

5200 ATTENDANCE (M)

M

A. Definitions

1. "Attendance" is a pupil's presence in school and in the classroom to which he/she is assigned at the times scheduled for instruction or other school activities.
 - a. A pupil in grades Kindergarten through eight must be present at least one hour during the morning session and at least one hour during the afternoon session to be considered a full day. Additionally, he/she must be in school four or more hours of actual class time. To be considered present for one-half day, a pupil must be present as least one hour during the morning session or one hour during the afternoon session. The a.m. session and p.m. session are determined by the start time of the grade level lunch period.
 - b. A pupil in preschool must be present at least two hours to be recorded as a full day.
 - c. A pupil in grades preschool (a.m.) through eight must arrive by 8:30 a.m. Any pupil who arrives after 8:45 a.m. will be marked tardy. The teachers and administration will notify the parent(s) or legal guardian(s) when tardiness becomes an issue.
 - d. A pupil in p.m. preschool must arrive by 12:30 p.m. Any p.m. preschool pupil who arrives after 12:35 p.m. will be marked tardy. The teachers and administration will notify the parent(s) or legal guardian(s) when tardiness becomes an issue.
 - e. A pupil not present in school because of his/her participation in an approved school activity, such as a field trip, cooperative education assignment, or athletic/academic competition will be considered to be in attendance.
2. "Excused absence" is a pupil's absence from school for a full day or a portion of a day for one or more of the following reasons if an absence



note (see 3.a. below) from the parent(s) or legal guardian(s) is received by school personnel within four days after the pupil returns to school.

- a. The pupil's illness;
 - b. Death in the pupil's immediate family or a relative that has resided in the pupil's household for longer than two years;
 - c. Excused religious observances, pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:36-14 through 16;
 - d. 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;
 - e. The pupil's suspension from school;
 - f. The pupil's required attendance in court.
3. "Unexcused absence" is a pupil's absence for all or part of a school day for any reason other than those listed in A.2. above.

- a. Absence Notes:

Pupils are required to present an absent note from their parent(s) or legal guardian(s) after each and every absence explaining why the pupil was absent from school. If applicable, doctor's notes, court appearance notes, etc. should accompany the parent(s) or legal guardian(s) note.

If an absence note is not received by school personnel within four days after the pupil returns to school, the absence will be considered unexcused. Absence notes not providing acceptable explanations will cause the absence to be considered unexcused. The school administration reserves the right to require official medical notes and legal documentation in cases where excessive pupil absences occur.

- b. Vacations:



Pupils are not to be excused for vacations that are not listed on the school calendar.

c. Make-Up Work:

Pupils are to be provided with the opportunity to complete assignments missed because of their absence(s), as well as receive full (earned) credit for the work. The time allowed to make up work missed is to be equal to the amount of time absent. Work not made up within this time will receive partial and/or zero credit. It will be accepted and evaluated by the teacher. Assignments and tests announced prior to the absence are due by the second day of the pupil's return to school or at the teacher's discretion.

4. "Truancy" is a pupil's absence from all or a part of the school day without the knowledge of the pupil's parent(s) or legal guardian(s). A pupil will also be considered truant if he/she:
- a. Leaves school without permission at any time when school is in session;
 - b. Leaves class because of illness and does not report to the school nurse as directed; or
 - c. Is present in school but is absent from class without approval. Such truancy from class is considered a "class cut."

B. Notice to School of a Pupil's Absence

1. The parent(s) or legal guardian(s) of a pupil is required to call the school office before 9:00 a.m. of the morning of the pupil's absence.
2. The parent(s) or legal guardian(s) of a pupil who anticipates that an absence will be prolonged should notify the classroom teacher or the Assistant Principal, who will assist in the arrangement of make-up work.

C. Re-admission to School After an Absence



1. Pupils are required to present an absent note from their parent(s) or legal guardian(s) after each and every absence explaining why the pupil was absent from school. If applicable, doctor's notes, court appearance notes, etc. should accompany the parent(s) or legal guardian(s) note.
 2. If a pupil is absent for five consecutive school days or longer due to a non-communicable illness, a doctor's note describing the illness and the pupil's satisfactory recovery must accompany the parent(s) or legal guardian(s) absence note upon the pupil's return to school.
 3. A pupil who has been absent by reason of having or being suspected of having a communicable disease must present to the school nurse written evidence from the pupil's physician of being free of communicable disease, in accordance with Board policy.
 4. A pupil will be retained at grade level, in accordance with Board policy, when he/she has accumulated twenty-five or more absent school days, whatever the reason(s) for the absences. However, absences for the observances of religious holidays and absences occurring during a pupil's suspension will not count toward the total. Administration will take into consideration any pupils whose absences are excused and 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.
- D. Appeal Process for a Pupil that is being Retained Due to Accumulating Twenty-five or More Days Absent From School
1. A truant pupil may be suspended or expelled for trancies.
 2. A pupil who has been retained at grade level for excessive absences may appeal that action, in writing, to the Superintendent/Principal, by following the procedures listed below.
 - a. The pupil shall file a written appeal to the Assistant Principal within five school days of receiving notice of the action. The appeal should state the reasons for admitted absences, documentation that would reduce the number of absences, and reasons why the pupil should proceed to the next grade level.



- b. The Assistant Principal will respond in writing no later than seven working days after receiving the pupil's appeal.
 - c. If the pupil is not satisfied, he/she may submit a written request to the Superintendent/Principal for consideration by an Attendance Review Committee.
 - d. Upon the pupil's request, the Superintendent/Principal shall convene an Attendance Review Committee. The Attendance Review Committee shall meet informally to hear the pupil's reasons for proceeding to the next grade level. The pupil's parent(s) or legal guardian(s) and teacher may attend the meeting.
 - e. The Attendance Review Committee shall decide the appeal and inform the pupil in writing within seven working days of the meeting. The committee may impose conditions on proceeding to the next grade level and may require the pupil to agree to those conditions.
 - f. The pupil may appeal an adverse decision of the Attendance Review Committee to the Superintendent/Principal, the Clementon Board of Education, and the Commissioner of Education, in that order and in accordance with Board policy, Pupil Grievance. Resorting to the Attendance Review Committee shall be considered to have exhausted the first step of the grievance.
- E. School District Response to Unexcused Absences During the School Year
- 1. For up to four cumulative unexcused absences, the building principal, or designee shall:
 - a. Make a reasonable attempt to notify the pupil's parent(s) or legal guardian(s) of each unexcused absence prior to the start of the following school day;
 - b. Conduct an investigation of the cause of each unexcused absence, including contact with the pupil's parent(s) or legal guardian(s);
 - c. Develop an action plan in consultation with the pupil's parent(s) or legal guardian(s) designed to address the patterns of unexcused



absences, if any, and to have the pupil 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:16-11, if a potentially missing or child abuse 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, the Superintendent/Principal, or designee, shall:
- a. Make a reasonable attempt to notify the pupil's parent(s) or legal guardian(s) of each unexcused absence prior to the start of the following school day;
 - b. Conduct a follow-up investigation, including contact with the pupil's parent(s) or legal guardian(s), to determine the cause of each unexcused absence;
 - c. Evaluate the appropriateness of the action plan developed pursuant to F.1.c. above;
 - d. Revise the action plan, as needed, to identify patterns of unexcused absences and establish outcomes based upon the pupil's needs and specify the interventions for achieving the outcomes, supporting the pupil's return to school and regular attendance that 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 pupil's academic, behavioral, and health needs;
 - (3) Consider an alternate educational placement;
 - (4) Make a referral to a community-based social and health provider agency or other community resource;



- (5) Refer to the court program designated by the New Jersey Administrative Office of the Courts; and
 - (6) Proceed in accordance with the provisions of N.J.S.A. 9:6 et seq. and N.J.A.C. 6A:16-11, if a potentially missing or child abuse situation is detected.
 - e. Cooperate with law enforcement and other authorities and agencies, as appropriate.
3. For cumulative unexcused absences of ten or more, the pupil between the ages of six and sixteen is truant, pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:38-27, and the Superintendent/Principal or designee shall:
 - a. Make a mandatory referral to the court program required by the New Jersey Administrative Office of the Courts;
 - b. Make a reasonable attempt to notify the pupil's parent(s) or legal guardian(s) of the mandatory referral;
 - c. Continue to consult with the parent or legal guardian and the involved agencies to support the pupil's return to school and regular attendance;
 - d. Cooperate with law enforcement and other authorities and agencies, as appropriate; and
 - e. 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. For pupils with disabilities, the attendance plan and punitive and remedial procedures of N.J.A.C. 6A:16-7.8 and Policy and Regulation 5200 shall be applied, where applicable, in accordance with the pupil's Individualized Education Programs, pursuant to 20 U.S.C. §1400 et seq.; the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement 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 plans, pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:16-2.3.



5. All receiving schools pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:14-7.1(a) shall act in accordance with E.1. above for each pupil with up to four cumulative unexcused absences.
 - a. For each pupil attending a receiving school with five or more cumulative unexcused absences, the absences shall be reported to the sending district by the receiving school.
 - (1) The sending school district shall proceed in accordance with the district Board of Education policies and procedures pursuant to E. above and the provisions of E.2. through F.4. above, as appropriate.

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