

SUBJECT: COMPREHENSIVE STUDENT ATTENDANCE POLICY**Statement of Overall Objectives**

School attendance is both a right and a responsibility. The School District is an active partner with students, parents, and the community in the task of ensuring that all students meet or exceed the New York State Learning Standards. Because the School District recognizes that consistent school attendance, academic success and school completion have a positive correlation; the School District will develop, review and, if necessary, revise a Comprehensive Student Attendance Policy to meet the following objectives:

- a) To increase school completion for all students;
- b) To raise student achievement and close gaps in student performance;
- c) To identify attendance patterns in order to design attendance improvement efforts;
- d) To know the whereabouts of every student for safety and other reasons;
- e) To verify that individual students are complying with education laws relating to compulsory attendance;
- f) To determine the District's average daily attendance for State aid purposes

Description of Strategies to Meet Objectives

The School District will:

- a) Create and maintain a positive school building culture by fostering a positive physical and psychological environment where the presence of strong adult role models encourages respectful and nurturing interactions between adults and students. This positive school culture is aimed at encouraging a high level of student bonding to the school, which in turn should lead to increased attendance.
- b) Develop a Comprehensive Student Attendance Policy based upon the recommendations of a multifaceted District Policy Development Team that includes representation from the Board of Education, administrators, teachers, students, parents and the community. The District will hold at least one public hearing prior to the adoption of this collaboratively developed Comprehensive Student Attendance Policy.
- c) Maintain accurate recordkeeping via a Register of Attendance to record attendance, absence, tardiness or early departure of each student.

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- d) Utilize data analysis systems for tracking individual student attendance, as well as, individual and group trends in student attendance problems.
- e) Develop early intervention strategies to improve school attendance for all students.

Determination of Excused and Unexcused Absences, Tardiness and Early Departures

Based upon our District's education and community needs, values and priorities, the School District has determined that absences, tardiness and early departures will be considered excused or unexcused according to the following standards:

- a) **Excused:** An absence, tardiness or early departure may be excused if due to personal illness, illness or death in the family, impassable roads due to inclement weather, religious observance, quarantine, required court appearances, medical/dental appointments, approved college visits, approved cooperative work programs, drivers license road test, military obligations or other such reasons as may be approved by the Superintendent or his/her designee.
- b) **Unexcused:** An absence, tardiness or early departure is considered unexcused if the reason for the lack of attendance does not fall into the above categories (e.g., family vacation, hunting, babysitting, hair cut, obtaining learner's permit, oversleeping).

Student Attendance Recordkeeping/Data Collection

The record of each student's presence, absence, tardiness and early departure shall be kept in a register of attendance in a manner consistent with Commissioner's Regulations. An absence, tardiness or early departure will be entered as "excused" or "unexcused" along with the District code for the reason.

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

- a) For students in non-departmentalized kindergarten through grade six (i.e., self-contained classrooms and supervised group movement to other scheduled school activities such as physical education in the gym, assembly, etc.), such student's presence or absence shall be recorded after the taking of attendance once per school day, provided that students are not dismissed from school grounds during a lunch period. Where students are dismissed for lunch, their presence or absence shall also be recorded after the taking of attendance a second time upon the student's return from lunch.
- b) For students in grades seven through twelve or in departmentalized schools at any grade level (i.e., students pass individually to different classes throughout the day), 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 paragraph "a" above.

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- c) Any absence for a school day or portion thereof shall be recorded as excused or unexcused in accordance with the standards articulated in this policy.
- d) In the event that a student at any instructional level from kindergarten through grade twelve arrives late for or departs early from scheduled instruction, such tardiness or early departure shall be recorded as excused or unexcused in accordance with the standards articulated in this policy.

A record shall be kept of each scheduled day of instruction during which the school is closed for all or part of the day because of 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 of Education.

Attendance records shall also indicate that date when a student withdraws from enrollment or is dropped from enrollment in accordance with Education Law Section 3202(1-a).

At the conclusion of each class period or school day, all attendance information shall be compiled and provided to the designated school personnel who are responsible for attendance. The nature of the absence, tardiness or early departure shall be coded on student's record in accordance with the established District/building procedures.

Student Attendance

Good student attendance is an integral part of education and irregular attendance is a frequent cause of school failure. Therefore, it is the goal of the Port Jervis City School District to promote a sound attendance policy which in turn will lead to the development of life skills, work habits, and a comprehensive understanding of course content. The District believes that classroom participation is related to, and affects, a student's performance and grasp of the subject matter and, as such, is properly reflected in a student's final grade.

Participation is to be incorporated into a student's quarterly grade based upon his or her attendance, and overall class involvement. It will be the responsibility of the high school, middle school and elementary schools to develop building level procedures that will allow teachers to incorporate participation in a student's overall assessment.

The procedures are to include reasonable opportunity for students to complete missed work and must be in concert with state and federal education law including regulations for required seat time in lab classes prior to taking associated exams. Alternative assignments, tests, and/or class work, may be assigned at the discretion of the classroom teacher.

Consistent with the importance of classroom participation, student absences, tardiness, and early departures may affect a student's grade, including credit for classroom participation, for the marking period.

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SUBJECT: COMPREHENSIVE STUDENT ATTENDANCE POLICY (Cont'd.)Notice of Minimum Attendance Standard/Intervention Strategies

In order to ensure that parents/persons in parental relation and students are informed of the District's policy regarding minimum attendance, the following guidelines shall be followed:

- a) Copies of the District's Comprehensive Student Attendance Policy will be mailed to parents/persons in parental relation and provided to students at the beginning of each school year or at the time of enrollment in the District.
- b) School newsletters and publications will include periodic reminders of the components of the District's Comprehensive Student Attendance Policy. Copies of the Attendance Policy will also be included in parent/student handbooks.
- c) Information regarding the impact of attendance on a student's grade shall be included in existing notification procedures to parents such as progress reports and report cards.
- d) At periodic intervals, a designated staff member(s) may notify, by telephone, the parent/person in parental relation of the student's absence, tardiness, or early departure and explain the relationship of the student's attendance to his/her ability to receive course credit. If the parent/person in parental relation cannot be reached by telephone, a letter may be sent detailing this information.
- e) A designated staff member may review the District's Attendance Policy with students who have excessive and/or unexcused absences, tardiness or early departures. Further, appropriate student support services/personnel within the District, as well as the possible collaboration/referral to community support services and agencies may be implemented.

Notice of Students who are Absent, Tardy or Depart Early Without Proper Excuse

A designated staff member shall notify by telephone the parent/person in parental relation to a student who is absent, tardy or departs early without proper excuse. The staff member shall explain the District's Comprehensive Student Attendance Policy, the District's/building level intervention procedures, and, if appropriate, the relationship between student attendance and course credit. If the parent/person in parental relation cannot be reached by telephone, the staff member will provide such notification by mail. Further, the District's Attendance Policy will be mailed to the parent/person in parental relation to promote awareness and help ensure compliance with the policy.

If deemed necessary by appropriate school officials, or if requested by the parent/person in parental relation, a school conference shall be scheduled between the parent/person in parental relation and appropriate staff members in order to address the student's attendance. The student may also be requested to attend this conference in order to address appropriate intervention strategies that best meet the needs of the student.

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SUBJECT: COMPREHENSIVE STUDENT ATTENDANCE POLICY (Cont'd.)**Attendance Incentives**

In order to encourage student attendance, the District will develop and implement grade-appropriate/building-level strategies and programs which may including, but are not limited to:

- a) Attendance honor rolls to be posted in prominent places in District buildings and included in building newsletters and, with parent/person in parental relation consent, in community publications;
- b) Monthly drawings for prizes at each grade level to reward perfect attendance;
- c) Grade-level rewards at each building for best aggregate attendance;
- d) Classroom acknowledgement of the importance of good attendance (e.g., individual certificates, recognition chart, bulletin boards);
- e) Assemblies collaboratively developed and promoted by student council, administration, PTA/PTO and other community groups to promote good attendance.

Disciplinary and/or Academic Consequences for Student AbsencesDisciplinary Consequences

Unexcused absences, tardiness and early departures will result in disciplinary sanctions as described in the District's Code of Conduct. These may include but are not limited to, in-school suspension, detention and denial of participation in interscholastic and extracurricular activities.

Academic Consequences

Academic consequences for all absences may include, but are not limited to, lowered grades, work with instructional support services personnel during free periods or before or after school, etc.

Intervention Strategy Process

Designated District personnel will contact parents/persons in parental relation of students who show problematic patterns of attendance at periodic intervals to discuss their child's absences, tardiness or early departures and the importance of class attendance and appropriate interventions. Individual buildings/grade levels will address procedures to implement the contact process to the parent/person in parental relation.

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In order to intervene effectively when an identified pattern of unexcused absences, tardiness or early departures occurs, designated District personnel will pursue the following:

- a) Identify specific element(s) of the pattern (e.g., grade level, building, time frame, type of unexcused absences, tardiness or early departures);
- b) Contact the District staff most closely associated with the element. In specific cases where the pattern involves an individual student, the student and parent/person in parental relation will be contacted.
- c) Discuss strategies to intervene directly with specific element;
- d) Recommend intervention to Superintendent or his/her designee if it relates to change in District policy or procedure;
- e) Implement changes, as approved by appropriate administration;
- f) Utilize appropriate District and/or community resources (PINS petition, referrals to Family Court, Department of Social Services, Child Protective Services, Mental Health, etc.) to address and help remediate student unexcused absences, tardiness or early departures;
- g) Monitor and report short and long term effects of intervention.

Appeal Process

A parent/person in parental relation may request a building level review of their child's attendance record.

Building Review of Attendance Records

Commencing with the 2003-04 school year, the building principal will work in conjunction with the building attendance clerk and other designated staff in reviewing attendance records at the end of each term. This review is conducted to identify individual and group attendance patterns and to initiate appropriate action to address the problem of unexcused absences, tardiness and early departures.

Annual Review by the Board of Education

The Board of Education shall annually review the building level student attendance records and if such records show a decline in student attendance, the Board shall make any revisions to the Policy and plan deemed necessary to improve student attendance.

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SUBJECT: COMPREHENSIVE STUDENT ATTENDANCE POLICY (Cont'd.)**Community Awareness**

The Board of Education shall promote necessary community awareness of the District's Comprehensive Student Attendance Policy by:

- a) Providing a plain language summary of the policy to parents or persons in parental relation to students at the beginning of each school year and promoting the understanding of such a policy to students and their parents/persons in parental relations;
- b) Providing each teacher, at the beginning of the school year or upon employment, a copy of the policy; and
- c) Providing copies of the policy to any other member of the community upon request.

Education Law Sections 3024, 3025, 3202, 3205, 3206
3210, 3211, and 3213
8 New York Code of Rules and Regulations
(NYCRR) Sections 104.1, 109.2 and 175.6