

## STUDENT ATTENDANCE

The Plattsburgh City School District Board of Education recognizes that providing clear, concise policy guidance to administrators, teachers, students and interested others in regard to attendance is necessary, in accordance with state law, and appropriate, in regard to district-wide consistency with attendance among the district's schools.

The goal of having all students who attend our schools receive a sound basic public school education that will enable them to enjoy life as responsible, healthy citizens, critical thinkers, lifelong learners, and effective communicators is best achieved by consistent student attendance and active participation. It is therefore extremely important that each student be present for this process of education to be effective.

Parents and families have the obligation to insure the consistent and punctual attendance of their children in their family who are enrolled in our district's schools and classes. Students themselves share in this obligation for consistent, punctual attendance and active student participation in classes. Administrators and teachers have an obligation to encourage consistent and punctual attendance by students.

### *Strategies*

The basic strategy of this policy is to recognize and promote the positive connections among active student participation in class activities, student achievement throughout the disciplines, timely completion of graduation requirements for earning a high school diploma and consistent, punctual student attendance. Consistent and punctual student attendance helps to create an environment that fosters subject competency, continuity of learning, productive habits of work and mind, and enhanced student responsibility.

Students are expected to consistently attend and actively participate in class, and to arrive at class prepared to be actively engaged with class activities and assigned projects. Students within state prescribed age limits are required to attend school each day when school is in session unless they have an excused absence.

Absence from class is detrimental to learning and is in conflict with the overall goal of having our students become responsible, healthy citizens, critical thinkers, lifelong learners, and effective communicators. Compensating or corrective actions are to be considered and implemented, upon careful consideration of valid data and the circumstances associated with a particular student who has an emerging or chronic pattern of unexcused absences.

### *Charge to Principals*

Consequently, Principals are charged with specific responsibility to see that class attendance is recorded in a manner consistent with state requirements, and a summary report of each individual student's attendance record is to be reported to parents/legal guardians at the end of each marking quarter or more frequently if so required by the school's code of conduct or if that student's Principal or Principal's designee(s) determines more frequent notification to be necessary.

Principals are to see that a summary of this policy is to be included in each school's code of conduct for students, and the code of conduct is to be distributed to students and their parents/legal guardians at the start of classes each academic year.

Principals are to meet at the start of each academic year with faculty and support staff directly involved with generating and reporting attendance data to review this policy and to clarify individual and team roles associated with implementation. The Principal is to see that those who are charged with tracking attendance and/or electronic reporting of attendance data for that school receive training in proper procedures and protocols.

Students are to be given opportunity to make up work that was missed, due to one or more excused absences. Although consistent attendance and active participation in the classroom are important, Principals are charged with making certain that attendance will not be an automatic basis for denial of course credit.

Further Principals are charged with submitting to the Superintendent of Schools before the end of each academic school year's first quarter the specific guidelines and processes that will be used by the Principal and others in the event there is consideration given later that school year to deny a student course credit.

The Superintendent will notify the Principal if the guidelines or processes submitted are in need of refinement to meet state regulations or to satisfy the Plattsburgh City School District expectations established via this policy.

### *Excused Absences and Tardiness*

Student absence or tardiness is to be excused for the following reasons:

1. personal sickness or injury;
2. sickness or death in the family;
3. impassible roads;
4. religious observance;
5. medical or dental appointments;

6. school-approved supervised trips;
7. approved college visits;
8. required court attendance;
9. quarantine;
10. military obligations;
11. other reasons authorized by the Principal or Superintendent of Schools.

Each absence must be recorded. It is the parent's/guardian's responsibility to notify the school on the morning of the absence. In addition, the parent/guardian must provide a written signed explanation for each absence.

Absence or tardiness for any other reason is considered to be unexcused.

#### *Released Time for Religious Instruction*

1. Absence of a pupil from school during school hours for religious observance and education to be had outside the school building and grounds may be permitted upon written request of the parent or guardian of the pupil.
2. The courses in religious observance and education must be maintained and operated by or under the control of a duly constituted religious body.
3. Pupils must be registered for the course(s) and a copy of the registration filed with the local public school authorities.
4. Reports of attendance of pupils registered in such courses shall be filed with the Principal or teacher at the end of the week.
5. Such absence shall be for not more than one hour each week at the close of either the morning or the afternoon session or both, at a time to be fixed by the local school authorities, provided that the time designated for each separate unit, the primary grades (K-2), intermediate grades (3-5), middle school grades (6-8), and senior high school grades (9-12) shall be the same for all pupils in that unit in each separate school.
6. In the event that more than one school for religious observance and education is maintained in the district, the hours of absence in each particular elementary or secondary school unit in such district shall be the same for all religious schools.

#### *Instruction on Days of Religious Observance*

The Board recognizes that to meet state school year requirements it will be necessary to hold school on days some students must be absent due to religious observances. Absence of a student from school during school hours for religious observance shall be permitted upon the prior written request of the parent or guardian of the student. It is expected that administrators and teachers will be sensitive to the observance requirements of their students and insure each student will be afforded full opportunity to make up work missed during such approved absences within a reasonable period of time.

### *Attendance of Students Reporting System Codification*

Principals, in consultation with the district's information technology coordinator and other individuals identified by the Principals as appropriate, are to establish a consistent district-wide attendance reporting system codification method such as:

- A.....Absent
- E.....Early Dismissal
- O.....Out of School Suspension
- I.....In School Suspension
- T.....Tardy or Late
- UA...Unexcused Absence
- UT ...Unexcused Tardiness

### *Timely Notice to Parents/Legal Guardians*

Parents are to be contacted by telephone or sent a letter whenever a student is absent, tardy or otherwise not in school for the full day without a proper excuse. Chronic tardiness and truancy are disruptive to both teachers and fellow students and will be not tolerated. Unlawful or unexcused absence from school is considered a serious offense. Continued truancy and/or tardiness may result in disciplinary action.

### *Intervention Strategies*

Additional actions are to be taken when a student has a severe attendance problem. Such actions might include a school staff member telephone call to the parent; guidance counselor conference with the parent; referral to a child study team; case conference with the student, parent and, one or more of the student's teachers; counseling services, hotline call or a petition to a judge for court supervision.

### *Attendance Records Review to Address Unexcused Absence or Tardiness*

Each school's Principal is responsible for timely review of that school's student attendance records and for timely response to address chronic or serious instances of unexcused student absence, unexcused tardiness or unexcused early departure.

### *Annual Review*

Once adopted, this policy is to be reviewed annually at a regular meeting of the Board of Education scheduled in September along with the district's code of conduct

Adoption date: March 23, 2006