

**ATTENDANCE POLICY****Absences**

The board requires that school-aged children enrolled in the District attend school in accordance with all applicable state laws and Board policies. The educational program offered by the District is predicated upon the presence of the student and requires continuity of instruction and classroom participation in order for students to achieve academic standards and consistent classroom educational progress.

Attendance shall be required of all students enrolled in the school District during the days and hours that school is in session. The Board considers the following to be excused absences:

1. Illness
2. Recovery from an accident
3. Required court attendance
4. Medical and dental appointments
5. Bereavement
6. Religious holiday
7. Absence excused by an administrator (e.g. adoption, family illness), or permitted by law

Any absence that has not been excused for one of the reasons listed above will be considered an unexcused absence.

In the event of an illness, parents must call and inform the school. For other excused absences, parents must provide written notice or a written excuse that states one of the reasons for non-attendance. The Principal or his/her designee may require parents to provide additional documentation in support of their written notice, including, but not limited to doctor's notes, court documents, obituaries, or other documents supporting the claimed reason for non-attendance.

The Principal or his/her designee may excuse a student for absences when receiving satisfactory evidence of conditions or reasons that may likely cause the student's absence. If parents wish for their child(ren) to be absent for a reason not listed above, the parents must provide a written explanation of the reason for that absence, including why and for how long the student will be absent. The Principal or his/her designee will make a determination whether the stated reason for the student's absence constitutes good cause and will notify the parents in writing of his/her decision. If the Principal or his/her designee determines that good cause does not exist, the parents may request a conference with the Principal or his/her designee to again explain the reasons for non-attendance. The Principal or his/her designee may then reconsider the initial determination.

## ATTENDANCE POLICY (continued)

### **Family Trips/Educational Opportunities**

The school Principal or his/her designee may also grant an excused absence for family trips, under the following conditions:

- Parents are required to provide, in writing, a note to the Principal at least two weeks prior to the trip explaining the reason for the absence, including why and for how long the student will be absent due to the trip.
- The Principal must make a determination and will provide written notification of his/her decision to the parent in advance of the trip.

Please note that, even in the event of an excused absence due to a family trip, the report card must still reflect the absences.

### **Truancy**

Truancy is defined as any unexcused absence from class or school.

Ten half-days or five full days of unexcused absence during a school year constitute habitual truancy.

A half-day absence is defined as a student missing more than two hours of instructional time and less than three and one-half hours of instructional time.

Any absence of more than three and one-half hours of instructional time shall be considered a full-day absence.

The Principal or his/her designee or Truant Officer is hereby designated as a District employee responsible for overseeing truancy issues.

### **Developing and Coordinating Strategies for Truancy Reduction**

The Board encourages the administration to seek truancy-prevention and truancy-reduction strategies along with the recommendations listed below. The Superintendent is authorized to develop and utilize other means, guidelines and programs aimed at preventing and reducing truancy.

1. Coordinate truancy-prevention strategies based on the early identification of truancy, such as prompt notification of absences to parents/guardians.
2. Assist school staff in developing site-based attendance teams.

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3. Encourage and coordinate the adoption of attendance-incentive programs at school sites on an individual basis as a targeted intervention that rewards and celebrates good attendance and significant improvements in attendance.

**Intervention Process to Address Truancy**

The Principal or his/her designee shall ensure that the administrative guidelines on attendance properly address the matter of truancy by utilizing a building attendance team whose role is to identify students who are habitually truant as defined above.

When the Principal or his/her designee identifies a student who is habitually truant or who is in danger of becoming habitually truant, he/she shall commence a tiered intervention with the student, the student's parents, and other staff members as may be deemed necessary. The tiered intervention shall be comprised of processes including, but not limited to:

1. Investigate the cause(s) of the student's truant behavior;
2. Consider, when appropriate, modification of the student's educational program to meet particular needs that may be causing the truancy;
3. Involve the parents/guardians in the development of a plan designed to reduce the truancy;
4. Seek alternative disciplinary measures, but still retain the right to impose discipline in accordance with the District's policies and administrative guidelines on student discipline.

**Parent/Guardian Involvement in Truancy Intervention**

When a student reaches habitual truancy status or is in danger of reaching habitual truancy status, the Principal or his/her designee will send the student's parent/guardian a letter which includes:

1. A statement that the student has become or is in danger of becoming habitually truant;
2. A statement of the parent's/guardian's responsibility to ensure that the student attends school; and
3. A request for a meeting between the parents/guardians and the Principal or his/her designee to discuss the student's truancy and develop a plan for reducing the student's truancy.

**Parent/Guardian Notification of Truancy Policy**

The Superintendent shall ensure that this policy is included in or referenced in the parent/student handbook and is communicated to parents/guardians annually at the beginning of each school year.

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**Legal References:**

RSA 189:34, Appointment

RSA 189:35-a, Truancy Defined

RSA 193:1, Duty of Parent: Compulsory Attendance by Pupil

RSA 193:7, School Attendance: Penalty

RSA 193:8, Notice Requirements

RSA 193:16, Bylaws as to Nonattendance

NH Code of Administrative Rules, Section Ed 306.04 (a)(1)

NH Code of Administrative Rules, Section Ed 306.04 (c), Policy Relative to  
Attendance and Absentee

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2<sup>nd</sup> Review: July 16, 2012

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