

MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENT ATTENDANCE

**PHILOSOPHY**

Administrative procedures for implementing Board policy on Regular Student Attendance (Policy 501.3) are based on the following beliefs:

- a. that daily attendance is directly related to better school success.
- b. that knowing District expectations is essential for the parents/guardians and students.
- c. that understanding attendance-related terminology is needed.
- d. that the consequences of poor school attendance and punctuality must be known.

Good attendance and punctuality are indicators of responsible, well self-disciplined students. They are traits that are also good predictors of success in school, employment, and life. Students who attend regularly and are on time help their own growth and do not interfere with the potential progress of other students. Students who, due to irregular attendance or frequent tardiness, are unprepared and often create the need for unnecessary re-teaching or interruptions to class progress.

The successful implementation of school attendance-related policies and procedures is founded on fostering good communication between home and school, providing the school information on all student absences, supporting the strong relationship between regular attendance and academic success, establishing increasingly higher expectations for school performance of students, and shifting the responsibility for school success from the family to the student as he/she progresses through the system.

Some absences are unavoidable and to help compensate for the instructional time missed, make-up work may be assigned. While it is impossible to completely compensate for absences in class, make-up work may be required for all absences.

At times, school officials may determine that the problems associated with absence from school are outweighed by the advantages of an activity in which the student participates and they may endorse or sponsor activity trips. Absences due to attendance at such approved trips and activities will not be considered an absence from school; but, will require a student to make-up work missed.

**DEFINITIONS**

There are five (5) terms with which a person needs to become familiar. They are: A) absence, B) tardy, C) truant, D) unverified, and E) verified. Definitions of the terms are important to understanding the District's position on school attendance. Study carefully the five definitions.

**A. ABSENCE:** Students will be considered absent from class if they miss one-half or more of a class period.

Students who miss one-half or more of the scheduled period will be counted absent for the full day. School sponsored activities will not be considered an absence but students will be required to make-up assigned work. Excused absences will include but not be limited to: 1) personal illness; 2) death or serious illness in the immediate family or household; 3) special exceptions if approved by the Principal or designee; 4) school initiated suspensions; 5) medical, dental, or legal appointments which cannot be made other than during school time; and 6) request to accompany parents/guardians (or an individual(s) approved by the parent/guardian) on trips.

**B. TARDY:** A student who arrives to class late will be considered tardy unless a note, phone call, or personal contact is accepted within 48 hours of the tardy.

(A student missing more than one half of the class will be considered absent.) A student who is late to class because he/she was detained by a teacher must have a pass from the teacher to excuse the tardiness.

**C. TRUANT:** A student who fails to attend class or school, or leaves the building without permission from his/her parent/guardian and a school official will be considered truant. Being truant is counted as an unexcused absence. Truancies accumulate throughout the entire school year. Unexcused absences will include but not be limited to: tardiness, shopping, hunting, concerts, preparation or participation in parties and other celebrations, employment, and other absences not identified as excused in the procedures for this policy.

**D. UNVERIFIED:** An unverified absence is one in which no contact is made by the parent/guardian with the school within the two days following the student's return to school.

**E. VERIFIED:** A verified absence is one in which a phone call or written excuse provided by the parent/guardian is received by the office within two school days of the student's return to school.

### **INFRACTIONS**

**A. ABSENCE:** (1) Parent/guardian will notify the school after 8:00 a.m.

a. If no call is made, a note must be sent with the student when the student returns to school.

**B. VERIFIED:** After the fifth (5<sup>th</sup>) verified absence, a letter of concern for the student's frequent absences will be sent home. After the tenth (10) verified absence, (accumulated during the year) a conference will be held to discuss how the absences are affecting the student's performance and what might be done to correct the situation. Participants in the conference may include the student, parent/guardian, counselor, and principal/designee. If the parent/guardian does not call to set up and attend this conference any further violation of the attendance policy could result in a notification to the County Attorney.

**C. UNVERIFIED:** (1) An unverified absence means that no reason or excuse has been given to the office. (2) After the third unverified absence, a letter will be sent home. (3) After the fifth unverified absence, a

conference will take place with the student, parent, principal/designee, and support staff as deemed necessary. If the parent/guardian does not call to set up and attend this conference any further violation of the attendance policy could result in attending summer school for three weeks for continuing violations in a semester.

**D. TARDIES:** (1) When a student is late to school, he/she must report to the office or designated area as soon as he/she arrives. (2) Teachers may assign detention for tardiness to class. (3) On the third tardy to school and each subsequent tardy, the teacher will refer the student to the principal/designee. (4) A student who is late because he/she was detained by a teacher must have a pass from the teacher to excuse the tardiness.

**E. TRUANT:** In dealing with truancy situations, guidance personnel will be involved in the initial situations to try to deal with the reason for the truancies. The County Attorney's office will be used when deemed necessary to assist in matters involving students' covered by the State's compulsory attendance laws.

**(1) First truancy** - A parent conference is required and appropriate disciplinary action will be taken. The building administrator may take the following action: a) Detention-/I.S.S./Saturday School; b. Staffing held with student, instructor, administrative personnel, and parent. A letter summarizing the conference will be sent to the parent as a follow-up.

**(2) Second truancy** - An in-house parent conference is required with a building principal/designee who will take disciplinary action. The discipline may be any or all of the following: a. detention/I.S.S./Saturday School; b. staffing held with student, instructor, administrative personnel, and parent; c. conference with student and principal/designee; d. review the records and recommend appropriate educational placement; and e. contact the County Attorney. A letter summarizing the conference will be sent to the parent as a follow-up.

**(3) Third truancy** - An in-house parent conference is required with a building principal/designee who will take disciplinary action. The discipline may be any or all of the following: a. Detention/I.S.S./Saturday School; b. Staffing held with student, instructor, administrative personnel, and parent; c. Conference with student and principal/designee; d. Review the records and recommend appropriate educational placement; and e. Contact the County Attorney. A letter summarizing the conference will be sent to the parent as a follow-up.

**(4) Fourth truancy** - the principal/designee, at his/her discretion, may consider a Saturday School, an extended suspension, or a suspension to consider expulsion and Board action.

### **APPEAL PROCESS**

Any time students or parents are concerned about the disposition of an attendance violation they are encouraged to contact the teacher or building administrator for clarification. Upon ten absences in a semester,

the student and/or guardian have the right to appeal any/all absences to the principal/designee. This appeal must be made within five school days of the conference.

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