

**BOARD OF EDUCATION**  
Cherry Hill, New Jersey

**POLICY 5113**

**ATTENDANCE POLICY**

In order for the Board to fulfill its constitutional and statutory responsibility for providing a thorough and efficient education for each student, the complete cooperation of parents/guardians and students is required to maintain a high level of school attendance. The frequent absence of students from the classroom disrupts the continuity of the instructional process and limits the ability of students to complete the curriculum requirements successfully. A student must be in attendance for every day that school is in session.

For the purposes of this policy, “attendance” need not always be within the school facilities. A student will be considered to be in attendance if he/she is present at any place where school is in session by authority of the Board. The Board shall consider each student assigned to a program of independent study, with parent/guardian permission, to be in regular attendance for that program, provided that he/she is under the guidance of a staff member so assigned, reports daily or weekly, as prescribed, to such staff member the place in which he/she is conducting his/her study, and regularly demonstrates progress toward the objectives of his/her course of study.

Parents/guardians are responsible for notifying the school within the first hour of the regular school day when their child will be absent and for informing the school of the reason for the absence.

In High School there must be no more than 6 days missed from a semester high school course. A waiver of these attendance requirements may be granted for good cause by the school principal. In considering the granting of a waiver of this attendance requirement, the principal shall establish and consider the recommendations of an Attendance Review Panel. The Attendance Review Panel will make recommendations to the principal and consider the nature and causes of all absences rather than only those in excess of 12 days, academic achievement and other factors brought to their attention by the student, his parent or guardian. Documentation of the nature and causes of these absences shall be the responsibility of the student and parent/guardian. Any exclusion from a course or loss of credit for a given school year is subject to due process, which may include a hearing before the Board.

**Excused Absences**

The Board considers the following as cause for excused absences. For the purposes of this policy, “excused absence” is a student’s absences from school for a full day or a portion of a day for one or more of the following reasons:

1. The student’s illness;
2. Requirements of a student’s individual health care plan;
3. A death or critical illness in the student’s immediate family;
  
4. Religious observance--In accordance with statute, no student absent for religious observance of a day recognized by the Commissioner of Education or this Board shall be charged with an unexcused absence, deprived of an award or eligibility/opportunity to compete for an award, or of the right to take an alternate to a test or examination missed through such absence.
5. The student’s suspension from school;
6. Requirements of the student’s Individualized Education Program (IEP);
7. Alternate short or long term accommodations for students with disabilities;
8. The student’s required attendance in court;
9. Interviews with an admissions officer of an educational institution;
10. Necessary and unavoidable medical or dental appointments that cannot be scheduled at a time other than the school day;
  
11. Special permission from the New Jersey Department of Education (e.g.. Take Your Child to Work Day)
12. Such good cause as may be acceptable to the principal

### **Late Arrival and Early Dismissal**

The Board recognizes that from time to time compelling circumstances will require that a student be late to school or dismissed before the end of the school day. As agent responsible for the education of the children of this district, the Board shall require that the school be notified in advance of such absences by written request of the student's parent/guardian, which shall state the reason for the tardiness or early dismissal. Justifiable reasons may include:

- A. Medical or dental appointments which cannot be scheduled outside of school hours;
- B. Medical disability;
- C. Motor vehicle driver's test;
- D. Interview for college entrance or employment;
- E. Family emergency;
- F. Court appearance;
- G. Such good cause as may be acceptable to the principal

No student under the age of 16 shall be permitted to leave the school before the close of the school day unless he/she is met in the school office by his/her parent/guardian or a person authorized by the parent/guardian to act in his/her behalf.

Students arriving 10 minutes or more late and not covered by the causes listed above shall be considered absences, and may affect course credit.

### **Truancy**

The Board will report to appropriate authorities infractions of the law regarding the attendance of students below the age of 16. Repeated infractions by enrolled students over the age of 16 may result in the suspension or expulsion of the student.

## **Marking Missing Child's School Record**

Whenever the superintendent receives notice from the Missing Persons Unit that a child has been reported missing, he/she shall mark the child's records in such a way that whenever a copy of or information regarding the record is requested, district personnel will be aware that the record is that of a missing child. If a copy of a marked school record is requested, the superintendent shall supply the record to the requestor without alerting him/her to the fact that the record has been marked, according to provisions in code and statute on accessing student information. After the superintendent has complied with the request for copies of records or information, he/she shall immediately report the inquiry or any knowledge as to the whereabouts of the missing child to the Missing Persons Unit.

### ***Legal References:***

- N.J.S.A. 18A:35-4.9 requires Boards to adopt policies and procedures for promotion/remediation. Attendance is a logical standard in considering possible need for remediation/retention.*
- N.J.S.A. 18A:36-14, -15 and -16 govern student absences for religious observance; prohibit counting absence as unexcused if a proper written excuse is presented; prohibit depriving student of award or eligibility/opportunity to compete for an award, or of the right to take an alternate to a test or examination missed through such absence.*
- N.J.S.A. 18A:36-25 requires written policy on potentially missing children*
- N.J.S.A. 18A:38-26 Days when attendance required; exceptions*
- N.J.S.A. 18A:38-27 Truancy and juvenile delinquency defined*
- N.J.S.A. 18A:38-31 Violations of article by parents or guardians; penalties*
- N.J.S.A. 18A:38-32 District and county vocational school attendance officers*
- N.J.S.A. 18A:40-7 Exclusion of students who are ill*
- N.J.S.A. 18A:40-8 Exclusion of students whose presence is detrimental to health and cleanliness*
- N.J.S.A. 18A:40-10 Exclusion of teachers and students exposed to disease*
- N.J.S.A. 18A:40-11 Exclusion of students having communicable tuberculosis*
- N.J.S.A. 52:17B-9.8a through -9.8c Marking of missing child's school record*

*N.J.A.C. 6:8-3.1 Student attendance*

*N.J.A.C. 6:20-1.1 et seq. Attendance and Student Accounting*

*N.J.A.C. 6A:8-5.1 says that Boards must include student attendance requirements as one of the requirements for receiving a state-endorsed high school diploma. While legal requirements apparently apply only to secondary schools, Boards may appropriately set standards for elementary grades.*

*N.J.A.C. 6A:30-1.1 et seq. Evaluation of the Performance of School Districts*

*New Jersey State Board of Education Resolution, May 2, 1984, requires local Boards to adopt policy on academic eligibility for extracurricular activities. Must address grade point average, attendance requirements and course failure rate.*

*Wetherell v. Board of Education of Township of Burlington, 1978 S.L.D. 794*

*Wheatley v. Board of Education of City of Burlington, 1974 S.L.D. 851*

*C.R., on behalf of J.R., v. Board of Education of the Scotch Plains-Fanwood Regional School District, 1988 S.L.D. (June 22)*

**Related Procedures and Policy:**

Procedure C-14: High School Rank in Class

Procedure P-20: Pupils Who Intend to Withdraw from High School

Policy 6146: Graduation Requirements

Adopted: October 23, 2001

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