

Students

SUBJECT: Comprehensive Attendance Policy

The Board of Education of the Red Hook Central School District recognizes that student attendance in school is an important component of learning success. According to various learning theories, a student's interaction with knowledgeable adults, as well as with engaged peers, serves to deepen and broaden learning experiences. Regular student attendance is also a critical component in maintaining and promoting positive change in school culture.

The District recognizes that, without appropriate academic progress monitoring, the effectiveness of regular student attendance is dramatically reduced. The District shall make every effort to adjust curricular expectations and/or the course of study for those students who are able to demonstrate subject mastery in advance of developmental norms. Providing an academically challenging environment is a primary responsibility to students.

Pursuant to Section 104.1 of the Regulations of the Commissioner of Education, the Board of Education adopts this comprehensive attendance policy, containing the following components:

1. overall objectives of the policy;
2. specific strategies to accomplish these objectives;
3. excused vs. unexcused student absences and tardiness;
4. coding system identifying reasons for absence or tardiness;
5. student attendance and course credit;
6. incentives and disciplinary sanctions;
7. notice to parents or persons in parental relation;
8. intervention strategies to identify patterns of student absence or tardiness;
9. parties responsible for student attendance in each school; and
10. annual review (7/1) of policy by the Board.

All staff (instructional and administrative) will be provided with a copy of the comprehensive attendance policy by the building principal and any amendment to such policy within thirty (30) days following initial adoption or amendment of the policy. New staff members will be provided a copy of the comprehensive attendance policy by the building principal upon commencement of employment with the District

The Attendance Policy Committee shall promote community awareness of this District comprehensive attendance policy by providing a plain language summary of the policy to the parents or guardian at the beginning of each school year. In order to promote an understanding of the policy, the District shall post a summary on its web site and in each school's handbook. Copies of the complete comprehensive attendance policy shall be available in the District central office and in each school building and will be provided to any member of the community upon request within 3-5 business days.

1. Overall objectives of the policy

The major objectives of the comprehensive attendance policy in the Red Hook Central School District are to:

- a. ensure the maintenance of an adequate record verifying the attendance of all children at instruction in accordance with Education Law;
- b. enhance the effectiveness of regular attendance by affording students the opportunity to demonstrate academic proficiency in advance of developmental norms and adjust curricular expectations and/or coursework accordingly;
- c. ensure sufficient pupil attendance at all scheduled periods of actual instruction or supervised study activities to permit such pupils to succeed at meeting the District's and New York State's learning expectations.

2. Specific strategies to accomplish these objectives

The Board of Education charges the Superintendent or designee to develop a system of pupil attendance recordkeeping in each school in a register of attendance that shall provide an accurate record of each pupil's presence, absence, tardiness, and early departure. The register of attendance shall set forth the following for each pupil: name; date of birth; full names of parents or guardian; address where the pupil resides; phone numbers where the parents or persons in parental relation may be contacted; date of the pupil's enrollment; and a record of the pupil's attendance on each day of scheduled instruction, date the pupil withdraws or is dropped from enrollment (where applicable); a record of when school was closed for all or part of the day due to extraordinary weather conditions or school building emergencies.

All entries in the register of attendance shall be made by the designated school attendance personnel, based on information provided by the teacher of the class in which the pupil is enrolled, parents and/or guardians in parental relation to the pupil. The entries in the register of attendance shall be verified by the oath or affirmation of the individual making the entries in the register of attendance. The principal of each school shall have the responsibility of supervising the keeping of the register of attendance. The principal shall also be charged with reviewing pupil attendance records as follows: at least quarterly for grades K-8 and at least quarterly upon receipt of the Single Class Absence Reporting Form [SCARF] in grades 9-12. The review is for the purpose of initiating appropriate action pursuant to Section 8 of this policy to address unexcused pupil absence, tardiness, and early departure.

Attendance in each school building shall be recorded as follows:

- a. in the elementary schools, after the taking of attendance once per school day; and
- b. in the middle school and high school, after the taking of attendance in each period of scheduled instruction.

3. Excused vs. unexcused absences and parental responsibility

A student shall be regarded as being absent from class if he or she misses more than fifteen (15) minutes of class including tardiness or early dismissal.

The following reasons for pupil absences, tardiness, and early departure shall be considered by the Board of Education to be excused (with the appropriate documentation):

- a. illness;
- b. illness or death in the family;
- c. religious observance;

- d. medical appointments;
- e. required court appearances;
- f. approved college visits or post-graduate educational visits coordinated thru guidance
- g. school-sanctioned activities or events pre-approved by building principal or designee

Field trips, music rotations, counseling, in-school suspension, for which the student does assigned work, and out-of-school suspension, where the student takes advantage of alternate educational services provided by the District, shall not count as absences from class.

Any other pupil absence is considered by the Board of Education to be unexcused. Each absence shall be accounted for by the designated school attendance personnel in the register of attendance and shall be entered as excused or unexcused.

It is the responsibility of the parents or guardians to notify the office by telephone or other electronic means on the morning of the absence or tardiness or at the time of early departure as to the reason for such absence, tardiness or early departure. As a follow-up to any oral notification, parents or persons in parental relation to the pupil shall provide a written excuse containing the date of the absence, tardiness, or early departure and reason for such within two school days following a student's return to school. Parents or guardians need to include in a written excuse (1) the date(s) of absence, (2) reason for such absence, and (3) the signature of the parent or person in parental relation to the pupil.

Failure to produce a written excuse within two school days shall result in the absence being designated as unexcused.

When an excused absence exceeds one day, it may be considered one event for the purpose of credit eligibility. Such determination will be at the discretion of the Principal. The District's preferred format for a doctor's note will be provided to parents at the beginning of each year and be available on the District's website.

In the event of a planned unexcused absence of three weeks or more, it shall be the policy of the District that the student will be unenrolled. The District is not responsible for providing assignments to the student; however, the District will provide topics to be covered during the student's absence.

4. Coding system identifying reasons for absence or tardiness

For any absence that is excused, a coding system shall identify the reason for such absence. An absence shall be assumed to be unexcused until the designated school attendance personnel has received written notification.

Along with coding whether an absence is excused or unexcused and, if excused, the reason for such, the designated school attendance personnel shall record the time of entry of a student due to tardiness and the time of exit of a student due to early departure.

The following codes shall be consistently used by all designated school attendance personnel in the District:

5. Student attendance and course credit in secondary school (grades 7-12)

The Board of Education recognizes that appropriately placed students and regular attendance is essential to the total learning experience. Although some class absences may be unavoidable, each student is expected to make every effort to attend each assigned class. The underlying rationale for an attendance policy that denies course credit for non-attendance is based on the beliefs that appropriately placed and engaged students maximize the effectiveness of regular attendance, that the community has invested significant resources in securing the services of a certified classroom teacher, and that the true potential of our learning community can only be achieved when all stakeholders are actively engaged.

For the purposes of recording and reporting accurate attendance; including tardiness to class, each absence shall equal 1 point, while each tardy to class shall equal 1/5 point. Any student that exceeds 18 points for a full year course or 9 points for a half year course will may not receive credit for the course.

Any student that exceeds (18) absences for a full year course and (9) absences for a half year course, may not receive credit. At the discretion of the Principal, Students may reduce the number of absences for the purpose of avoiding a loss of credit. Attendance point reduction may be accomplished by making up class time, doing additional work at home, or attending designated evening sessions. However, students may not make up more than 4 (four) absences for an individual class per quarter.

*	Unexplained
UNV	Unverified
UTDY	Unexcused Tardy
ETDY	Excused Tardy
FLD	Field Trip
EDS	Early Dismissal
UABS	Unexcused Absence
ILL	Illness
MD	MD Appointment
FAM	Family Matters
REL	Religious
EABS	Excused Absence
OSS	Out of School Suspension
ISS	In School Suspension
CTD	Court Date

PULL	Pull Out
ALT	Alternate Placement
ACT	School Activity
HT	Home Tutor
COL	Post-Sec Visit
HMNR	Nurse Sent Home
LTCE	Late to Class
ULTC	Unexcused Late to Class
AMU	Absence-Made Up
AMUE	Absence-Made Up-Excused
Dr.N	Dr.'s Note
MUS	Music Lesson
LD	Left District
Ably	Assembly
CNSL	Counseling

When excused absences occur, it shall be the student's responsibility to obtain all make-up work from his or her teacher(s) immediately upon his or her return to school, and all make-up work shall be submitted within a reasonable time frame determined by the classroom teacher. All written medical excuses shall be submitted within three (3) school days of a student's return to school in order to be considered as a valid excuse for the student's absence.

Notice to the pupil's parents or persons in parental relation regarding absences and the potential for denial of course credit and strategies that shall be employed in the high school and middle school prior to the denial of course credit to the pupil for insufficient attendance shall be as follows:

- a) On or before the tenth (10th) absence [fifth (5th) in a half-year course], a letter (or electronic communication) will be sent advising the parents or persons in parental relation

of the class and the number of absences. The principal shall also provide the student and/or the student's parents or persons in parental relation with an opportunity to meet to discuss the absences. This provision shall be applicable to K-8 students with the understanding that consecutive absences may be counted as one event.

b) On the seventeenth (19th) absence [ninth (10th) in a half-year course], the student may receive no credit for the course. (2) The principal or his/her designee shall so notify the student's parents or persons in parental relation by letter (or electronic communication). Appeals regarding denial of credit shall be made to the Superintendent of Schools within 30 days of the letter being mailed.

c) In grades K-8, it is at the discretion of the building principal to consider retention.

6. Incentives and disciplinary sanctions

The Board of Education recognizes that pupil attendance may be positively affected by the use of incentives to encourage pupil attendance and disciplinary sanctions to discourage unexcused pupil absences, tardiness and early departures from school.

In this regard, students who have above average attendance (i.e., 95%) may be considered for graduation awards and scholarships. Students who have above average attendance may qualify for consideration for membership in the National Honor Society, student leadership positions, preferential privileges (e.g., parking spots, study hall times, special luncheons, etc.).

Where it is determined by the building principal that disciplinary sanctions are necessary to discourage a specific instance of an unexcused pupil absence, tardiness or early departure or a pattern of unexcused absences, tardiness or early departures by a pupil, the following sanctions shall be available for use by the school: suspension from athletic and club opportunities, suspension from extra-curricular activities (e.g., student dances), restriction on lunch privileges (e.g., assigned to a specific location during lunch periods), revocation of student parking privileges, etc.)

Students who are absent seventeen (17) times in a full-year course or nine (9) times in a half-year course shall be deemed excessively absent. They are not only subject to a loss of class credit or retention, but may also be referred to the county Probation Department for person in need of supervision (PINS) diversion and/or filing a PINS petition with Family Court. Students who are excessively absent will not be eligible for certain awards and scholarships, for student leadership positions, or for membership in the National Honor Society.

7. Intervention strategies to identify patterns of student absence or tardiness

The Board of Education understands that in order to increase overall District attendance and pupil attendance in each school building, it is important to develop a process by which teachers and other school employees can readily identify patterns of unexcused pupil absence, tardiness or early departure and can employ specific intervention strategies in an attempt to change such patterns.

Each school building shall establish a committee (e.g., Pupil Assessment Team, RtI Team, Child Study Team) which shall be charged with monitoring overall pupil attendance and determining and addressing specific patterns of unexcused pupil absence, tardiness, or early departure. The committee shall be comprised of the building principal, nurse, and teachers and other support staff as determined by the principal.

The committee shall meet at least monthly and shall identify specific pupils with patterns of unexcused absences, tardiness or early departure and the intervention strategies to be employed by teachers and other school staff to address these patterns. Such interventions may include counseling, additional academic services, mentoring, referral to outside agencies, and the like. A summary of each meeting of this committee shall be kept and shall be available to the Superintendent for his information and review.

8. Parties responsible for student attendance in each school

The principal of each school building shall hereby be charged by the Board of Education as the person responsible for reviewing pupil attendance records and initiating appropriate actions at the building level to address unexcused pupil absence, tardiness and early departure consistent with the comprehensive attendance policy of the District.

9. Annual review of policy by the Board

The building principal or designee shall report annually a summary of pupil attendance to the Board of Education. The Board shall have the opportunity to amend the comprehensive attendance policy and make any revisions deemed necessary to improve pupil attendance. Any such amendment to the comprehensive attendance policy shall be provided in writing by the building principal to each staff member no later than thirty (30) days after adoption of the amendment by the Board. The policy shall also be included in the next publication of the student handbook and posted on the District website.

First reading: 09/25/19

Second reading & adopt: 10/16/19