

**ATTENDANCE POLICY**

- I. Purpose/Statement of Objectives: Good attendance is a central component of the educational process. The educational program offered by the District is predicated upon student presence and requires continuity of instruction and classroom participation. This Board of Education attendance policy has been developed and implemented to ensure the maintenance of an adequate record verifying the attendance of all children at instruction in accordance with Education Law §§ 3205 and 3210 and establishes a mechanism by which the patterns of pupil absence can be examined to develop effective intervention strategies to improve school attendance.
  
- II. Strategies to Be Employed: The District will employ the following strategies to ensure good attendance of all of its students:
  - A. Development of this policy and appropriate record-keeping mechanisms to ensure that the attendance of all students is tracked and analyzed.
  - B. Development of mechanisms to intervene on the individual student level when a student’s attendance record demonstrates a need for improvement.
  - C. Development of a District-wide program to encourage good attendance and improve the attendance of all District students.
  
- III. Excused and Unexcused Absences:
  - A. Appropriate Grounds for Excused Absences or Tardiness. The student and his/her parent or person in parental relation are responsible for providing written notification of the reason for such absences upon the student’s return to school. Whenever possible, parents or persons in parental relation are encouraged to contact the school in writing or by telephone prior to the absence. The following list represents legal and appropriate bases for being absent from school or tardy.
    - 1. Personal Illness
    - 2. Sickness or death in family
    - 3. Medical Appointments
    - 4. Court Appearances
    - 5. Religious Observance
    - 6. Quarantine
    - 7. Military Obligation
    - 8. Pre-approved college visits for H.S. juniors and seniors
    - 9. Any other absence excused in the discretion of the Superintendent.
    - 10. Take your child to work day

- B. Grounds for Unexcused Absences or Tardiness. Absence for any reason not included in the list set forth in section III, A is an unexcused absence. Absences for reasons set forth in section III, A for which a student does not have pre-approval from the District or for which the student does not provide an appropriate note or documentation within three (5) school days of his/her return to school will also be recorded as an unexcused absence.

Parental requests excusing their child from school for reasons not included above (i.e., to take a driver's test, to get a haircut, to go shopping, to go on a family trip, or not stating a specific reason) are unexcused absences under state law. Excuses that a student "overslept" or had "car trouble" are also unacceptable and will constitute an unexcused absence or tardy.

IV. Record Keeping:

- A. When Attendance will be Taken:
1. Elementary Buildings: Attendance shall be taken each morning at the beginning of the school day. Each classroom teacher shall record the students' presence or absence in a classroom record and shall report all absence or tardiness to the building office on an attendance report form.
  2. Middle School/High School Buildings: Attendance shall be taken at the beginning of each period of scheduled instruction. Each classroom teacher shall record the students' presence or absence in a classroom record and shall report all absence or tardiness to the building office on an attendance report form.
- B. Content/Form of District Attendance Records. The District maintains a permanent record of attendance for all students enrolled in instruction. The attendance record will be prepared by teachers and maintained electronically and in paper form on a building-level basis by the building principal or another employee designated by the Board of Education. The record shall include the following information for each student: name, date of birth, names of parents or persons in parental relation; address where student resides, phone numbers where parents or persons in parental relation can be reached, date of enrollment, a record of the student's attendance on each day of scheduled instruction recorded in conformity with the chart below, a record of each scheduled day of instruction during which the school is closed for all or part of the day due to extraordinary circumstances.

Code	Title	Status	Excused
UA	Unexcused Absence	Absence	No
UT	Unexcused Tardy	Tardiness	No
EA	Excused Absence	Absence	Yes
ET	Excused Tardy	Tardiness	Yes
OS	Out-of-school Suspension (w/o tutoring)	Absence	Yes
IS	In-school Suspension	Present	Yes
SP	Suspended (Out-of-school w/tutoring)	Present	Yes
TR	Truancy	Absence	No
ED	Educational Absence	Absence	Yes
RA	Religious Observance	Absence	Yes
EP	Educational Program	Present	Yes
OT	Other (w/ explanation)	Absence	No
SC	School Closed (extraordinary circumstance)	Present	Yes
HI	Home Instruction	Present	Yes

Entries on the attendance record shall be made only by a teacher, the building principal, or an employee designated by the Board of Education and shall be verified as accurate under oath or affirmation.

- C. Contacting parents. In the event that a student is absent from school without a previous notification to the teacher or building principal, the school will make contact with the student's parent or person in parental relation to confirm the student's absence. The district will attempt to make contact on the same day as the absence.

V. Student's Attendance Requirements for Rewards, Discipline, and Receipt of Course Credit:

- A. Rewards for Good Attendance. In addition to the likelihood of enhanced educational progress, good attendance may be the basis for student recognition awards. Any student who has perfect attendance shall be eligible for perfect attendance recognition if that type of recognition is given.

- B. Penalties for Poor Attendance. Chronic absences and tardiness, whether excused or unexcused, are disruptive to the educational process and will not be tolerated. Make up work will be encouraged for excused absences subject to the classroom teacher's discretion. For unexcused absences, make-up work will generally not be offered. The following procedures are in place to deal with excessive absences (whether excused or unexcused).

1. Elementary School:
  - a) 10 days absent - letter to parents;
  - b) 15 days absent - letter to parents, ~~attendance officer called to visit home~~; student may be banned from participating in any school-sponsored activity requiring them to miss classes;

- c) 20 days absent - letter to parents advising that PINS petition may be filed;
- d) 25 days absent - District will file PINS petition.

2. Middle School:

- a) 15 days absent - letter to parents advising that PINS petition may be filed; student may be banned from participating in any school-sponsored activity requiring them to miss classes;
- b) 20 days absent - District will file PINS petition.

3. High School:

School attendance and class participation lead to student competency and are essential to a comprehensive educational program. For this reason the Averill Park High School Attendance Policy takes into consideration participation as a component of the students grade. It is the philosophy of the faculty, administration, and the Board of Education that the active participation is an integral part of every course offered in the high school. Class participation shall be evaluated according to guidelines, which will be clearly stated to students by teachers at the beginning of each course. The minimum expectation is that students should be in attendance approximately 85% of the time to earn class credit. The Averill Park High School attendance regulation is compartmentalized into four “stages” as follows:

Stage I and Stage II:

When a student is identified as having an attendance problem according to the following table, the teacher will complete a Stage I letter or Stage II letter. A copy will be sent to the student’s parent/guardian, appropriate guidance counselor, and assistant principal by the main office.

<u>Stage I Criteria are:</u>		<u>Stage II Criteria are:</u>
Science Courses with Lab*:	10 absences	14 absences
Full Year Courses:	7 absences	11 absences
Semester Courses:	3 absences	7 absences
P.E. Courses:	3 absences	5 absences

\*A half-block science class counts as .5 of an absence for attendance purposes.

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In both the elementary and middle school environment, the District retains discretion whether or not to file a PINS petition. PINS petitions may be filed earlier than these guidelines if the situation warrants such action.

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This number is reduced to thirteen (13) periods for ½ year courses.

The counselor or the assistant principal will determine the need to meet with the student to review reasons for the absences and to determine which students to initiate strategies to improve class attendance. Strategies may include, but are not limited to, individual counseling sessions, attendance counseling groups, psychological referral and PINS (Person In Need of Supervision) diversion program.

Stage III:

When a student's attendance continues to be problematic according to the following table, the teacher will complete a Stage III form. A copy will be sent to the student's parent/guardian, appropriate guidance counselor, and assistant principal by the main office.

This Stage III letter is notification that the student is in danger of failing to meet the requirements of a particular course.

Stage III Criteria are:

Science Lab Courses:	20 absences
Full Year Courses:	14 absences
Semester Courses:	7 absences
P.E. Courses:	7 absences

This notification will state that in order to be eligible to receive course credit, the student will be responsible for contacting the teacher by the assigned date, fulfilling participation requirements and demonstrating competency according to departmental standards and guidelines.

The appropriate activities may be designed by the teacher or by the student with the approval of the teacher. The teacher will complete the "Stage III Activity Form" with copies given to the student, counselor and assistant principal. The grade for the satisfactory completion of these activities shall be averaged with the student's other grades for that quarter in the course in determining the student's grade.

Failure to satisfactorily complete these activities results in failure to complete the course requirement and, therefore, loss of course credit. If the student wishes to be eligible to retake the course in summer school, the student must remain in that course and satisfactorily participate for the duration of time during the school year when that class is scheduled to meet.

Stage IV:

When a student who has successfully completed Stage III accumulates additional absences according to the following table the student will be required to repeat Stage III.

Stage IV Criteria are:

Science Lab Courses:	+6 absences
Full Year Courses:	+4 absences
Semester Courses:	+2 absences
P.E. Courses:	+2 absences

The District retains discretion whether or not to file a PINS petition. PINS petitions may be filed earlier than these guidelines if the situation warrants such action.

- C. Course Credit. Cumulative absences in excess of twenty-five (25) periods of instruction for a full-year course or twenty-five (25) days of instruction in a non-departmentalized school may render a student ineligible to earn credit for the course or school year (“25” is reduced to “13” periods for ½ year courses). Parents will be notified according to the schedule set forth in ‘B’ above that their student’s receipt of course credit is in jeopardy. The District retains discretion to allow a student to perform make-up work for properly excused absences in order to avoid having the absence counted in a determination to deny course credit. The District retains discretion to evaluate a student’s attendance in light of academic performance and other indicators in deciding whether credit shall be denied.
- D. Unexcused tardiness and absences will also subject a student to the range of penalties specified in the District’s Code of Conduct.

VI. Development of an Attendance Intervention Strategy:

The Superintendent, through a committee of teachers, parents, and school administrators, will develop an attendance intervention strategy consistent with this policy in the event that regular reviews of the District’s attendance record suggests that overall student attendance is declining or should be improved.

VII. Policy Review and Assessment:

*This policy shall be annually reviewed by the Board of Education. If the attendance records show a decline in attendance, the Board shall revise this policy as is necessary to improve attendance.*

VIII. Distribution and Public Awareness:

- A. Public Meeting. This Policy shall be adopted only after it has been presented at a public meeting of the Board of Education, duly noticed, that provides for the participation of school personnel, parents, students, and any other interested persons.
- B. Plain Language Summary. The Superintendent shall create a plain language summary of this Policy which shall be distributed to parents and persons in parental relationship to all District students at the beginning of each school year by way of the district calendar which is mailed to each household. It will also be distributed at “Open House” in each school.
- C. Distribution to staff. Each teacher and administrator shall be provided with a copy of this policy upon adoption or subsequent amendment. Each new teacher or administrator shall be provided a copy of this policy upon employment.
- D. This policy shall be made available to any member of the community upon request.

Adopted: 06/25/02