

Regulation

ATTENDANCE, ABSENCES AND EXCUSES

Definitions

- A. "Attendance" is a student's presence in school and in the classroom to which he or she is assigned at the times scheduled for instruction or other school activities.
1. A student will be considered to have attended if he or she has been present at least four hours during the school day.
 2. A student not present in school because of his or 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.
- B. "Excused absence" is a student's absence from school for a full day or a portion of a day for one or more of the following reasons:
1. The student's illness;
 2. A death or critical illness in the student's immediate family, or others with permission of principal;
 3. Quarantine;
 4. Observance of the student's religion on a day approved for that purpose by the State Board of Education;
 5. The student's suspension from school;
 6. The student's required attendance in court;
 7. Interviews with an admissions officer of an educational institution;
 8. Necessary and unavoidable medical or dental appointments that cannot be scheduled at a time other than the school day;
 9. 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 pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:16-2.3;
 10. An absence for a reason not listed above, but deemed excused by the Superintendent, upon a written request by the pupil's parent or legal guardian stating the reason for the absence and requesting permission for the absence to be an excused absence.
- C. "Truancy" is a student's absence from all or a part of the school day without the knowledge of the student's parent. A student will also be considered truant if he or she:
1. Leaves school without permission when school is still in session;
 2. Leaves class because of illness and does not report to the school nurse as directed; or
 3. Is present in school but is absent from class without approval. Such truancy from class is a "class cut."
- D. "Unexcused absence" is a student's absence for all or part of a school day for any reason other than those listed in paragraph "Excuses Absences" above. Absence is expressly not excused for any of the following purposes (this list is intended to be illustrative and is not inclusive):
1. Family travel;
 2. Performance of household or babysitting duties; and
 3. Hunting.

ABSENCES AND EXCUSES (regulation continued)E. Unexcused Absences

In N.J.S.A. 18A:38-25-31, N.J.A.C. 6:3-9, and N.J.A.C. 6A:16-7.8, the New Jersey Department of Education defines an unexcused absence as an absence for which no communication has occurred between the school and the parent. In other words, the parent did not report the absence to the school and the school was unable to contact the parent regarding the absence. The following administrative actions will be taken after the specified number of absences in accordance with the above regulations in addition to the actions specified in the school's disciplinary code:

One to Four Unexcused Absences – Truancy Officer to investigate absence. Principal forwards written notification to parent(s)/guardian(s) and conducts a conference. An action plan is developed to remedy the situation.

Five to Nine Unexcused Absences – Truancy Officer provides documentation for principal. Principal forwards written notification to parent(s)/guardian(s) and conducts a conference. The action plan will be revised and the matter will be referred to the building Pupil Assistance Committee. The matter will be reported to DYFS and the parent(s)/guardian(s) will be advised that the issue will be referred to Riverton Borough Municipal Court if unexcused absences exceed nine days.

Ten or More Unexcused Absences – Principal forwards written notification to parent(s)/guardian(s) and conducts a conference. Principal makes a mandatory referral to Riverton Borough Municipal Court utilizing Truancy Officer's documentation.

Notice to School of a Student's Absence

- A. A parent or adult student is requested to call the nurse's office before 8 a.m. of the morning of the student's absence.
- B. A parent who anticipates a future absence or anticipates that an absence will be prolonged should notify the teacher, who will assist in the arrangement of makeup work. The student's teacher will provide home assignments for short-term absences (less than two weeks). Home instruction will be arranged for long-term absences (two weeks or more).

Readmission to School After An Absence

- A. A student returning from an absence of any length must present a written statement, dated and signed by the parent, of the reasons for the absence.
- B. A student who has been absent by reason of having or being suspected of having a communicable disease must present to the nurse written evidence of being free of communicable disease, in accordance with board policy 5141.2 Illness.

Instruction

- A. Teachers are expected to cooperate in the preparation of home assignments for students who anticipate an excused absence of three days' duration. The parent must request such home assignments.
- B. A student who anticipates an excused absence of more than two weeks' duration may be eligible for home instruction in accordance with board policy 6173 Home Instruction. The parent must request home instruction.
- C. Students absent for any reason are expected to make up the work missed. Teachers will provide make-up assignments as necessary.
- D. In general, students will be allowed two day(s) to make up missed work for each one day of absence. Teachers shall make reasonable accommodations to extend time for students.

ABSENCES AND EXCUSES (regulation continued)

- E. A student who missed a test because of an excused absence shall be offered an opportunity to take the test or an alternate test; in no case will a student who missed a test because of his or her observance of a religious holiday be denied an opportunity to make up the test.

Discipline

- A. Students may be denied participation in co-curricular activities if their attendance fails to meet the standards set forth in board policy 5113 Absences and Excuses.
- B. Students may be denied participation in athletic competition if their attendance fails to meet the standards set forth in board policy 5113 Absences and Excuses.
- C. 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.
- D. Truancies will be handled as follows:
 - 1. **First instance:** the teacher will confer with the student about the illegal absence and will notify the student and the parent that continued truancies may result in serious discipline.
 - 2. **Second instance:** the teacher will request the parent to attend a conference with the teacher and the student to discuss the cause of the truancies.
 - 3. **Third instance:** the teacher will confer with the chief school administrator and local authorities.
- E. When a student is absent without excuse more than 18 days in any one school year, the chief school administrator will notify municipal court pursuant to law.
- F. The absence of a student missing from school for unexplained reasons will be handled in accordance with this regulation.

Recording Attendance

- A. Teachers must accurately record the students present, tardy, and 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.
- B. Teachers must classify and record each absence as excused, unexcused, or truancy.
- C. A report card will record the number of times the student was absent and tardy in each marking period.
- D. A student's absence for observance of a religious holiday will not be recorded as such on any transcript or application or employment form.

Attendance Benchmark

Administrative Action

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| 5 Days Absent | - Confirmation letter to parent(s)/guardian(s) (Middle School Only) |
| 10-14 Days Absent | - First written notification to parent(s)/guardian(s) by principal - Conference may be required at principal's discretion |
| 15-20 Days Absent | - Second written notice - Conference required with principal and/or support team |

ABSENCES AND EXCUSES (regulation continued)

- Action plan developed to improve attendance and address academic achievement
 - Possible referral to municipal court
 - consideration for retention through I&RS
- 23-25 Days Absent
- Third written notice
 - Conference required with principal
 - Complaint filed in municipal court
 - I&RS required to address possible retention and/or to develop/revise action plan

Attendance Improvement Plan

- A. The chief school administrator will collect attendance data and calculate the average daily attendance rate for the district. The attendance rate shall be calculated by dividing the total number of student days present for all students by the total possible number of student days present for all students and multiplying the result by one hundred.
- B. When the average daily attendance rate is below 85% the following attendance improvement plan shall be implemented, district-wide or in the affected school, as appropriate.
 1. The chief school administrator is responsible for implementing the attendance improvement plan district-wide.
 2. The procedures for notifying parents and disciplining students, set forth in this regulation, shall be strictly followed.
 3. Classroom teachers will identify and report to the chief school administrator the students for whom prompt attendance is a problem. The chief school administrator will confer with the parent of each identified student by telephone or in person to determine the causes of the student's poor attendance and to impress upon the parent the district's attendance expectations. Every reasonable effort shall be made to determine whether the student's absenteeism is caused by an inappropriate educational program; if necessary, the student's instructional program will be modified.
 4. At the end of the school year, the principal will compile a list of students at risk for attendance problems at each grade level. The attendance of the identified students will be closely monitored, if any such identified student is absent more than five times in the month of September, the principal will conduct a home visit to discuss the student's absenteeism and to inform the parent of his or her legal responsibility to comply with the compulsory attendance statute.
 5. The principal shall conduct a follow-up visit to the parent if the student's attendance fails to improve.
 6. The principal will analyze attendance data to determine any patterns of absence that may occur district-wide, in individual schools, and in student population groups. The results of the analysis will be reported to the chief school administrator.

Tardiness Benchmark

Administrative Action

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| 3 Days Tardy | - After School Detention |
| 6 Days Tardy | - Confirmation letter to parent(s)/guardian(s) - Student consequences may be assigned at the discretion of the principal |

ABSENCES AND EXCUSES (regulation continued)

10-14 Days Tardy

- First written notification to parent(s)/guardian(s) by principal
- Conference may be required at principal's discretion
- Student consequences may be assigned at the discretion of the principal

15-20 Days Tardy

- Second written notice
- Conference required with principal and/or I&RS support team
- Action plan developed to improve tardiness and address academic achievement
- Possible referral to municipal court over 21 days

FIRST READING: Board of Education Meeting: 10/27/09

SECOND READING & ADOPTION: Board of Education Meeting: 11/24/09