

***Required Policy**

SUBJECT: ATTENDANCE POLICY

Education Law in the State of New York requires all children between the ages of 6 and 16 to be in attendance whenever school is in session.

Philosophy and Objectives

The Auburn Enlarged City School District's philosophy of attendance is based on the principle that students who are in school every day perform at a higher academic level. The goal of the Auburn Enlarged City School District's attendance policy is to enable parents/guardians, school staff, and community to work together to encourage daily attendance and punctuality to maximize student achievement, potential, and safety.

All students are expected to strive for 100% daily attendance.

The Objectives of the Attendance Policy are as follows:

1. To verify that individual students are complying with compulsory education laws concerning school attendance.
2. To track students' whereabouts during school hours for safety and school management reasons.
3. To identify and address attendance patterns.
4. To use attendance data to aid in developing interventions to help close the gap in student performance.
5. To accurately determine the district's average daily attendance for State Aid purposes.

Strategies to Meet Objectives

The School District will:

- a) Track and maintain the attendance, absence, tardiness and early departure of every student.
- b) Develop early intervention strategies to improve school attendance.
- c) Develop incentives for daily attendance at the building level.
- d) Inform and educate district staff and families about the Attendance Policy through the faculty orientation, student handbook, the district website, the newsletter, appropriate meeting venues, and plan periodic updates as needed.
- e) Review the district's attendance records and attendance policy on an annual basis, prior to the start of the new school year, and report recommendations to the School Board.

6. Carry out Disciplinary Interventions prior to attendance falling below an acceptable level.

(Continued)

2006

7210

2 of 5

Students

SUBJECT: ATTENDANCE POLICY (con't)

Definitions and Coding

An absence is recorded for each occasion that a student is not present for a scheduled class. Not included are cases such as a school assembly, music lesson, or other building administrator-approved absence. Students serving in-school suspension are not to be counted absent for the purpose of this policy.

The only excused absences or reasons for tardiness are:

1. Illness of student
2. Illness or death in family
3. Severe weather conditions
4. Religious observance
5. Required court appearance
6. Health care visit to clinic or physician
7. Approved college visit
8. Military obligation
9. Building-administrator approved absences

Unexcused absences

All reasons other than the ones noted above are considered unexcused and must be so noted on the student's attendance record.

Tardiness

A student is tardy if he/she is late for school or for class.

Early dismissal

An early dismissal occurs when a student is excused from school with parental permission before the end of the regular school day.

(Continued)

2006 7210
 3 of 5

Students

SUBJECT: ATTENDANCE POLICY (con't)

Coding System

The following symbols are used for the recording of school and classroom attendance:

a) School Attendance

1. Unexcused = U
2. Excused = A
3. Tardy = T
4. Unexcused Tardy = V
5. Early Dismissal = D

b) Classroom Attendance

1. Present = P (Present for at least 2/3 of class period)
2. Tardy = T
3. Absent = U

Attendance and Course Credit

A student's grade is based on classroom participation as well as performance on homework, tests, papers, projects (written and oral), group work, and similar exercises. Students' performance will be fully communicated to parents/guardians. Students are expected to attend all scheduled classes. When a student's daily attendance rate falls below 85%, or approximately 4 absences per marking period, interventions will occur.

- a) To receive credit for a course in grades 9-12, a student must have a passing final average and take a final exam, where required.
- b) Students must attend a minimum of 85% of the scheduled class/program times. For full year classes, a student may be denied course credit if the absences number twenty-eight (28) or more days.

- c) For classes meeting for one-half year, or every other day for a full year, a student may be denied course credit if the absences number fourteen (14) or more days.
- d) This will not be applied to students engaged in alternative education programs.

(Continued)

2006 7210
4 of 5

Students

SUBJECT: ATTENDANCE POLICY (con't)

- d) The following communication to parents/guardians will occur for school absences at all levels and for classroom absences at the secondary level:
 - 1 – First notification - 7 days absent
 - 2 – Second notification - 14 days absent
 - 3 – Third notification - 21 days absent
 - 4 – Fourth notification - 28 days absent

Intervention Strategy Process

Schools within the district will create incentives to encourage high attendance, and develop a positive school building culture with strong adult role models, and value placed on respectful and nurturing interactions between adults and students. Each school will foster a climate that will encourage increased attendance.

- a) When there is an identified pattern of unexcused absences, tardiness, or early departures, the following actions will occur:
- b) A meeting of the principal, counselor, teacher, parent/guardian, and others as deemed necessary, will occur.
- c) The principal, or his/her designee, is responsible for administering appropriate sanctions for excessive absences, tardiness, or early dismissals.

d) Any parent/guardian wishing to appeal denial of course credit should contact the building principal.

Disciplinary Consequences

Unexcused absences, tardiness or early departures will result in disciplinary action consistent with the student's attendance record. Parent conferences or principal hearings, in-school suspension/detention, denied participation in school activities, loss of parking and other student privileges, loss of course credit, and possible legal actions as appropriate may result.

In order to participate in after-school activities a student must be present in school for at least one half of that school day and attend all classes during that time. Students who provide an excused absence, as listed in Definitions, will be allowed to participate.

(Continued)

2006 7210
 5 of 5

Students

SUBJECT: ATTENDANCE POLICY (con't)

Teacher Responsibilities

- a) The records of the teacher for the class will be the official attendance record.
- b) Students will be given the opportunity to make up classroom absences. Such opportunity will be determined by the teacher on an individual basis. It is expected that teachers will provide opportunities for class make-ups. All class make-ups will be decided by the teacher who may consult with the principal in appropriate circumstances. Students must arrange to make up a missed class within one (1) week of the absence. Failure to do so may make it impossible for the student to get attendance credit for the missed class.

Parent/Guardian Communication

Parent/teacher communication is a high priority.

- a) For safety reasons, parents/guardians should call the school when they know their children will be absent, using the designated phone number and voice mail. Voice mail access is available 24 hours a day.
- b) A written, verbal (face-to-face), phone call, e-mail, or text message excuse from a parent/guardian should be received on the date of the child's return to school; must be received no later than five days of return to school. If no excuse is provided as required, the absence(s) will be coded as unexcused on the school record.
- c) Parents/guardians are required to provide the school with current addresses, telephone numbers, and emergency contacts at the beginning of each year. If this information changes, parents/guardians should contact the school immediately.

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First Reading 8/12/2008
BOE Adopted: 8/26/2008
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