

Attendance/Tardiness

As you may or may not be aware, the State Department of Education has placed renewed emphasis on school attendance. Students who arrive on time and are present in school on a daily basis are more positive in the classroom, and have an enhanced learning experience. Therefore, we are emphasizing our Board of Education policy regarding Attendance. Please read and sign off on your understanding of these policies.

The Department of Education amended the requirements regarding attendance during the 2014-2015 school year. The compulsory education law (N.J.S.A. 18A:38-28 through 31) requires all children between the ages of 6-16 to attend school. The attendance regulations (N.J.A.C. 6A:16-7.6), require each district board of education to develop, adopt and implement policies and procedures regarding the attendance of students, including the adoption of a definition of "unexcused absence," and the provision of mandated services for students with between one and nine cumulative unexcused absences and a mandated court referral for truant students, those with ten or more cumulative unexcused absences.

A student shall be present at least one hour during both the forenoon and the afternoon in order to be recorded as present for the full day. In a school which is in session during either the forenoon or the afternoon, a student shall be present at least two hours in the session in order to be recorded as present for the full day.

The following unexcused absences **are not counted toward truancy**:

1. The student's illness;
2. Requirements of a student's individual health care plan;
3. A death or critical illness in the student's immediate family, or others with permission of principal;
4. Quarantine;
5. The student's suspension from school;
6. Requirements of the student's Individualized Education Program (IEP);
7. Alternate short or long term accommodations for students with disabilities;
8. The student's required attendance in court;
9. Interviews with an admissions officer of an educational institution;

The following unexcused absences **are counted toward truancy**:

1. Family travel;
2. Performance of household or babysitting duties;
3. Other daytime activities unrelated to the school program;
4. Leaves school without permission when school is still in session.

Tardiness hinders the proper conduct of school activity. Students are expected to arrive to school and class on time. A student who is tardy to any class will be subject to disciplinary action as outlined in board policy 5131 Conduct and Discipline and the student code of conduct. Consequences for accumulated occurrences of tardiness may include detention, loss of credit and an unexcused school day absence.

If a pattern of unexcused absences or tardiness arises consisting of up to 6 elementary absences and 4 middle school absences in one marking period the principal or designee shall personally contact the

parents/guardians. The purpose of this personal contact shall be to develop an action plan to assist the student to return to school and maintain regular attendance

Students who are not in attendance for the entire school day may not participate in after school activities.

Late Arrival:

The board recognizes that from time to time compelling circumstances will require that a pupil be late to school.

As the agent responsible for the education of the children of this district, the board shall require that the school secretary be notified in advance of such absences by written request of the pupil's parent/guardian, which shall state the reason for the tardiness. Justifiable reasons may include:

- A. Medical or dental appointments which cannot be scheduled outside of school hours;
- B. Medical disability;
- C. Family emergency;
- D. Court appearance

Students must be in school four hours or more to be considered present for the day. Parents must sign children into school.

Release of Pupils During School Hours:

When necessary, students may be dismissed early for medical, dental and other such appointments and days of religious observance upon written request of the parent/guardian. No student shall be permitted to leave before the end of the school day unless they are met in the school office by a parent or a person authorized in writing by the parent. A Parent/guardian will be called to verify such authorization. Positive identification (driver's license, etc.) will be required of any person meeting a student. Parents/guardians are asked to sign out children in the book at the school office counter.