Comprehensive Student Attendance Policy 3190

**Statement of Overall Objectives**

School attendance is both a right and a responsibility. The School District is an active partner with students and parents in the task of ensuring that all students meet or exceed the New York State Learning Standards. Because the School District recognizes that consistent school attendance, academic success and school completion have a positive correlation, the School District will develop, review and, if necessary, revise a Comprehensive Student Attendance Policy to meet the following objectives:

A) To increase school completion for all students;

B) To raise student achievement and close gaps in student performance;

C) To identify attendance patterns in order to design attendance improvement efforts;

D) To know the whereabouts of every student for safety and other reasons;

E) To verify that individual students are complying with education laws relating to compulsory attendance;

F) To determine the District’s average daily attendance for State aid purposes.

**Description of Strategies to Meet Objectives**

The School District will:

A) Create and maintain a positive school building culture by fostering a positive physical and psychological environment where the presence of strong adult role models encourages respectful and nurturing interactions between adults and students. This positive school culture is aimed at encouraging a high level of student bonding to the school, which in turn should lead to increased attendance.

B) Develop a Comprehensive Student Attendance Policy based upon the recommendations of the Professional Learning Community Committee that includes representation from the teacher’s union, the administrative team, and staff members.

C) Maintain accurate recordkeeping via a Register of Attendance to record attendance, absence, tardiness or early departure of each student.

D) Utilize data analysis systems for tracking individual student attendance and individual and group trends in student attendance problems.

E) Develop early intervention strategies to improve school attendance for all students.

**Determination of Excused and Unexcused Absences, Tardiness and Early Departures**

Based upon our District’s education and community needs, values and priorities, the School District has determined that absences, tardiness and early departures will be considered excused or unexcused according to the following standards. See attached attendance code description.
A) **Excused:** An absence, tardiness or early departure may be excused if due to personal illness, illness or death in the family, impassable roads due to inclement weather, religious observance, quarantine, required court appearances, attendance at health clinics, approved college visits, obtaining learner's permit, road test, approved cooperative work programs, military obligations or other such reasons as may be approved by the Board of Education.

B) **Unexcused:** An absence, tardiness or early departure is considered unexcused if the reason for the lack of attendance does not fall into the above categories (e.g., family vacation, hunting, babysitting, haircut, oversleeping).

**Student Attendance Recordkeeping/Data Collection**

The record of each student’s presence, absence, tardiness and early departure shall be kept in a register of attendance in a manner consistent with Commissioner's Regulations. An absence, tardiness or early departure will be entered as "excused" or "unexcused" along with the District code for the reason.

*Attendance shall be taken and recorded in accordance with the following:*

A) For students in non-departmentalized kindergarten through grade five (i.e., self-contained classrooms and supervised group movement to other scheduled school activities such as physical education in the gym, assembly, etc.), such student’s presence or absence shall be recorded after the taking of attendance once per school day.

B) For students in grades six through twelve or in departmentalized schools at any grade level (i.e., students pass individually to different classes throughout the day), each student’s presence or absence shall be recorded after the taking of attendance in each period of scheduled instruction except that where students do not change classrooms for each period of scheduled instruction, attendance shall be taken in accordance with paragraph "a" above.

C) Any absence for a school day or portion thereof shall be recorded as excused or unexcused in accordance with the standards articulated in this policy.

D) In the event that a student at any instructional level from kindergarten through grade twelve arrives late for or departs early from scheduled instruction, such tardiness or early departure shall be recorded as excused or unexcused in accordance with the standards articulated in this policy.

A record shall be kept of each scheduled day of instruction during which the school is closed for all or part of the day because of extraordinary circumstances including adverse weather conditions, impairment of heating facilities, insufficiency of water supply, shortage of fuel, destruction of or damage to a school building, or such other cause as may be found satisfactory to the Commissioner of Education.

At the conclusion of each class period or school day, all attendance information shall be compiled and provided to the designated school personnel who are responsible for attendance. The nature of the absence, tardiness or early departure shall be coded on a student’s record in accordance with the established District/building procedures.

Attendance records shall also indicate the date when a student withdraws from enrollment or is dropped from enrollment in accordance with Education Law Section 3202(1-a).
**Student Attendance**

The District believes that classroom participation is related to and affects a student’s performance and grasp of the subject matter and, as such, is properly reflected in a student’s final grade. For purposes of this policy, classroom participation means that a student is in class and prepared to work.

Consequently, for each marking period a certain percentage of a student’s final grade will be based on classroom participation as well as the student’s performance on homework, tests, papers, projects, etc. as determined by the building administrator and/or classroom teacher.

Students are expected to attend all scheduled classes. Consistent with the importance of classroom participation, unexcused student absences, tardiness, and early departures will affect a student’s grade, including credit for classroom participation, for the marking period.  

**Incentives**

Each school, where administration deems appropriate, may develop positive student incentives to encourage good attendance. Likewise, the district may also choose to design and implement systems that acknowledge a student’s effort to maintain or improve school attendance.

**Examples of Incentives:**

A) Community donated gifts are given or raffled to students who meet attendance standards.
B) Students who meet the attendance standard can eat in a special area or with a special person in the school.
C) Field trip arranged for students who meet the attendance standards.
D) Participation in extra curricula activities for the students who meet attendance standards.
E) Recognition award for 100% attendance each term.
F) Students with perfect attendance selected to park in choice locations
G) Attendance record used when considering issuance of working papers.

**Notice of Students who are Absent, Tardy or Depart Early Without Proper Excuse**

A designated staff member shall notify by telephone the parent/person in parental relation to a student who is absent, tardy or departs early without proper excuse. The staff member shall explain the importance of good attendance and review key elements of the policy with parents related to student achievement. If the parent/person in parental relation cannot be reached by telephone, the staff member will provide such notification by mail. Further, the District’s Attendance Policy will be mailed to the parent/person in parental relation to promote awareness and help ensure compliance with the policy.

If deemed necessary by appropriate school officials, or if requested by the parent/person in parental relation, a school conference shall be scheduled between the parent/person in parental relation and appropriate staff members in order to address the student’s attendance. The student may also be requested to attend this conference in order to address appropriate intervention strategies that best meet the needs of the student.
Disciplinary Consequences

Unexcused absences, tardiness and early departures will result in disciplinary sanctions as described in the District’s Code of Conduct. Consequences may include, but are not limited to, in-school suspension, loss of parking privileges, loss of senior privileges, detention and denial of participation in interscholastic and extracurricular activities.

Parents/persons in parental relation will be notified by designated District personnel at periodic intervals to discuss their child’s absences, tardiness or early departures and the importance of class attendance and appropriate interventions. Individual buildings/grade levels will address procedures to implement the notification process to the parent/person in parental relation.

Developing Intervention Strategies

In addition to the communication of the responsibilities of the students, parents and school, the implementation of incentives and the enforcement of consequences, each building administration will meet on a yearly basis to evaluate the effectiveness of their intervention programs. New interventions will be discussed and implemented with approval from the principal. All strategies utilized by each school will be summarized and sent to the Director of Student Services who will maintain a current list of all strategies used throughout the district.

Appeal Process

A parent/person in parental relation may request a building level review of their child’s attendance record. Students/parents must first appeal to the principal or his/her designee, in writing, if they feel their attendance record is not accurate. The appeal must be made within five (5) days of the disputed absence. At this review, the absences will be discussed. Further appeals may be made to the superintendent (or his/her designee).

Communication of Attendance Policy

A summary of the Attendance Policy will be printed in each student handbook. Teachers will review the attendance policy at the start of each school year. Parents will be sent a copy of the Attendance Policy summary each year in the school calendar and in the parent guide. Back-to-school events and open houses will include an explanation of the policy, stressing the parent’s crucial responsibility for ensuring children’s attendance.

All staff will be provided with the Attendance Policy. They will be made aware of the procedures necessary for the accurate attendance recording for each class they teach. Teachers will review the policy with their students at the beginning of each school year.

Building Review of Attendance Records

The building principal will work in conjunction with the building attendance clerk and other designated staff in reviewing attendance records at the end of each term. This review is conducted to identify individual and group attendance patterns and to initiate appropriate action to address the problem of unexcused absences, tardiness and early departures.

Annual Review by the Board of Education

The Board of Education shall annually review the building level student attendance
records and if such records show a decline in student attendance, the Board shall make any revisions to the Policy and plan deemed necessary to improve student attendance.

Community Awareness

The Board of Education shall promote necessary community awareness of the District's Comprehensive Student Attendance Policy by:

A) Providing a plain language summary of the policy to parents or persons in parental relation to students at the beginning of the each school year and promoting the understanding of such a policy to students and their parents/persons in parental relation;

B) Providing each teacher, at the beginning of the school year or upon employment, with a copy of the policy; and

C) Providing copies of the policy to any other member of the community upon request.

Education Law Sections 3024, 3025, 3202, 3205, 3206, 3210, 3211, and 3213 & New York Code of Rules and Regulations (NYCRR) Sections 104.1, 109.2 and 175.6

Adopted: August 13, 2007