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Definitions

1. “Attendance” is a pupil's presence in school and in the classroom to which he/she is assigned at the times scheduled for instruction or other school activities.
 - a. A pupil will be considered to have attended school if he/she has been present at least four (4) hours during the school day.
 - b. A Pre-kindergarten student in a half day program will be considered to have attended school if he/she has been present at least one-half (1/2) the hours during the pre-kindergarten session to which the pupil is assigned.
 - c. A pupil not present in school because of his/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.
2. “Excused absence” is a pupil's absence from school for a full day or a portion of a day for one (1) or more of the following reasons when accompanied with documentation from the parent/guardian in advance or within three (3) days of the student’s return to school:
 - a. The pupil's illness,
 - b. Family illness or death
 - c. Educational opportunities
 - d. Excused religious observances, pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:36-14 through 16
 - e. 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,

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- f. The pupil's suspension from school,
 - g. The pupil's required attendance in court,
 - h. Interviews with a prospective employer or with an admissions officer of an institution of higher education,
 - i. Examination for a driver's license,
 - j. Necessary and unavoidable medical or dental appointments that cannot be scheduled at a time other than the school day,
 - k. An absence for a reason not listed above, but deemed excused by the 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.
3. "Truancy" or "unexcused absence" for local disciplinary purposes is defined as a pupil's absence from all or a part of the school day without the knowledge of the pupil's parent(s) or legal guardian(s). A pupil will also be considered truant if he/she:
- a. Leaves school at lunch time without a pass,
 - b. Leaves school without permission when school is still in session,
 - c. Leaves class because of illness and does not report to the school nurse as directed, or
 - d. Is present in school but is absent from class without approval. Such truancy from class is a "class cut."
4. "Tardiness" is defined as late arrival for the school day. Instances of tardiness and/or leaving prior to the end of the school day in the number established by Policy No. 5240 will constitute a single unexcused absence.

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B. Notice to School of a Pupil's Absence

1. The parent(s) or legal guardian(s) or adult pupil is requested to call the school office before 8:00 a.m. of the morning of the pupil's absence.
2. The parent(s) or legal guardian(s) of a pupil who attended morning session but will not attend afternoon session should call the school office or send a note before 10:00 a.m. to give notice of the pupil's absence.
2. The parent(s) or legal guardian(s) or adult pupil 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.

C. Readmission to School After an Absence

1. A pupil returning from an absence of any length must present to the Principal or his/her designee, a written statement, dated and signed by the parent(s) or legal guardian(s) or adult pupil, of the reasons for the absence.
2. A note explaining a pupil's absence for noncommunicable illness for a period of more than three (3) school 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 School Nurse written evidence of being free of communicable disease, in accordance with Policy No. 8451.

D. Instruction

1. Teachers are expected to cooperate in the preparation of home assignments for pupils who anticipate an excused absence of one (1) or more school days duration. The parent(s) or legal guardian(s) or adult pupil must request such home assignments.
2. A pupil who anticipates an excused absence due to a temporary or chronic health condition may be eligible for home instruction in accordance with Policy No. 2412. The parent(s) or legal guardian(s) or adult pupil must request home instruction.

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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. In general, pupils will be allowed one (1) day to make up missed work for each one (1) day of absence. Teachers shall make reasonable accommodations to extend time for pupils.
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.

E. 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 consider a pupil's absences in determining a final grade, except that absences for the observance of a pupil's religious holiday for a suspension from school, or a school sanctioned event cannot adversely affect the pupil's 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.
2. A secondary pupil will be present for one-hundred sixty-six (166) days in order to be awarded course credit regardless of the reason for the absence, except that absences for the observance of religious holidays and absences caused by a pupil's suspension will be counted toward the one-hundred sixty-six (166) day total.
 - a. A secondary pupil denied course credit may attend a credit completion session to regain the denied credit, provided the pupil has been in attendance for one-hundred forty-five (145) days. Exceptions to this rule may be made for pupils who have demonstrated through completion of home assignments and/or home instruction or attendance in an approved credit completion assignment that they have mastered the proficiencies established for the course of study during prolonged absences.
 - b. For courses meeting for less than a full year, a student needs to be in attendance ninety percent (90%) of the days.

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3. An elementary pupil will be present for one-hundred sixty (160) days in order to be awarded course credit regardless of the reason for the absence, except that absences for the observance of religious holidays and absences caused by a pupil's suspension will be counted toward the one-hundred sixty (160) day total. Exceptions to this rule may be made for pupils who have demonstrated through completion of home assignments and/or home instruction or attendance in an approved credit completion assignment that they have mastered the proficiencies established for the course of study during prolonged absences.

F. School District Response to Unexcused Absences During the School Year

1. For up to four (4) cumulative unexcused absences, the Principal or his/her designee shall:
 - a. Make a reasonable attempt to notify the pupil's parent or legal guardian of each unexcused absence prior to the start of the following school day;
 - b. Conduct an investigation of the cause of each unexcused absence, including contact with the pupil's parent or legal guardian;
 - c. Develop an action plan in consultation with the pupil'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;
 - 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 abuse situation is detected; and
 - e. Cooperate with law enforcement and other authorities and agencies, as appropriate.
2. For between five (5) and nine (9) cumulative unexcused absences, the Building Principal or designee shall:

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- a. Make a reasonable attempt to notify the pupil's parent or legal guardian of each unexcused absence prior to the start of the following school day;
- b. Conduct a follow-up investigation, including contact with the pupil's parent or legal guardian, to determine the cause of each unexcused absence;
- c. Evaluate the appropriateness of the action plan developed pursuant to F.1.c. above;
- d. Revise the action plan, as needed, to identify patterns of unexcused absences and establish outcomes based upon the pupil's needs and specify the interventions for achieving the outcomes, supporting the pupil's return to school and regular attendance that 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 pupil's academic, behavioral, and health needs;
 - (3) Consider an alternate educational placement;
 - (4) Make a referral to a community-based social and health provider agency or other community resource;
 - (5) Refer to the court program designated by the New Jersey Administrative Office of the Courts; and
 - (6) 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.
- e. Cooperate with law enforcement and other authorities and agencies, as appropriate.

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3. For cumulative unexcused absences of ten or more, the pupil between the ages of six (6) and sixteen (16) is truant, pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:38-27, and the Building Principal or designee shall:
 - a. Make a mandatory referral to the court program required by the New Jersey Administrative Office of the Courts;
 - b. Make a reasonable attempt to notify the pupil's parent or legal guardian of the mandatory referral;
 - c. Continue to consult with the parent or legal guardian and the involved agencies to support the pupil's return to school and regular attendance;
 - d. Cooperate with law enforcement and other authorities and agencies, as appropriate; and
 - e. 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. For pupils 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 pupil'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.
- G. 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.

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2. Pupils may be denied participation in athletic competition if their attendance fails to meet the standards set forth in Board 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. In addition to the requirements as outlined in F.3.a. through e. above, a pupil deemed truant shall be subject to appropriate pupil discipline.
5. The absence of a pupil missing from school for unexplained reasons will be handled in accordance with Regulation No. 8464.

H. 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. A report card will record the number of times the pupil was absent and tardy in each marking period.
3. A pupil's absence for observance of a religious holiday will not be recorded as such on any transcript or application or employment form.

I. Appeal

1. A truant pupil may be suspended or expelled for truancies in accordance with Policy Nos. 5610 and 5620.
2. A pupil who has been retained at grade level for excessive absences may appeal that action in accordance with Policy No. 5410.
3. A pupil who has been denied course credit for excessive absences may appeal that action in accordance with the following procedures:
 - a. The pupil shall file a written appeal to the Principal or his/her designee within five (5) school days of receiving notice of the action. The appeal

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should state the reasons for admitted absences, documentation that would reduce the number of absences, and reasons why the pupil should continue to be enrolled in the course and/or receive course credit.

- b. The Principal or his/her designee will respond in writing no later than five (5) working days after receiving the pupil's appeal.
- c. If the pupil is not satisfied, he/she may submit a written request to the Attendance Review Committee.
- d. On the pupil's request, the Principal shall convene an Attendance Review Committee consisting of Director of Pupil Personnel Services, Counselor, a teacher, Nurse, Case Manager, where appropriate, and Principal or his/her designee. The Attendance Review Committee shall meet informally to hear the pupil's reasons for reenrollment and/or credit. The pupil's parent(s) or legal guardian(s) and teacher may attend the meeting.
- e. The Attendance Review Committee shall decide the appeal and inform the pupil in writing within seven (7) working days of the meeting. The committee may impose conditions on any reenrollment and may require the pupil to agree to those conditions.
- f. The pupil may appeal an adverse decision of the Attendance Review Committee to the Superintendent, the Board of Education, and the Commissioner of Education, in that order and in accordance with Policy No. 5710, Pupil Grievance. Resort to the Attendance Review Committee shall be considered to have exhausted the first step of the grievance.

J. Attendance Improvement Plan

1. The Business Administrator's secretary will collect attendance data from each of the schools in the district and calculate the average daily attendance rate for the district and for each school. The attendance rate shall be calculated by dividing the total number of pupil days present for all pupils by the total possible number of pupil days present for all pupils and multiplying the result by one hundred (100).

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

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