

Attendance

District-Wide Guidelines – Grades K-12

Each school principal will adhere to the following guidelines regarding unexcused absences:

- I. For up to 4 cumulative unexcused absences, the school district shall:
 - (1) Make a reasonable attempt to notify the student's parents of each unexcused absence prior to the start of the following school day;
 - (2) Conduct an investigation to determine the cause of each unexcused absence, including contact with the student's parents;
 - (3) Develop an action plan in consultation with the student's parents 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 potential missing or abused child situation is detected; and
 - (5) Cooperate with law enforcement and other authorities and agencies, as appropriate.
- II. For between 5 and 9 cumulative unexcused absences, the school district shall:
 - (1) Make a reasonable attempt to notify the student's parents 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 parents, to determine the cause of each unexcused absence;
 - (3) Evaluate the appropriateness of the action plan developed pursuant to I (3) above;
 - (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:
 - (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. 9:6-1 et seq. and N.J.A.C. 6A:16-11, if a potential missing or abused child situation is detected; and
 - (5) Cooperate with law enforcement and other authorities and agencies, as appropriate.
- III. For cumulative unexcused absences of 10 or more, the student, between the ages of six and 16, is truant, pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:38-27, and the school district shall:
 - (1) Make a mandatory 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 parents of the mandatory referral.
 - (3) Continue to consult with the parent 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.

For students with disabilities, the attendance plan and punitive and remedial procedures set forth therein shall be applied, where applicable, in accordance with the students' 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(b)2ix.

The chief school administrator shall submit annually a report to the Commissioner of Education containing information on student attendance, including, but not limited to, the district board of education's implementation of each of the requirements pursuant to this section.

Grades K-5 Elementary School - Grades Kindergarten through Fifth Grade ABSENCES AND EXCUSES

In order for the Board of Education to fulfill its responsibility for providing a thorough and efficient education for each pupil, the complete cooperation of parents/guardians and pupils is required to maintain a high level of school attendance.

The frequent absence of pupils from classroom learning experiences disrupts the continuity of the instructional process and limits the ability of pupils to complete the prescribed curriculum requirements successfully.

A pupil must be in attendance for 164 or more school days in order to be considered to have successfully completed the instructional program requirements of the grade to which he/she is assigned.

Students will be limited to sixteen (16) absences (excused or unexcused) for the school year. It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to track their child's absences. Absences should be tracked via the attendance information encompassed in the quarterly report cards and/or by contacting the school's main office. The school will notify the parents when the student has accumulated 16 absences and a conference will be required at that time. The parents/guardians will appear before a review committee.

Excused Absences

The Board considers the following as cause for excused absence:

1. Disabling illness
2. Recovery from accident
3. Required court attendance
4. Death in the family
5. Religious observance – In accordance with statute, no pupil absent for religious observance of a day recognized by the Commission of Education or this Board of Education shall be charged with an unexcused absence, deprived of an award or eligibility/opportunity to compete for an award, or of the right to take an alternate to a test or examination missed through such absence.
6. Such good cause as may be acceptable to the principal.

A waiver of these attendance requirements may be granted for good cause by the school principal upon recommendation of the review committee, appointed by him/her, and consisting of representative staff, including guidance personnel and/or classroom teachers.

In recommending the granting of a waiver of this attendance requirement, the review committee shall consider the nature and causes of all absences rather than only those in excess of the 16 days. Documentation of the nature and causes of these absences shall be the responsibility of the pupil and parent/guardian.

Any student absent sixteen (16) or more days will require a doctor's note for any future absences. If a doctor's note is not presented, or the child exceeds 20 absences an automatic retention will occur.

All existing chronic illnesses (i.e....asthma) that may lead to excessive absences must be reported to the school nurse via a doctor's note by October first of each school year. Additionally, all chronic illnesses diagnosed during the school year must be immediately reported via a doctor's note to the school nurse in order to be considered as a legitimate plea for waiver of this attendance requirement.

Classroom teachers are to notify the guidance counselor of any students in the above category. The guidance counselor will then generate a list and forward it to the principal.

Parents/guardians are responsible for notifying the school no later than 8:45 AM when a child will be absent and should inform the school of the reason for the absence. Upon a student's return from any absence, a note is to be presented to the homeroom teacher.

A student absent from school will not be allowed to participate in any school function, either during or after school hours unless the principal or designee has granted prior permission.

POTENTIALLY MISSING CHILDREN

If daily attendance records indicate a child is absent, and the parent/guardian has not called, a designated person shall attempt to contact them. If no one can be reached the child will be considered truant. In addition, the appropriate law enforcement agencies and/or the truant officers will be notified to ensure the safety of your child.

VACATIONING STUDENTS

The administration and the teaching staff strongly discourage the removal of students from school for vacationing purposes. However, in the event that such absence is absolutely essential because of family commitments, the following procedures will prevail:

1. A letter signed by a parent/guardian will be addressed to the administration, which will ascertain the validity of the request.
2. The student will present the letter and principal's acknowledgement to each teacher for review and signature. The teacher's signature merely acknowledges notification of the student's proposed absence and does not indicate approval.
3. The teacher will, upon request, provide the student with information in the general areas of subject matter, which will be covered during the absence. Specific assignments will be made available for the period of absence for which written lesson plans are available. It is the parent's/guardian's responsibility to meet with the teacher at a mutually convenient time to discuss this advance work and to make arrangements with the teacher to take quizzes and/or tests.

Make-up work: Vacationing Students

After absences, students are required to make up all work missed within five (5) school days unless extenuating circumstances exist. If work is not submitted the student's average for the marking period will be lowered one grade.

BEDSIDE INSTRUCTION

Home instruction is available for students upon the request of the parent/guardian and the presentation of a physician's statement indicating that the student will be absent from school for a minimum of two weeks. While on home instruction, daily attendance requirements will be suspended. Absences will be excused from the first day of confinement associated with the request for bedside instruction. Instructional services shall begin as soon as possible but no later than seven calendar days after the physician's verification {6A:14-4.9}.

TARDINESS

All students are expected to attend school regularly and to be on time. When a student arrives to school after 8:35 AM (after the second bell), the student must report to the office to check in before going to the classroom. Repeated tardiness may have an adverse effect on students' grades.

- **Upon accumulating six days tardy the child may be assigned detention during recess for each subsequent tardy.**
- **Upon accumulating 10 days tardy, a letter will be sent home reminding parents/guardians of the policies and procedures.**
- **Upon accumulating 15 days tardy, a letter will be sent home, the district attendance officer and the Hasbrouck Heights Police Department will be notified.**

- Upon accumulating 18 days tardy a letter will be sent home and charges will be filed with the Hasbrouck Heights Municipal Court in accordance with NJSA 18A:38-25. Charges will be filed for all subsequent days tardy.

The principal has the right to excuse a student for being tardy on a case by case basis if a note for a valid reason is presented. Examples of valid excuses are: 1. Doctor's appointment, 2. State approved religious observances, 3. Family Emergencies.

Late Arrival and Early Dismissal

The Board recognizes that from time to time compelling circumstances will require that a pupil be later to school or dismissed before the end of the school day.

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

1. Medical or dental appointments which cannot be scheduled outside of school hours;
2. Medical disability;
3. Family emergency;
4. Court appearance;
5. Such good cause as may be acceptable to the administration

No pupil in grades kindergarten through eighth shall be permitted to leave school before the close of the school day unless he/she is met in the school office by his/her parent/guardian or a person authorized by the parent/guardian to act in his/her behalf.

Tardiness not covered by the causes listed shall be cumulative, and may affect course credit.