

SUBJECT: COMPREHENSIVE STUDENT ATTENDANCE POLICY

The Board of Education recognizes that regular daily attendance in school is essential for students to gain the benefits of the educational program and is a major component of academic success. Through implementation of this policy, the Board expects to reduce the current level of unexcused absences, tardiness, and early departures (referred to in this policy as (“ATEDs”), encourage full attendance by all students, maintain an adequate attendance record keeping system, identify patterns of student ATEDs and develop effective intervention strategies to improve school attendance.

Excused and Unexcused Absences

Excused ATEDs are defined as absences, tardiness, and early departures from class or school due to personal illness, illness/death in the family, religious observance, quarantine, required court appearances, attendance at health clinics, physicians, or dentists provided that evidence of attendance is provided, administratively approved college visitations, approved cooperative work programs, attendance in any credit bearing class, attendance in school competitions and school generated obligations, military obligations, or attendance at approved field trips or such other reasons as may be approved by the Principal or his/her designee. All other ATEDs are considered unexcused absences.

All ATEDs must be accounted for. It is the parent/guardian's responsibility to notify the school office on the morning of the ATED or provide a written excuse with the reason or the absence within twenty-four (24) hours upon the student's return to school. If the parent/guardian fails to notify the school in the aforementioned manner, the absence will be considered unexcused and disciplinary consequences as outlined later in this document will apply.

Tardiness to school

Students are expected to arrive to school and to all classes on time. Any student entering a class after the beginning of the start of school or after the beginning of the start of a class is considered tardy.

Students who bring a valid note to the attendance office will have the tardiness recorded as an "excused" tardiness. If the student does not have a note, the tardiness will be considered "unexcused."

Tardiness to class

Any student entering a class after the beginning of the period is tardy for that class. The teacher shall record the lateness as either an "excused" tardiness or an "unexcused" tardiness as the reason the student is late to class. Three (3) unexcused tardinesses will result in teachers initiating disciplinary referral and the consequences as outlined for unexcused absences may be applied.

NOTE: Three (3) latenesses to class or early departures of fewer than fifteen (15) minutes equals one (1) absence. Each lateness to class or early departure of over fifteen (15) minutes equals one (1) absence.

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Early Departure

If a student will be leaving school prior to the end of the day, a parent or legal guardian must go to the attendance office to sign his/her child out of school. If a student leaves school without being signed out by a parent or legal guardian, the absence will be considered an unexcused absence from class(es) and appropriate disciplinary action will be taken.

Dissemination of Policy

To be successful in this endeavor, it is imperative that all members of the school community are aware of this policy, its purpose, procedures and the consequences of non-compliance. To ensure that students, parents, teachers and administrators are notified of and understand this policy, the following procedures shall be implemented:

- a) Attendance policy will be included in student handbooks, the Levittown Schools webpage (www.Levittownschoools.com), and will be reviewed with students at the start of the school year.
- b) Parents will receive a plain language summary of this policy by mail at the start of each school year.
- c) A back-to-school night will be held at the beginning of each school year to explain this policy and stress the parent's responsibility for ensuring their child's attendance at school. School newsletters and publications will include periodic reminders of the components of this policy.
- d) The District will provide a copy of the attendance policy and any amendments thereto to faculty and staff.
- e) All faculty and staff will meet at the beginning of each school year to review the attendance policy to clarify individual roles in its implementation.
- f) Copies of this policy will also be made available to any community member, upon request.

General Procedures/Data Collection

- a) Attendance shall be taken daily at the elementary level for each subject area. Attendance will be taken during each class period in the Middle School(s) and High School(s). Periodic checks will take place during the day at the elementary level, i.e., after lunch, gym, art, etc.
- b) At the conclusion of each class period or school day, all attendance information shall be compiled from the student management system and provided to the designated staff member(s) responsible for attendance.

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- c) The nature of an ATED shall be coded on a student's record according to accepted district recording procedures. All ATEDs shall be recorded with the annotations on the student management system used by the District.
- d) When additional information is received that requires changes to be made to a student's attendance records, such change will be made immediately. Notice of such a change will be sent to appropriate school personnel subject to applicable confidentiality rules.
- e) Continuous monitoring will be conducted to identify students who are absent, tardy, or leave class or school early. The Principal or his/her designee will analyze attendance data regularly to identify patterns or trends in student absence.
- f) If a student is marked illegally absent from a class (cut), an attendance monitor will make every effort to notify the parent by the end of the school day. It is the responsibility of the student to speak with his or her teacher to make necessary corrections should there be an error. The teacher will then notify the Attendance Office. Parents will receive written notification by mail of confirmed unexcused absences and dates when consequences have been assigned.
- g) In order to insure that parents and students are aware of the implications of this minimum attendance requirement, the teacher or other designated staff member(s) will advise the student and attempt to contact the parent(s) by telephone and mail /email at appropriate intervals prior to the student reaching ten (10) and/or twenty (20) ATEDs for the school year. Notification will be given at appropriate intervals prior to the student having reached ten (10) and/or twenty (20) ATEDs.

Disciplinary Consequences

Absences from class dramatically reduce a student's ability to perform effectively. Unexcused ATEDs will result in disciplinary action. These actions can include, but are not limited to:

- a) Parent contact;
- b) Parent/teacher conferences;
- c) Detention(s);
- d) Suspension from co-curricular activities or athletic teams;
- e) Suspension from field trips.

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In addition, designated staff member(s) will contact the student's parents and the student's guidance counselor. Such staff member(s) shall remind parents of the attendance policy, explain the ramifications of unexcused ATEDs, stress the importance of class attendance and discuss appropriate intervention strategies to correct the situation. In extreme cases families may be referred to Child Protective Services.

Attendance/Grade Policy

The Board of Education recognizes an important relationship between class attendance and student performance. Therefore, students are expected to attend all scheduled classes. Consequently, each marking period a student's grade may be based on classroom participation as well as student's performance on homework, tests, papers, projects, assessments, etc. Consistent with the importance of classroom participation, unexcused ATEDs may affect a student's class participation grade for the marking period.

Except as noted below, in grades K through 8, any student having more than thirty-six (36) unexcused absences for the school year is in danger of being retained at their current grade level. At the high school level or for students taking high school courses, students with greater than ten (10) absences for a half year course or twenty (20) absences for a full year course will not receive credit for that course.

NOTE: These numbers are based on five (5) regular class periods each week. All other classes meeting for greater or fewer periods per week will be prorated.

This will hold true for advanced/accelerated classes at the Middle School that receive High School Credits.

All students with an excused ATED are expected, upon their return to school, to consult with their teachers regarding missed work. Only those students with excused ATED's will be given the opportunity to make up a test or other missed work and/or turn in a late assignment for inclusion in their quarterly grade. It is the responsibility of the student and/or parent to obtain missed work. All class work, homework assignments, and assessments must be completed by a date specified by the student's teacher for the class in question.

In implementing the policy set forth above, students who are unable to attend school or a class on a given day due to their participation in a school-sponsored activity (i.e., college visits, field trips), may arrange with their teachers to make up any work missed. This make-up does not strike the absence from the record, but those absences will not count toward the previously described minimum attendance standard (denial of credit). This also applies to any student who is absent, tardy or leaves early from school or a class due to illness or any other excused reason.

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A student who is denied credit for attendance (DC) will receive a report card comment of "Denied Credit " on his or her report card. The report card will also indicate whether the student was passing or failing the course at the time of Denial of Credit for attendance was issued. A student who is denied credit due to poor attendance is still required to attend class until the last day of classes. A hearing must be conducted as specified pursuant to Education Law 3214 in order for a student to be prohibited from further attendance in the course.

Students who reach eighteen (18) absences in a full-year course and/or nine (9) absences in a half-year course may not be permitted to participate in any field trips or any other activities, as specified in the District Code of Conduct, that would remove them from the class in question with the exception of those activities that are prescribed by the class instructor.

Consequences for absences and tardiness will not apply when related to issues associated with homelessness.

Annual Review

The Board shall annually review building level student attendance records and, if such records show a decline in student attendance, the Board shall revise this comprehensive attendance policy and make any revisions to the plan it deems necessary to improve student attendance.

The Superintendent of Schools is authorized to establish procedures and regulations to maintain and enhance student attendance.

Ref: Education Law §§3202, 3205 et. seq.
Matter of Falcigno, 22 EDR 599 (1983)
Matter of Shamon, 22 EDR 428 (1983)

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