

SUBJECT: **ATTENDANCE**

I. PURPOSE:

The members of the Plainview-Old Bethpage School District are committed to the success of all its students. A critical component of academic success is coming to school on a regular, consistent basis. Students, who are in school each day, all day, learn in a consistent, orderly way. They apply the knowledge they have gained one day to the new insights and understanding they will gain in the next day. A disruptive attendance pattern interferes with the continuity of instruction that is essential to the learning process. There is simply no substitute for being in class: to listen, to participate, to question, to experiment, to challenge. The stimulation of being in a classroom with other learners, guided by a knowledgeable, insightful teacher, is at the core of a sound education. Learning builds day by day, and consistent attendance is vital to make learning meaningful.

We believe that it is the responsibility of the school community to impress upon each youngster, from kindergarten through high school, the importance of regular attendance in school. Adults play a pivotal role when they encourage respect and responsibility for school attendance by respecting the sanctity of the school day. Beginning at the earliest grades, children should understand that coming to school on time and remaining in school for a full day, each day, is a family priority. Only illness, religious observance exclusive of religious instruction, or emergency should exempt a student of any age from fulfilling his/her responsibility to be in school.

In order to encourage students to achieve excellence in their attendance habits, and thereby provide themselves with the best opportunity to succeed in school, we, the members of the Board of Education, have adopted the following attendance policy.

In accordance with New York State Education Law, the Board of Education requires that students attend school full time from the age of six (6) years old until the last day of the school year in which they turn sixteen (16), unless the student has completed an approved four-year high school course of study.

As such, the Board is committed to the following objectives:

1. Ensuring the maintenance of an adequate record verifying the attendance of all children at instruction;

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2. Establishing a mechanism by which the patterns of student absence can be examined to develop effective intervention strategies to improve student attendance;
3. Improving student achievement;
4. Fostering good attendance habits;
5. Preparing students for post-graduation experience by encouraging responsibility;
6. Promoting the safety of the District's students throughout the school day; and
7. Providing an intervention process to assist students and their families in improving student attendance.

As set forth more fully herein, in order to accomplish these objectives, the District shall employ the following strategies:

1. Developing procedures to maintain accurate and current attendance records;
2. Frequently reviewing attendance records for patterns of nonattendance;
3. Collaborating with students, school staff and the community to develop comprehensive intervention strategies and to review and revise those strategies when appropriate; and
4. Employing attendance incentives and disciplinary sanctions to discourage nonattendance, including the requirement that students meet minimum attendance standards in order to receive credit for a course.

II. PROCEDURES FOR RECORDING STUDENT ATTENDANCE

Each elementary school in the District as well as the District's middle school's and high school, shall keep a record of each student's presence, absence, tardiness and early departure, in a register of attendance. For purposes of this policy, a student shall be considered "absent unexcused" when he/she has arrived late without an acceptable excuse for a period of instruction three (3) times.

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1. Each register of attendance shall set forth the following for every student:
 - A. Student's name;
 - B. Student's date of birth;
 - C. Full name(s) of student's parent(s)/person(s) in parental relation;
 - D. Student's address;
 - E. Phone number(s) where the parent(s)/person(s) in parental relation may be contacted;
 - F. Date of student's enrollment;
 - G. A record of the student's attendance on each day of scheduled instruction.

For purposes of this policy, "scheduled instruction," means every period that a student is scheduled to attend actual instructional or supervised study activities during the course of a school day during the school year from July 1 to June 30.

- i. Any absence for a school day or any portion of a school day shall be recorded in the register as excused or unexcused in accordance with the standards set forth in this policy.
 - ii. An early departure from scheduled instruction shall be recorded as excused or unexcused in accordance with the standards set forth in this policy.
2. In addition, each register of attendance shall include:
 - A. A record of each scheduled day of instruction during which the school is closed for all or part of the day due to extraordinary circumstances including adverse weather conditions, impairment of heating facilities, insufficiency of water supply, shortage of fuel, destruction of or damage to a school building, or such other cause as may be found satisfactory to the Commissioner.
 - B. The date when a student withdraws from enrollment or is dropped from enrollment in accordance with Education Law §3202(1-a).

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3. Commencing July 1, 2003, student attendance shall be taken and recorded in accordance with the following:

A. For Students in Non-Departmentalized Kindergarten through Grade Four (4):

Each student's presence or absence shall be recorded after the taking of attendance once per school day. However, if a student is dismissed from school grounds during a lunch period, that student's presence or absence shall also be recorded after taking of attendance a second time upon the return from the lunch period each school day.

B. For students in grades five (5) through twelve (12) :

Each student's presence or absence shall be recorded after the taking of attendance in each period of scheduled instruction except that where students do not change classrooms for each period of scheduled instruction, attendance shall be taken in accordance with subsection (A), above.

4. Entries in the Registers of Attendance:

A. The District shall employ a coding system for identifying a student's absence, tardiness or early departure for recording in the registers of attendance, as follows:
[Please see Page 16 of this policy for a description of the coding system]

B. All entries in the registers of attendance shall be made by a teacher or Principal's designee. In addition, the entries made in the registers of attendance shall be verified by the oath or affirmation of the person making the entries in the register of attendance. Students are not allowed to take attendance.

C. The Superintendent shall designate a teacher or other district employee to supervise the keeping of the register of attendance.

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5. Review of Attendance Records

- A. In each school building, the principal or principal's designee shall be designated as responsible for reviewing pupil attendance records and initiating appropriate action to address unexcused pupil absence, tardiness and early departure in a manner, which is consistent with this policy. Commencing with the 2003-2004 school year, pupil attendance records shall be reviewed by the principal of every building as well as by the designated attendance reviewer.
- B. The District shall use the following process to develop intervention strategies to address identified patterns of unexcused absence, tardiness or early departure:
 - I. Instructional Support Teams, Building Intervention Teams and other building team meetings designed to assess students' needs shall review students' patterns of attendance and tardiness to develop appropriate intervention strategies to improve school attendance.
 - ii. Attendance patterns shall be reviewed quarterly to determine if the intervention strategies are effective or need revision.
 - iii. District attendance committee will meet annually to review the efficacy of intervention strategies and make recommendations if revision is needed
- C. In addition, the Board of Education shall annually review the building level student attendance records and if such records show a decline in pupil attendance, the Board shall review the student attendance policy and make any revisions deemed necessary to improve student attendance.

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III. EXCUSED and UNEXCUSED ABSENCES

If a student is absent from school for all or part of the school day, the student must provide a reason for the absence to the building principal or his/her designee. The building principal or his/her designee shall then determine whether the absence is considered excused or unexcused.

1. **Excused Absences:**

- A. The District recognizes the following absences as “excused” absences:
1. Family deaths, illness, or emergency beyond the family’s control;
 2. Student Illness: If a student becomes ill during school he/she must report to the nurse’s office;
 3. Chronic/Extended Illness: For students who are absent due to a chronic/extended illness or disability, or due to a need for homebound services, documentation from the student’s physician will be required. Where appropriate, the principal or her/designee shall refer the student to the District’s Section 504 Team or Committee on Special Education (“CSE”) to address the student’s education in light of his/her condition;
 4. Pre-arranged Appointments with the court, social service agencies or other state agencies as well as appointments with health care providers that cannot be scheduled outside of school hours. Supporting documentation of the appointment will be required to verify the student’s absence;
 5. Religious observances, exclusive of religious instruction;
 6. Approved College Visits with documentation;
 7. Suspensions
 8. Exceptional Circumstances: The principal may approve a pre-arranged absence where the absence from attendance is in the best interests of the student and his/her family. Approval for such absences must be requested of the principal in writing. In extenuating circumstances that are supported by adequate documentation, the principal may approve exceptional circumstances after it has occurred.

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B. Documentation of Absences:

Absences for any of the aforementioned reasons may be considered excused” by the building principal or his/her designee upon receipt of a written, signed explanation from the student’s parent(s)/person(s) in parental relation, together with any supporting documentation that may be required. This information should be submitted to the school immediately by the student or parent/person in parental relation upon return from his/her absence and in no case later than within five (5) school days upon the student’s return.

A student’s parent(s)/person(s) in parental relation must notify the school, in writing in advance of any scheduled absence (i.e., court appearance, medical appointment that cannot be scheduled outside of school hours, religious observance, etc.).

Upon returning to school, or before leaving school, each student must report to the attendance office or other designated area for the appropriate pass. This pass must be shown to the subject teacher to verify the absence as excused.

2. Unexcused Absences

A. Types of Unexcused Absences:

Absences for any reason other than those set forth as “excused absences” under this policy, shall be considered “unexcused.”

B. Notification:

Parents will be notified of a student’s unexcused absence in a manner consistent with the procedures set forth in the “denial of course credit” section of this policy.

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3. Early Departures/Late Arrivals

A. **Types of Unexcused Early Departures/Late Arrivals**

Students who leave early or arrive late for any other reason than those set forth as “excused absences” under this policy, shall be considered “unexcused.”

IV. ATTENDANCE INCENTIVES AND NONATTENDANCE DISCIPLINARY SANCTIONS

The District shall employ the following intervention strategies, incentives, and disciplinary measures to foster attendance and discourage student non-attendance.

1. **Denial of Course Credit:**

A student's final grade in a class may be based on participation, homework, quizzes, exams, etc. Due to the importance of class participation, students must meet a minimum standard of attendance in order to be eligible for course credit.

Any student taking a high school level course will be denied course credit where he/she has exceeded eighteen (18) absences for a full year course or exceeded nine (9) absences for a half year course exclusive of absences for approved school sponsored trips and activities and pre-arranged school appointments. In the middle school, 7th and 8th grade students who fall below the minimum standards for attendance will be given a grade of “incomplete.” Students in middle schools who receive incompletes must make up their work to earn a final grade by attending summer school. For courses not offered in summer school, students must satisfactorily complete, over the summer, an independent project under the supervision of the principal and/or his designee.

However, if the absences are determined to be the result of “unexcused” absences i.e. truancy/cutting, a student will be denied credit where he/she has exceeded six (6) “unexcused” absences per full year course or exceeded four (4) “unexcused “ absences per half year course.

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Students whose absences do not meet the minimum standards will be denied credit after the intervention procedures below are implemented.

A. Intervention Procedures - Absences

- I. After an unexcused absence:
 - The subject teachers will speak with the student and distribute an absent from class notice;
 - Appropriate disciplinary action may be taken as per school policy

- ii. Following the third unexcused absences for a course:
The principal and/or his/her designee will contact the student's parent(s)/person(s) in parental relation, by certified mail and phone;
 - A copy of the letter will be sent to the subject teachers and guidance counselor;
 - The guidance counselor and/or school official will telephone the parent(s)/person(s) in parental relation to discuss the student's attendance and the district's attendance policy;
 - The guidance counselor and/or school official, the student, his/her parent(s)/person(s) in parental relation shall have a discussion to plan to address the student's nonattendance which shall identify patterns as well as intervention measures;
 - Appropriate disciplinary action may be taken as per school policy

- iii. After five absences for a half-year course or fifteen absences for a full year course:
 - The principal and/or his/her designee will contact the student's parent(s)/person(s) in parental relation, by mail and phone;
 - A copy of the letter will be sent to the subject teachers and guidance counselor;

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- The student and parent(s)/person(s) in parental relation may be requested to meet with appropriate staff, which may include the student's teachers guidance counselor, and other support staff and the principal and or his/her designee to review the student's attendance;
 - The subject teachers will speak with the student;
 - The student shall be reviewed by the building's pupil personnel team and the child's attendance will be reviewed and intervention strategies revised, as appropriate;
 - The possibility of initiating a Person In Need of Supervision (PINS) diversion shall be discussed; and
 - Appropriate disciplinary action may be taken as per school policy
- iv. After eighteen absences for a full year course or nine absences for a half-year course:
- A certified letter will be sent to the parent(s)/person(s) in parental relation, informing them that course credit will be denied for those courses for the school year and their opportunity to appeal
- v. Following six unexcused absences for a full year course or four unexcused absences in a half year course: A certified letter will be sent to the parent(s) /person(s) in parental relation, informing them that course credit will be denied for those courses for the semester or school year and their opportunity to appeal

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B. Content of Written Notice:

Each written notice that is sent to the student's parent(s)/person(s) in parental relation, shall, at a minimum:

- Set forth the student's name, grade, number of absences/tardiness/early departures from/to class, name of the course and teacher's name;
- Provide a means by which the parent(s)/person(s) in parental relation can contact the building administration to discuss the matter;
- Advise the student's parent(s)/person(s) in parental relation of the District's attendance requirements regarding the granting of course credit.
- In the event a student is being denied course credit due to absences, the written notice shall also include a statement that the student is being denied credit and set forth the procedures parent(s)/person(s) in parental relation must follow if they would like to appeal the decision to deny credit.

C. Make-up Work for Excused Absences:

Students with properly excused absences will be given the opportunity and are expected to make up all missed work. It is the responsibility of the student to arrange make-up work/tests with their teachers. All work missed must be satisfactorily completed by a date set by the student's teacher(s) for the class(es) in which the absence(s) occurred. Students who fail to make up all missed work resulting from an excused absence will have that absence converted to an unexcused absence.

D. Timing of Intervention Procedures:

Irrespective of how many absences a student has accumulated, the District reserves the right to implement any intervention procedure it deems appropriate.

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- E. Entrants After the Commencement of the School Year:
Students who enter school after the school year begins shall have the maximum number of absences prorated to reflect that portion of their courses that remain after they have entered the District's schools.

- F. Physical Education Attendance Grades 9-12:
Students who exceed three (3) absences in a quarter in physical education class will receive a failing grade for that quarter and be denied credit for physical education for that semester. Students are required to make-up absences in excess of three absences by a date determined by the department. Only excused absences are eligible to be made-up. It is the student's responsibility to make arrangements for make-ups with their physical education teacher.

- G. Appeals Process
Students faced with loss of credit in a course due to absence may bring their appeal before the Principal or his/her designee no later than five (5) school days after being informed of the decision to withhold credit or invoke sanctions.

- 1. An appeal of the principal's decision may be made to the Superintendent of schools by the student's parent(s)/person(s) in parental relation within five (5) school days of being informed of the decision. An appeal of the Superintendent's decision may be made by the student's parent(s)/person(s) in parental relation, to the Board of Education within five (5) school days of being informed of the Superintendent's decision.

- 2. Ineligibility for Co-curricular and Interscholastic Activity:
A student must be marked present for at least four (4) consecutive periods at the secondary level to be able to participate in any co-curricular and/or interscholastic sports activity for that day.

Students who are denied credit or placed on audit status for two or more subject classes shall be deemed ineligible to participate in co-curricular and interscholastic activities including but not limited to participation in the performing arts, clubs, athletics, junior gala, senior prom. "Audit status" is

defined as attending a class from which credit has been denied for the purposes of maintaining eligibility for summer school registration.

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3. **Ineligibility for Driver's Education:**
Students who are denied credit or placed on audit status for two or more classes shall be deemed ineligible to participate in the District's driver education course for that school year as well as the semester following that year.
4. **Detention or In-School Suspension:**
The District may impose after-school detention, in-school or out-of-school suspension as warranted and in accordance with the District's Code of Conduct and law.
5. **Ineligibility for Student Parking:**
Those students who have any unexcused absences in any quarter shall be deemed ineligible for on campus student parking.
6. **Ineligibility for Summer School Registration:**
Those students who have been placed on "audit status" in a subject class for the purposes of attending summer school to earn credit for that course will be deemed ineligible to register for summer school if they have one or more additional unexcused absences or exceed two (2) additional excused absences in that class.

Students who are no longer eligible for summer school registration will be assigned to the In-School Suspension Center.

7. **Denial of Course Credit for Summer School**

Absences, regardless of their nature, in excess of three (3), in a credit class will result in denial of credit.

A lateness in excess of fifteen (15) minutes is considered one-half (½) absence.

A lateness of less than fifteen (15) minutes is considered one-fourth (1/4) absence.

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8. Recognition for Attendance:

At the conclusion of the year, the District will give special recognition to students who have accumulated no absences, including no unexcused lateness. An attendance honor roll shall be maintained recognizing perfect attendance for each quarter. Students with perfect attendance in a quarter will have first priority to student parking in the succeeding quarter.

V. Students with Disabilities

Students with disabilities who receive unexcused absences shall be referred to the CSE or Section 504 team, as applicable, for a determination as to whether the student's absences are related to the student's disability or medical condition. In addition, the CSE/504 team shall consider any other action it deems appropriate. The District will not apply its attendance policy to a student with a disability for purposes of denying the student course credit, where the absences are related to the student's disability/medical condition.

VI. Students Past the Compulsory Age of Attendance

A student who is past the compulsory age of attendance may be dropped from enrollment if he/she has been absent for twenty (20) consecutive days and the following procedure is complied with:

- The Principal or Superintendent shall schedule an informal conference and notify, in writing, the student and his/her parent(s)/person(s) in parental relation of the conference.
- The Principal or Superintendent shall make a determination at the conference regarding the reasons for the student's absences and whether reasonable changes in the student's educational program would facilitate his/her re-entry or continuance of study.

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- The student and his/her parent(s)/person(s) in parental relation, shall be informed orally and in writing of the student's right to re-enroll in the school maintained in the district of residence at anytime, if the student otherwise meets the eligibility requirements of Education Law §3202.
- If, after reasonable notice, the student and his/her parent(s)/person(s) in parental relation fail to attend the informal conference, the student may be dropped from enrollment provided he/she is properly notified of the right to re-enroll.

VII. Dissemination of the Attendance Policy

The Board of Education shall facilitate community awareness of this policy by:

1. Providing a plain language summary of the policy to parents/persons in parental relation to students at the beginning of the school year. Prior to the beginning of the school year, parents will receive a summary of the policy highlighting the major points.
2. Providing each teacher with a copy of the policy and any amendments thereto as soon as practicable following the initial adoption of amendment of the policy, and providing new teachers with a copy of the policy upon their employment.
3. Making copies available to any other member of the community upon request.
4. Highlights of the major points of the attendance policy will be published in the District's calendar and in the Student's Handbook. Additionally, the entire policy shall be published on the District's website www.pob.k12.ny.us.
5. Sharing of the major issues of the attendance policy will be discussed at parent and student orientation meetings.

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Attendance Coding Key

<u>AExp</u>	<u>Absent Exempt</u>
<u>AExu</u>	<u>Absent Excused</u>
<u>AUnk</u>	<u>Absent Unknown</u>
<u>AUnx</u>	<u>Absent Unexcused</u>
<u>BRV</u>	<u>Absent Bereavement</u>
<u>BUS</u>	<u>Bus Late</u>
<u>CUT</u>	<u>Possible Cut</u>
<u>ER</u>	<u>Early Release-Excused</u>
<u>EX</u>	<u>Early Release-Exempt</u>
<u>FT</u>	<u>Field Trip</u>
<u>HOSP</u>	<u>Hospital</u>
<u>IS</u>	<u>In School Suspension</u>
<u>LTS</u>	<u>Long Term Suspension</u>
<u>MED</u>	<u>Medical Excused Absence</u>
<u>NCO</u>	<u>Note From Counselor</u>
<u>NUR</u>	<u>Nurse</u>
<u>OFF</u>	<u>Office</u>
<u>OS</u>	<u>Out-of-School Suspension</u>
<u>REL</u>	<u>Absent Religious</u>
<u>Sick</u>	<u>Ill</u>
<u>Susp</u>	<u>Suspension</u>
<u>TExp</u>	<u>Tardy Exempt</u>
<u>TExu</u>	<u>Tardy Excused</u>
<u>TRU</u>	<u>Truancy</u>
<u>TUnk</u>	<u>Tardy Unknown</u>
<u>TUnx</u>	<u>Tardy Unexcused</u>
<u>UNK</u>	<u>Unknown</u>

References:

Education Law §§3202, 3204, 3205, 3210, 3211, 3214(3), 3211.
8 N.Y.C.R.R. §104.1
Family Court Act §712(a)
School District Code of Conduct

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