at the times scheduled for instruction or other school activities.
1. A student will be considered to have attended school if he/she has been present at least four hours during the school day;
 2. A preschool student will be considered to have attended school if he/she has been present at least two hours during the session to which the student is assigned;
 3. A student who is not present in school because of his/her participation in an approved school activity, such as a field trip, meeting, or athletic/academic competition will be considered to be in attendance;
 4. A student will be considered to have attended school if he/she has been present at least two hours on an early dismissal day.
- B. "Excused absence" for the purposes of promotion is a student's absence from school for a full day or a portion of a day for one or more of the following reasons:
1. The student's illness;
 2. Family illness or death;
 3. Excused religious observances, pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:36-14 through 16;
 4. 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 pursuant to N.J.A.C.6A:16-2.3;
 5. The student's suspension from school;
 6. The student's required attendance in court;
 7. Necessary and unavoidable medical or dental appointments that cannot be scheduled at a time other than the school day.
- C. "Excused absence" for the purpose of state reporting is a student's absence from school for a NJDOE approved religious holiday only
- D. "Truancy" refers to 10 or more cumulative unexcused absences.
- E. "Unexcused absence" is a student's absence for all or part of a school day for any reason other than those listed in "B" and "C" above.

Notice to School of a Student's Absence

At the beginning of the school year the principal or his/her designee is to notify parents/guardians and students of the minimum attendance requirements in board policy 5200 Nonpublic School Students and the school's procedures for attendance.

It is the parents' or guardians' responsibility to telephone the school the morning of their child's absence stating the reason(s) why their child is not in attendance. Should the parent/guardian not telephone the school, it is the school's responsibility to contact the parent/guardian at work or at home to verify the child's absence from school.

The parent(s) or legal guardian(s) or adult student who anticipates a future absence or anticipates that an absence will be prolonged should notify the principal who will assist in the arrangement of make-up work.

ATTENDANCE, ABSENCES AND EXCUSES (regulation continued)Readmission to School after an Absence

A student returning from an absence of any length must present a written statement, dated and signed by the parent(s) or legal guardian(s) or adult student, of the reasons for the absence in order to qualify for an excused absence.

It is the principal or his/her designee's responsibility to maintain accurate attendance records. A note explaining a student's absence for illness for a period of more than four school days must be accompanied by a physician's statement of the student's illness.

A student 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.

Instruction

- A. It is the responsibility of teachers to provide students who have excused absences with work they have missed;
- B. Students absent for any reason are expected to make up the work missed;
- C. A student who anticipates an excused absence due to a temporary or chronic health condition may be eligible for home instruction in accordance with policy 6173 Home Instruction. The parent(s) or legal guardian(s) or adult student must request home instruction;
- D. Make-up work for a one day absence will be provided when the student returns to school;
- E. Requests for make-up work for unexcused absences (i.e. vacations) must be made forty eight hours prior to the absence;
- F. Assignments will be provided for no more than five days of consecutive unexcused absence.

School District Response To Unexcused Absences During the School Year

- A. For up to four cumulative unexcused absences, the building principal or designee shall:
 1. Make a reasonable attempt to notify the student's parent or legal guardian of each unexcused absence prior to the start of the following school day;
 2. Conduct an investigation of the cause of each unexcused absence, including contact with the student's parent or legal guardian;
 3. Develop an action plan in consultation with the student's parent or legal guardian designed to address patterns of unexcused absences, if any, and to have the child return to school and maintain regular attendance;
 4. 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 abuse situation is detected; and
 5. Cooperate with law enforcement and other authorities and agencies, as appropriate.
- B. For between five and nine cumulative unexcused absences, the building principal or designee shall:
 1. Make a reasonable attempt to notify the student's parent or legal guardian of each unexcused absence prior to the start of the following school day;
 2. Conduct a follow-up investigation, including contact with the student's parent or legal guardian, to determine the cause of each unexcused absence;
 3. Evaluate the appropriateness of the action plan developed for up to four unexcused absences;
 4. Revise the action plan, as needed, to identify patterns of unexcused absences and establish outcomes based upon the student's needs and specify the interventions for achieving the outcomes, supporting the student's return to school and regular attendance that may include any or all of the following:

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- a. Refer or consult with the building's Intervention and Referral Services Team, pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:16-8;
 - b. Conduct testing, assessments, or evaluations of the student's academic, behavioral, and health needs;
 - c. Consider an alternate educational placement;
 - d. Make a referral to a community-based social and health provider agency or other community resource;
 - e. Refer to the court program designated by the New Jersey Administrative Office of the Courts; and
 - f. Proceed in accordance with the provisions of N.J.S.A. 9:6 et seq. and N.J.A.C. 6A: 16-11, if a potentially missing or child abuse situation is detected.
5. Cooperate with law enforcement and other authorities and agencies, as appropriate.
- C. For cumulative unexcused absences of ten or more, the student between the ages of six and sixteen is truant, pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:38-27, and the building principal or designee shall:
1. Determine a need for referral to the court program required by the New Jersey Administrative Office of the courts;
 2. Make a reasonable attempt to notify the student's parent or legal guardian of the referral;
 3. Continue to consult with the parent or legal guardian and the involved agencies to support the student's return to school and regular attendance;
 4. Cooperate with law enforcement and other authorities and agencies, as appropriate; and
 5. 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.
- D. For students with disabilities, the attendance plan and punitive and remedial procedures of N.J.A.C. 6A:16-7.8 and Policy and Regulation 5200 shall be applied, where applicable, in accordance with the student's Individualized Education Programs, pursuant to 20 U.S.C. §1400 et seq.; the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act; the procedural protections set forth in N.J.A.C. 6A:14; accommodation plans under 29 U.S.C. §794 and 705(20); and individualized health care plans, pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:16-2.3.
- E. All receiving schools pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:14-7.1(a) shall act in accordance with the policy and procedures for unexcused absences for each student with up to four cumulative unexcused absences.
1. For each student attending a receiving school with five or more cumulative unexcused absences, the absences shall be reported to the sending district by the receiving school.
 2. The sending school district shall proceed in accordance with the district board of education policies and procedures for unexcused absences as appropriate.

Discipline

Students who are absent from school, for any reason other than an excused absence, are prohibited from participating in school-sponsored activities on the day of the absence.

No student 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.

In addition to the requirements for unexcused absences, a student deemed truant shall be subject to appropriate student discipline.

Recording Attendance

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

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Promptly each morning, the homeroom teacher is to provide the principal or his/her designee with a list of absentee students.

The principal or his/her designee is required to maintain accurate attendance records which he/she will review on a monthly basis.

Chronic attendance problems shall be referred to the Intervention and Referral Services (I&RS) committee to develop appropriate assistance plans, including attendance monitoring strategies, program modification, and support services. The principal or his/her designee shall monitor students' participation in the assistance plans and shall initiate further corrective action if necessary.

Educationally disabled students are subject to the same attendance requirements and procedures as non-disabled students unless modifications are specified in the student's Individualized Educational Program, accommodation Plan or Individualized Health Care Plan.

Attendance Improvement Plan

The chief school administrator or designee will collect attendance data and calculate the average daily attendance rate for the district. The attendance rate shall be calculated by dividing the total number of student days present for all students by the total possible number of student days present for all students and multiplying the result by one hundred.

When the average daily attendance rate for the district does not meet the New Jersey Department of Education requirements, performance objectives to improve student attendance pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:32-12.2(a) 3 shall be developed.

The chief school administrator or designee will notify parents each month if their child is at or exceeds the 10% unexcused absentee level. This notification will include the development of an action plan to prevent further absences.

Tardiness

Students are considered tardy when they arrive at school after the opening bell. When a student is late for school, he/she must report to the main office for a late slip. If a student reports late to school with a parental note explaining the reason for the lateness, this tardy will be considered an excused tardy. School administration will decide on the appropriateness of the parental excuse.

Excessive tardiness (both excused and unexcused) will be dealt with on an individual basis.

The following regulations are designed to enhance the on-time arrival of all students for the beginning of their instructional day:

- A. When a child accrues three (3) tardies in a marking period, a letter is sent to the parents by the chief school administrator;
- B. If a child reaches six (6) tardies in a marking period, a letter requiring parental action to modify the tardy behavior will be sent by the chief school administrator;
- C. In addition, a student in grades 6, 7, and 8 will receive one day of after school detention;
- D. On the ninth tardy of the school year, the chief school administrator will send a letter to the parents requiring a conference of parents and child with the chief school administrator for the purpose of formulating a plan of action to remediate the tardiness;
- E. If a child accumulates six or more tardies but has shown significant progress in modifying his/her late behavior, the chief school administrator, at his/her discretion, may waive any future detentions or consequences in order to have the student begin a marking period with a "clean slate".

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F. If a child is tardy from class for half of the total class period the child is considered to be absent from that class.

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