

R 5200 ATTENDANCE

A. Definitions

1. For the purposes of school attendance, a “day in session” shall be a day on which the school is open and students are under the guidance and direction of a teacher or teachers engaged in the teaching process. Days on which school is closed for such reasons as holidays, teachers’ institutes, and inclement weather shall not be considered as days in session.
2. A “school day” shall consist of not less than four hours.
3. “A day of attendance” shall be one in which the student is present for a full day under the guidance and direction of a teacher while school is in session.
4. A “half-day class” shall be considered the equivalent of a full day’s attendance only if in session for four hours or more, exclusive of recess periods or lunch periods.

B. Attendance Recording

1. A record of the attendance of all students on roll in a school register shall be kept each day that school is in session by a teacher or other authorized person. It shall be the duty of this person to keep the attendance records according to these rules and the specific instructions issued by the Commissioner of Education.
2. No student shall be recorded as present unless the school is in session and the student so recorded is under the guidance and direction of a teacher in the teaching process.
3. A student shall be recorded as absent in the school register when not in attendance at a session of the school while a member of the school, except students excused due to religious holidays who shall be recorded as excused.
4. A student shall be recorded as either present, absent, or excused for religious observance, every day the school is in session after the student enters until the date the student is transferred to another school, transferred to an individual home instruction record, or officially leaves the school system.



5. The Commissioner shall annually prescribe a list of religious holidays on which it shall be mandatory to excuse students for religious observance upon the written request signed by the parent or person standing in loco parentis.
 6. The mere presence of a student at roll call shall not be regarded as sufficient attendance for compliance with N.J.A.C. 6A:32-8.3. In a school which is in session during both the forenoon and the afternoon, 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.
 7. A student not present in school because of his/her participation in an approved school activity, such as a field trip, meeting, cooperative education assignment, or athletic competition will be considered to be in attendance.
- C. Excused/Unexcused Absences
1. “Excused absence” is a student’s absence from school for a full day or a portion of a day for the observance of a religious holiday pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:36-14 through 16, for Take Your Child to Work Day, or any other absence determined to be excused by the New Jersey Department of Education.
 2. “Unexcused absence that counts toward truancy” is a student’s absence from school for a full or a portion of a day for any reason that is not excused as defined above or for any unexcused absence that does not count toward truancy listed below.
 3. “Unexcused absence that does not count toward truancy” is a student’s absence from school for a full day or a portion of a day for the reasons listed below:
 - a. The student’s illness supported by a written letter from the parent upon student’s return to school;
 - b. The student’s required attendance in court;
 - c. Where appropriate, when consistent with Individualized Education Programs, the Individuals with Disabilities Act, accommodation



- plans under 29 U.S.C. §§ 794 and 705(20), and individualized health care plans;
- d. The student's suspension from school;
 - e. Family illness or death supported by a written letter from the parent upon the student's return to school;
 - f. Visits to post-secondary educational institutions;
 - g. Interviews with a prospective employer or with an admissions officer of an institution of higher education;
 - h. Examination for a driver's license;
 - i. Necessary and unavoidable medical or dental appointments that cannot be scheduled at a time other than the school day;
 - j. An absence for a reason not listed above, but deemed unexcused that does not count toward truancy by the Principal, upon a written request by the student's parent stating the reason for the absence and requesting permission for the absence to be an unexcused absence that does not count toward truancy;
4. "Truancy" means ten or more cumulative unexcused absences that count toward truancy of a student between the ages of six and sixteen as determined by the Board's Attendance Policy and Regulation pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:16-7.6(a)4.iii. and the definition of school day pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:32-8.3. Any unexcused absence not counted toward truancy listed in C.3. above shall be an absence counted toward truancy.
5. Instances of tardiness in the number established by Policy 5240 may constitute an unexcused absence that counts toward truancy.
- D. Notice to School of a Student's Absence
- 1. The parent or adult student is requested to call the school office before the start of the student's school day.
 - 2. The parent of the student or an adult student who will attend the morning session, but will not attend the afternoon session should call or provide notice to the school office before the start of the afternoon session.



3. The parent or adult student who anticipates a future absence or anticipates that an absence will be prolonged should notify the school office to arrange make-up work.
- E. Readmission to School After an Absence
1. A student returning from an absence of any length of time must provide a written statement that is dated and signed by the parent or adult student, listing the reasons for the absence.
 2. A note explaining a student's absence for a non-communicable illness for a period of more than three (3) days must be accompanied by a physician's statement of the student's illness with medical clearance to return to school.
 3. A student who has been absent by reason of having or being suspected of having a communicable disease must present to the school nurse written evidence of being free of communicable disease, in accordance with Policy 8451.
- F. Instruction
1. Teachers shall cooperate in the preparation of home assignments for students who anticipate an excused absence of three or more days duration. The parent or student must request such home assignments.
 2. A student who anticipates an absence due to a temporary or chronic health condition may be eligible for home instruction in accordance with Policy 2412. The parent must request home instruction.
 3. Students absent for any reason are expected to make up the work missed. The parent or student is responsible for requesting missed assignments and any assistance required. Teachers will provide make-up assignments as necessary.
 4. In general, students will be allowed one day to make up missed work for each one day of absence. Teachers shall make reasonable accommodations to extend time for pupils.
 5. A student who missed a test or an exam shall be offered an opportunity to take the test, exam, or an appropriate alternate test.



G. Denial of Course Credit

1. The teacher will determine the credit to be awarded a student for make-up work, subject to the rules set forth in this section. Where class participation is a factor in the learning process, the teacher may consider a student's absences in determining a final grade, except that absences for the observance of a student's religious holiday or for a suspension from school cannot adversely affect the student's grade. The teacher may record an incomplete grade, in accordance with Regulation 2624, for a student who has not had full opportunity to make up missed work.
2. A High School student will be denied curriculum credit when he/she has been absent from fifteen (15) or more of the class sessions, whatever the reason for absence, except that absences for the observance of religious holidays and absences caused by a student's suspension will not count toward the total. Exceptions to this rule may be made for students whose absences are excused by High School Administration or who have demonstrated through completion of home instruction that they have mastered the proficiencies established for the curriculum of study. Doctor notes received within forty-eight hours will be reviewed by the administration. Administration will determine of these absences will count towards the cumulative total of absences leading to a loss of credit.

If a pupil exceeds the number of absences stated in the paragraph above during a course, he/she will be placed in a non-credit status. The student will be provided an opportunity to appeal the loss of credit through the Appeals Committee. If the appeal is denied, the student will remain in the class. A pupil remaining in a class on a loss-of-credit status and who has completed work in a satisfactory way may receive credit and a grade after satisfactorily attending and completing an approved summer school program at the expense of the parent.

3. An elementary student may be retained at grade level, in accordance with Policy 5410, when he/she has been absent twenty or more school days, whatever the reason for the absence, except that absences for the observance of religious holidays and during a student's suspension will not count toward the total. Exceptions to this rule may be made for students whose absences are excused and who have demonstrated through



completion of home assignments and/or home instruction that they have mastered the proficiencies established for the assigned curriculums of study.

- H. School District Response To Unexcused Absences During the School Year That Count Toward Truancy
1. For up to four cumulative unexcused absences that count toward truancy, the Principal or designee shall:
 - a. Make a reasonable attempt to notify the student's parent of each unexcused absence prior to the start of the following school day;
 - b. Make a reasonable attempt to determine the cause of the unexcused absence, including through contact with the student's parent;
 - c. Identify, in consultation with the student's parents, needed action designed to address patterns of unexcused absences, if any, and to have the child return to school and maintain regular attendance;
 - d. Proceed in accordance with the provisions of N.J.S.A. 9:6-1 et seq. and N.J.A.C. 6A:1610, if a potentially missing or abused child situation is detected; and
 - e. Cooperate with law enforcement and other authorities and agencies, as appropriate.
 2. For between five and nine cumulative unexcused absences that count toward truancy, the Principal or designee shall:
 - a. Make a reasonable attempt to notify the student's parent of each unexcused absence prior to the start of the following school day;
 - b. Make a reasonable attempt to determine the cause of the unexcused absence, including through contact with the student's parent;
 - c. Evaluate the appropriateness of action taken pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:16-7.6(a)4.i.(3) and H.1.c. above;
 - d. Develop an action plan to establish outcomes based upon the student's patterns of unexcused absences and to specify the interventions for supporting the student's return to school and regular attendance, which may include any or all of the following:



- (1) Refer or consult with the building's Intervention and Referral Services Team, pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:16-8;
 - (2) Conduct testing, assessments, or evaluations of the student's academic, behavioral, and health needs;
 - (3) Consider an alternate educational placement;
 - (4) Make a referral to or coordinate with a community-based social and health provider agency or other community resource;
 - (5) Refer to a court or court program pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:16-7.6(a)4.iv. and H.4. below
 - (6) Proceed in accordance with N.J.S.A. 9:6-1 et seq. and N.J.A.C. 6A:1610, if a potential missing or abused child situation is detected; and
 - (7) Engage the student's family.
- e. Cooperate with law enforcement and other authorities and agencies, as appropriate.
3. For ten or more cumulative unexcused absences that count toward truancy, a student between the ages of six and sixteen is truant, pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:38-25, and the Principal or designee shall:
- a. Make a determination regarding the need for a court referral for the truancy, per N.J.A.C. 6A:16-7.6(a)4.iv. and H.4. below;
 - b. Continue to consult with the parent and the involved agencies to support the student's return to school and regular attendance;
 - c. Cooperate with law enforcement and other authorities and agencies, as appropriate; and
 - d. 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.



4. A court referral may be made as follows:
 - a. When unexcused absences that count toward truancy are determined by school officials to be violations of the compulsory education law, pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:38-25, and the Board of Education's policies, in accordance with N.J.A.C. 6A:16-7.6(a), the parent may be referred to Municipal Court.
 - (1) A written report of the actions the school has taken regarding the student's attendance shall be forwarded to the Municipal Court; or
 - b. When there is evidence of a juvenile-family crisis, pursuant to N.J.S.A. 2A:4A-22.g, the student may be referred to Superior Court, Chancery Division, Family Part.
 - (1) A written report of the actions the school has taken regarding the student's attendance shall be forwarded to the Juvenile-Family Crisis Intervention Unit.
5. For a student with a disability, the attendance plan and its punitive and remedial procedures shall be applied, where applicable, in accordance with the student's IEP, pursuant to 20 U.S.C. §§ 1400 et seq.; the Individuals with Disabilities Education 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 and individualized emergency healthcare plan pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:16-2.3(b)5.xii.
6. All receiving schools pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:14-7.1(a), shall act in accordance with N.J.A.C. 6A:16-7.6(a)4.i. and H.1. above for each student with up to four cumulative unexcused absences that count toward truancy.
 - a. For each student attending a receiving school with five or more cumulative unexcused absences that count toward truancy, the absences shall be reported to the sending school district.
 - (1) The sending school district shall proceed in accordance with the Board of Education's policies and procedures pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:16-7.6(a) and H.5. above and the provisions of N.J.A.C. 6A:16-7.6(a)4.ii. through iv. and H.2. through H.5. above, as appropriate.



I. Discipline

1. Students may be denied participation in co-curricular activities if the Board establishes attendance standards for participation.
2. Students may be denied participation in athletic competition if the Board establishes attendance standards for participation.
3. No student who is absent from school for observance of a religious holiday may be deprived of any award or of eligibility for or opportunity to compete for any award because of the absence.

J. Recording Attendance

1. Teachers must accurately record the students present, tardy, or absent each day in each session or each class. Attendance records must also record students' attendance at out-of-school curricular events such as field trips.

Any High School student exceeding twenty "lates" to class will be placed in a loss-of-credit status for that class.

2. A record shall be maintained of each excused absence, unexcused absence that counts toward truancy, and unexcused absence that does not count toward truancy for each student.
3. A report card will record the number of times the student was absent and tardy in each marking period.
4. A student's absence for observance of a religious holiday will not be recorded as such on any transcript or application or employment form.

K. Appeal

1. A truant student may be suspended or expelled for truanancies in accordance with Policies 5610 and 5620.
2. A student who has been retained at grade level for excessive absences may appeal that action in accordance with Policy 5410.



- 3 A student who has been dropped from a curriculum and/or denied curriculum credit for excessive absences may appeal that action in accordance with the following procedures:
 - a. The student will be provided with the opportunity to appeal a loss of credit by meeting with the Appeals Committee. The Appeals Committee will consider any extenuating circumstances and make a decision on the credit status of the student.
 - b. If the student is not satisfied, he/she may submit a written request to the Principal for consideration.
 - c. The Principal will notify the student of his/her decision within seven (7) school days of receiving the written request from the student.
 - d. The student may appeal an adverse decision of the Principal to the Superintendent, the Board of Education, and the Commissioner of Education, in that order and in accordance with Policy 5710, Pupil Grievance.

L. Attendance Records

Attendance records for the school district and each school will be maintained and attendance rates will be calculated as required by the New Jersey Department of Education. The school district will comply with all attendance requirements and any improvement plans as required by the Department of Education.

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