

ATTENDANCE

The Bethlehem Central School District (the District) and the Board of Education (the Board) recognize that regular school attendance is a major component of academic success. Through implementation of this policy, the Board expects to minimize the number of unexcused absences, tardiness, and early departures (referred to in this policy as “ATEDs”); encourage full attendance by all students; maintain an adequate attendance recordkeeping system; identify patterns of student ATEDs; and develop effective intervention strategies to improve school attendance.

Objectives

Through implementation of this policy, the Board expects:

1. to encourage full attendance by all students;
2. to accurately track the attendance, absence, tardiness, and early departure of students to and from the school;
3. to ensure sufficient pupil attendance in classes so that pupils may achieve state-mandated education standards; and
4. to track student location for safety reasons and to be accountable to parents regarding the location of children during school hours.

Notice

To be successful in this endeavor, it is imperative that all members of the school community are aware of this policy, its purposes, procedures, and the consequences of noncompliance. To ensure that students, parents, teachers and administrators are notified of and understand this policy, the following procedures shall be implemented.

1. The attendance policy will be included in student handbooks and will be reviewed with students at the start of the school year.
2. Parents will receive a plain language summary of this policy at the start of the school year.
3. When a student cuts class or is absent without excuse, designated staff members will notify the student’s parent(s)/guardian(s) and review the attendance procedures with them.
4. School publications will include periodic reminders of the components of this policy.
5. The District will provide a copy of the attendance policy and any amendments thereto to faculty and staff. New staff will receive a copy upon their employment.
6. All faculty and staff will meet at the beginning of each school year to review the attendance policy in order to clarify individual roles in its implementation.
7. Copies of this policy will also be made available to any community member, upon request.

Register of Attendance

Every school is required to take attendance and record each pupil’s presence, absence, tardiness, or early departure, and whether such is excused or unexcused in the following manner:

1. In nondepartmentalized grades, attendance must be taken once a day.
2. If students are released from school grounds for lunch, attendance must be taken again after lunch.
3. In all other cases, attendance must be taken each period. Where a class extends for multiple periods, attendance for that class only must be taken once.
4. Additionally, after attendance is taken, an individual student’s late arrival or early departure must be recorded.
5. The building principal and/or designee will be responsible for reviewing pupil attendance records and initiating appropriate action to address unexcused pupil absence, tardiness, and early departure consistent with policy.

Excused and Unexcused Absences

Excused ATEDs are defined by the commissioner of Education as absences, tardiness, and early departures from class or school due to personal illness, illness or death in the family, impassable roads or weather, religious

observance, quarantine, required court appearances, attendance at health clinics, approved college visits, approved cooperative work programs, military obligations, or such other reasons as may be approved by the appropriate building administrator (including, but not limited to, absences due to circumstances related to homelessness).

All other ATEDs are considered unexcused absences.

All ATEDs must be accounted for. It is the parent(s)/guardian(s)'s responsibility to notify the school office within at least twenty-four hours of the ATED and to provide a written excuse upon the student's return to school. For homeless students, the homeless liaison will assist the student in providing or obtaining documentation if needed.

Coding System

The following coding system shall be used to indicate the nature and reason for a pupil missing all or part of scheduled instruction;

| CODE | DEFINITION |
|-------------|--------------------------|
| A | Absent, unexcused |
| AE | Absent, excused |
| D | Departure, unexcused |
| DE | Departure, excused |
| FT | Field Trip |
| HI | Home Instruction |
| ISS | In-School Suspension |
| LA | Late Arrival |
| OSS | Out-of-School Suspension |
| T | Tardy, unexcused |
| TE | Tardy, excused |

Next to the entry code, a reason will be selected for the student missing all or part of scheduled instruction.

Disciplinary Consequences

Unexcused ATEDs will result in disciplinary action consistent with the District's Code of Conduct. Students may also be denied the privilege of participating in or attending extracurricular events. However, absences related to homelessness shall not result in negative consequences where the District determines that it would be in the best interests of the student in retaining the student in school.

In addition, the building principal and/or designee will contact the student's parent(s)/guardian(s) and the student's guidance counselor. The building principal and/or designee shall remind parent(s)/guardian(s) of the attendance policy, explain the ramifications of unexcused ATEDs, stress the importance of class attendance, and discuss appropriate intervention strategies to correct the situation.

Attendance/Grade Policy

The Board of Education recognizes an important relationship between class attendance and student performance. Consequently, in each marking period a student's final grade may be based on classroom participation as well as a student's performance on homework, tests, papers, projects, etc.

Students are expected to attend all scheduled classes. Consistent with the importance of classroom participation, unexcused ATEDs will affect a student's class participation grade for the marking period.

Minimum Attendance for Course Credit

Student attendance and class participation are vital to successful learning. In order for students to be successful in school and be prepared to take all state-mandated assessments, they must attend classes every day.

Additionally, to ensure that parent(s)/guardian(s) and students are aware of the implications of this minimum attendance requirement, the teacher or other designated staff member(s) will take the following action:

Elementary:

| Absences | Action Taken |
|------------|---|
| 1-9 | Teacher maintains student's daily attendance record. Notification of student's absence to parent(s)/guardian(s) may be sent a letter from teacher/principal. |
| 10-15 | Teacher/principal may contact parent(s)/guardian(s) either by letter or phone call and request a parent(s)/guardian(s) meeting. A student attendance plan is developed with the parent(s)/guardian(s) by the fifteenth absence. Child Protective Services (CPS) may be contacted or a PINS (Person In Need of Supervision) petition may be filed by the school. |
| 16 or more | Based on the school administration's assessment of the student's attendance, Child Protective Services (CPS) may be contacted or a PINS (Person In Need of Supervision) petition may be filed by the school, if deemed appropriate. |

Middle School:

| Absences | Action Taken |
|------------|---|
| 1-9 | Teacher maintains student's daily attendance record. Notification of student's absence to parent(s)/guardian(s) may be sent a letter from teacher/principal. In addition, a parent/guardian will be notified for 3 or more consecutive unexcused absences, |
| 10-15 | Counselor/principal may contact parent(s)/guardian(s) either by letter or phone call and request a parent(s)/guardian(s) meeting. A student attendance plan is developed with the parent(s)/guardian(s) by the fifteenth absence. Child Protective Services (CPS) may be contacted or a PINS (Person In Need of Supervision) petition may be filed by the school. |
| 16 or more | Based on the school administration's assessment of the student's attendance, Child Protective Services (CPS) may be contacted or a PINS (Person In Need of Supervision) petition may be filed by the school, if deemed appropriate. |

High School:

For high school students, a minimum number of attendance days are required to earn credit in full-year and half-year courses. Unexcused student absences, in excess of thirty (30) class meetings for a full-year course and fifteen (15) class meetings for a semester course, may result in the loss of opportunity to take further exams and quizzes.

Electronic notifications of student absences to parents, school counselors and administration are automatically sent at five days, ten days, fifteen days, and beyond. District counselors and administration discuss strategies and interventions, when necessary, to address chronic tardiness and absenteeism on a continuous basis. Principal conferences are conducted if absences are impacting student success.

| Semester/Course | Full Year | Action to be Taken |
|-----------------|-----------|---|
| 5 | 10 | Teacher maintains student's class attendance record. Notification of student's absence to parent(s)/guardian(s) will be sent through the student's Aspen account. |
| 10 | 20 | Student is in jeopardy of losing the opportunity to complete exams and other course requirements. Teacher will notify parent(s)/guardian(s) of class absence via the Attendance Referral Form. The counselor and/or administrator may schedule a parent(s)/guardian(s) and student conference. |
| After 15 | After 30 | The teacher will contact the principal. A formal attendance review for all courses will be conducted. The principal will notify the student and parent(s)/guardian(s) of the course for which the opportunity to complete exams and other course testing requirements has been withheld. Student is eligible to receive only the grade received as of that date. If it is determined that the opportunity to complete exams and other course requirements has been withheld, the principal will notify the student and parent(s)/guardian(s). |

Annual Review

The Board shall annually review student attendance data and make any revisions to the policy it deems necessary to improve student attendance.

Cross ref: 4710, Grading Systems
5151, Homeless Children
5300, Code of Conduct

Ref: 42 USC §11432(g)(1)(I) (McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act)
Education Law §§1709; 3024; 3025; 3202; 3205-3213; 3225
8 NYCRR §§104.1; 175.6
Social Service Law §34-a

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