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## District Regulation

### 5200 - ATTENDANCE (M)

Section: Students  
Date Created: August, 2015  
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#### M

##### A. Definitions

1. For the purposes of school **attendance**, a “day in session” shall be a day on which the school is open and students are under the guidance and direction of a teacher or teachers engaged in the teaching process. Days on which school is closed for such reasons as holidays, teachers’ institutes, and inclement weather shall not be considered as days in session
2. A “school day” shall consist of not less than four hours.
3. “A day of **attendance**” shall be one in which the student is present for a full day under the guidance and direction of a teacher while school is in session.
  - a. Whenever over-crowded conditions make it necessary to hold two separate sessions with a different group of students in each session, a student attending for all of either session shall be regarded as having attended for the full day. An excused absence for any reason shall not be counted as a day of **attendance** in the school register.
4. A “half-day class” shall be considered the equivalent of a full day’s **attendance** only if in session for four hours or more, exclusive of recess periods or lunch periods.

##### B. Attendance Recording

1. A record of the **attendance** of all students on roll in a school register shall be kept each day that school is in session by a teacher or other authorized person. It shall be the duty of this person to keep the **attendance** records according to these rules and the specific instruction issued by the Commissioner of Education.
2. No student shall be recorded as present unless the school is in session and the student so recorded is under the guidance and direction of a teacher in the teaching process.

3. A student shall be recorded as absent in the school register when not in **attendance** at a session of the school while a member of the school, except students excused due to religious holidays who shall be recorded as excused.
4. A student shall be recorded as either present, absent, or excused for religious observance, every day the school is in session after the student enters until the date the student is transferred to another school, transferred to an individual home instruction record, or officially leaves the school system.
5. The Commissioner shall annually prescribe a list of religious holidays on which it shall be mandatory to excuse students for religious observance upon the written request signed by the parent or person standing in loco parentis.
6. The mere presence of a student at roll call shall not be regarded as sufficient **attendance** for compliance with N.J.A.C. 6A:32-8.3. In a school which is in session during both the forenoon and the afternoon, a student shall be present at least one hour during both the forenoon and the afternoon in order to be recorded as present for the full day.
7. A student not present in school because of his/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**.

C. Unexcused Absences That Count Toward Truancy/Excused Absences

1. "An unexcused absence that counts toward truancy" is a student's absence from school for a full or a portion of a day for any reason that is not an "excused absence" as defined below.
2. An "excused absence" is a student's absence from school for a full day or a portion of a day for the observance of a religious holiday pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:36-14 through 16 or any absence for the reasons listed below:
  - a. The student's illness supported by required documentation stated below.
    - (1) Grades 6-12 – as verified by a physician's note
    - (2) Grades 3-5 – seven (7) absences with a note from a parent/guardian or physician. Any absences beyond seven (7) must be verified by a physician's note.
    - (3) Grades K-2 – ten (10) absences with a note from a parent/guardian or physician. Any absences beyond ten (10) must be verified by a physician's note.

- b. The student's required **attendance** in court,
- c. 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,
- d. The student's suspension from school,
- e. Family illness or death supported by a written letter from parent upon the student's return to school;
- f. Visits to post-secondary educational institutions;
- g. Interviews with a prospective employer or with an admissions officer of an institution of higher education,
- h. Examination for a driver's license,
- i. Necessary and unavoidable medical or dental appointments that cannot be scheduled at a time other than the school day,
- j. Take Our Children to Work Day
- k. An absence considered excused by a New Jersey Department of Education rule;
- l. An absence for a reason not listed above, but deemed by the principal, upon a written request by the student's parent/guardian stating the reason for the absence and requesting permission for the absence to be an excused absence.

3. "Truancy" means ten or more cumulative unexcused absences that count toward truancy of a student between the ages of six and sixteen as determined by the Board's **Attendance** Policy and Regulation pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:16-7.6(a)4.iii., and the definition of school day pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:32-8.3. Any absence not listed above shall be an unexcused absence counted towards truancy.

4. Unexcused tardiness in the number established by Policy 5240 Tardiness, three unexcused tardy will constitute a single unexcused absence.

D. Notice to School of a Student's Absence

- 1. The parent/-guardian or adult student or an adult student is requested to call the school office before 9:00 a.m. of the morning of the student's absence.

2. The parent/guardian of a student or an adult student who will attend the morning session but will not attend the afternoon session should call or provide notice to the school office before 12:00 p.m. to give notice of the student's absence.
3. The parent/guardian or adult student who anticipates a future absence or anticipates that an absence will be prolonged should notify the office to arrange make-up work.

E. Readmission to School After an Absence

1. A student returning from an absence of any length of time must provide office a written statement that is dated and signed by the parent/guardian or adult student, listing the reasons for the absence.
2. A note explaining a student's absence for non-communicable illness for a period of more than three (3) school days must be accompanied by a physician's statement of the student's illness with medical clearance to return to school.
3. A student who has been absent by reason of having or being suspected of having a communicable disease must present to the nurse's office written evidence of being free of communicable disease, in accordance with Policy 8451 Control of Communicable Disease.

F. Instruction

1. Teachers shall cooperate in the preparation of home assignments for students who anticipate an excused absence of more than three (3) school days duration. The parent/guardian or adult student must request such home assignments.
2. A student who anticipates an excused absence due to a temporary or chronic health condition may be eligible for home instruction in accordance with Policy 2412 Home Instruction. The parent/guardian or adult student must request home instruction.
3. Students absent for any reason are expected to make up the work missed. In grade one and above, the student is responsible for requesting missed assignments and any assistance required.
4. In general, students will be allowed two (2) days to make up missed work for each one day of absence.
5. A student who missed a test or exam shall be offered an opportunity to take the test, exam, or an appropriate alternate test.

G. Denial of Course Credit

1. The teacher will determine the credit to be awarded a student for make-up work. Where class participation is a factor in the learning process, the teacher may consider a student's absences in determining a final grade, except absences for the observance of a religious holiday or absence for a student's suspension from school will not adversely affect the student's grade. The teacher may record an incomplete grade for a student who has not had full opportunity to make up missed work.
2. A secondary student will not be granted credit in a class after exceeding sixteen (16) unexcused absences or 32 absences of any type (unexcused/excused). This also applies to Vo-Tech students who attend classes scheduled outside the high school. For a semester course a student will lose credit after exceeding eight (8) unexcused absences or 16 absences of any type (unexcused/excused). For a marking period course a student will lose credit after exceeding four (4) unexcused absences. A student will remain in a class after exceeding the limits noted above. The report card and permanent record will indicate the grade earned in the course as well as "L/C (loss of course credit – excessive absences)". Parents and students will be notified of unexcused absences after 4, 8, 12 and 16 days and total absences after 25 and 32 days. Appeals for exceptions to loss of course credit for excessive unexcused absences due to extenuating circumstances must be made to the principal within two weeks of receipt of the letter.
3. An elementary student will be retained at grade level, in accordance with Policy 5410 Promotion and Retention, when he/she has been absent thirty (30) or more school days, whatever the reason for the absence, except that excused absences and absences due to a student's suspension will not count toward the total. Exceptions to this rule may be made for students who have demonstrated through completion of home assignments and/or home instruction that they have mastered the proficiencies established for the assigned courses of study.

H. School District Response to Unexcused Absences That Count Toward Truancy During the School Year

1. For up to four cumulative unexcused absences that count toward truancy, the Principal or designee shall:
  - a. Make a reasonable attempt to notify the student's parent of each unexcused absence prior to the start of the following school day;
  - b. Make a reasonable attempt to determine the cause of the unexcused absence, including through contact with the student's parent/guardian;
  - c. Identify in consultation with the student's parent/guardian needed action designed to address

patterns of unexcused absences, if any, and to have the child return to school and maintain regular **attendance**;

- d. Proceed in accordance with the provisions of N.J.S.A. 9:6-1 et seq. and N.J.A.C. 6A:16-10, if a potentially missing or abused child situation is detected; and
- e. Cooperate with law enforcement and other authorities and agencies, as appropriate.

2. For between five and nine cumulative unexcused absences that count toward truancy, the Principal or designee shall:

- a. Make a reasonable attempt to notify the student's parent/guardian of each unexcused absence prior to the start of the following school day;
- b. Make a reasonable attempt to determine the cause of the unexcused absence, including through contact with the student's parent/guardian;
- c. Evaluate the appropriateness of action taken pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:16-7.6(a)4.i.(3) and H.1.c. above;
- d. Develop an action plan to establish outcomes based upon the student's patterns of unexcused absences and to specify the interventions for supporting the student's return to school and regular **attendance** which may include any or all of the following:
  - (1) Refer or consult with the building's Intervention and Referral Services Team, pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:16-8;
  - (2) Conduct testing, assessments, or evaluations of the student's academic, behavioral, and health needs;
  - (3) Consider an alternate educational placement;
  - (4) Make a referral to or coordinate with a community-based social and health provider agency or other community resource;
  - (5) Refer to a court or court program pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:16-7.6(a)4.iv. and H.4 below;
  - (6) Proceed in accordance with N.J.S.A. 9:6-1 et seq. and N.J.A.C. 6A:16-10, if a potential missing or abused child situation is detected; and
  - (7) Engage the student's family.

- e. Cooperate with law enforcement and other authorities and agencies, as appropriate.
3. For ten or more cumulative unexcused absences that count toward truancy a student between the ages of six and sixteen is truant, pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:38-25, and the Principal or designee shall:
    - a. Make a determination regarding the need for a court referral for the truancy, per N.J.A.C. 6A:16-7.6(a)4.iv. and H.4 below;
    - b. Continue to consult with the parent/guardian and the involved agencies to support the student's return to school and regular **attendance**;
    - c. Cooperate with law enforcement and other authorities and agencies, as appropriate; and
    - d. Proceed in accordance with N.J.S.A. 18A:38-28 through 31, Article 3B, Compelling **Attendance** at School, and other applicable State and Federal statutes, as required.
  4. A court referral may be made as follows:
    - a. When unexcused absences that count toward truancy are determined by school officials to be violations of the compulsory education law, pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:38-25, and the Board of Education's policies, in accordance with N.J.A.C. 6A:16-7.6(a), the parent may be referred to Municipal Court.
      - (1) A written report of the actions the school has taken regarding the student's **attendance** shall be forwarded to the Municipal Court; or
    - b. When there is evidence of a juvenile-family crisis, pursuant to N.J.S.A. 2A:4A-22.g, the student may be referred to Superior Court, Chancery Division, Family Part.
      - (1) A written report of the actions the school has taken regarding the student's **attendance** shall be forwarded to the Juvenile-Family Crisis Intervention Unit.
  5. For a student with a disability, the **attendance** plan and its punitive and remedial procedures; shall be applied, where applicable, in accordance with the student's IEP, pursuant to 20 U.S.C. §§ 1400 et seq., the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act; the procedural protections set forth in N.J.A.C. 6A:14; accommodation plans under 29 U.S.C. §§794 and 705(20); and individualized health care plan and individualized

emergency healthcare plan pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:16-2.3(b)5.xii.

6. All receiving schools pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:14-7.1(a), shall act in accordance with N.J.A.C. 6A:16-7.6(a) and H.58 above for each student with up to four cumulative unexcused absences that count toward truancy.

a. For each student attending a receiving school with five or more cumulative unexcused absences that count toward truancy, the absences shall be reported to the sending school district:

(1) The sending school district shall proceed in accordance with the Board of Education's policies and procedures pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:16-7.6(a)4.ii through iv. And H.2 through H.5 above, as appropriate.

#### I. Discipline

1. Students may be denied participation in co-curricular activities if the Board establishes **attendance** standards for participation.
2. Students may be denied participation in athletic competition if the Board establishes **attendance** standards for participation.
3. 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.

#### J. Recording Attendance

1. Teachers must accurately record the students present, tardy, or 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.
2. A record shall be maintained of each excused absence; and each unexcused absence that counts towards truancy as defined in Policy and Regulation 5200.
3. A report card will record the number of times the student was absent and tardy in each marking period.
4. A student's absence for observance of a religious holiday will not be recorded as such on any transcript or application or employment form.

#### K. Appeal

1. Students may be subject to appropriate discipline for their school **attendance** record.



2. A student who has been retained at grade level for excessive absences may appeal that action in accordance with Policy 5410.
3. A student who has been dropped from a course and/or denied course credit for excessive absences may appeal that action in accordance with the following procedures:
  - a. The student shall file a written appeal to the Principal or designee within five school days of receiving notice of the action. The appeal should state the reasons for each absence, any documentation that may support reducing the number of absences for the purposes of course credit, and reasons why the student should either continue to be enrolled in the course or receive course credit for a class the student completed.
  - b. The Principal or designee will respond in writing no later than seven working days after receiving the student's appeal.
  - c. If the student is not satisfied, he/she may submit a written request to the Principal for consideration by an **Attendance Review Committee**.
  - d. On a student's request for consideration by an **Attendance Review Committee**, the Principal shall convene an **Attendance Review Committee**. The **Attendance Review Committee** shall meet informally to hear student's appeal. The student's parent/guardian and teacher(s) may attend the meeting.
  - e. The **Attendance Review Committee** shall decide the appeal and inform the student in writing within seven school days of the meeting.
  - f. The student may appeal an adverse decision of the **Attendance Review Committee** to the Superintendent, the Board of Education, and the Commissioner of Education in accordance with Policy 5710 Pupil Grievance and N.J.S.A. 18A. An appeal to the **Attendance Review Committee** shall be considered to have exhausted the first two steps of the grievance procedure outlined in Policy 5710.

L. **Attendance Records Plan**

1. **Attendance** records for the school district and each school will be maintained and **attendance** rates will be calculated as required by the New Jersey Department of Education. The school district will comply with all **attendance** requirements and any improvement plans as required by the Department of Education.

Adopted: 21 August 2015

