

ATTENDANCE, ABSENTEEISM, AND TRUANCY

ATTENDANCE

The Board requires that school-aged children 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 educational progress.

Attendance shall be required of all students enrolled in the District during the days and hours that school is in session, except that the Principal may excuse a student for temporary absences when receiving satisfactory evidence of conditions or reasons that may reasonably cause the student's absence.

Students must be in attendance for at least one half of the school day to be counted as present.

DEFINITIONS:

Half Day: SAU #84 has defined "half day of school" as three (3) hours and fifteen (15) minutes of instructional time. Specifically, it is: 8:00 a.m. to 11:15 a.m. or 11:15 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.

Truancy: "truancy" means an unexcused absence from school or class and "unexcused absence" is an absence which has not been excused per RSA 189:35-a. Ten half days of unexcused absence during a school year shall constitute habitual truancy.

Tardiness: *Lakeway Elementary School* - Any student who arrives to their classroom after 8:00 a.m. is considered tardy. *Daisy Bronson Middle School/ Littleton High School* - Any student who arrives to homeroom after 7:45 a.m. is considered tardy. Any student who arrives to class after the scheduled start time is considered tardy.

Unexcused Tardiness: Three unexcused tardies will be counted as one unexcused absence for truancy purposes.

Duty of parent: RSA.193:1 A parent/guardian of a child between the ages of 6 and 18 shall cause the child to attend public school, with some exceptions.

EXCUSED ABSENCES

The Board considers the following to be excused absences:

1. Illness
2. Required court attendance
3. Medical and dental appointments
4. Death in the immediate family
5. Observation or celebration of a religious holiday
6. Such other good cause as may be acceptable to the Principal or permitted by law, i.e. college visit

**ATTENDANCE, ABSENTEEISM, AND TRUANCY
(Continued)**

In the event of an absence, the parent/guardian must call to inform the school of the student's absence. The parent/guardian must provide a signed written note stating the reason for the absence. The Principal may require parent/guardian to provide additional documentation in support of their written note, including but not limited to doctor's notes, court documents, obituaries, or other documents supporting the claimed reason for non-attendance.

If parent/guardian wishes for their child to be absent for a reason not listed above, the parent/guardian must provide a written explanation of the reason for such absence, including why the student will be absent and for how long the student will be absent. The Principal will make a determination as to whether the stated reason for the student's absence constitutes good cause and will notify the parent/guardian via telephone and writing of his/her decision. If the Principal determines that good cause does not exist, the parent/guardian may request a conference with the Principal to again explain the reasons for non-attendance. The Principal may then reconsider his/her initial determination. However, at this juncture, the Principal's decision will be final.

UNEXCUSED ABSENCES

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

Three unexcused tardies will be counted as one unexcused absence for truancy purposes.

FAMILY VACATIONS/EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

Generally, absences other than for illness during the school year are discouraged. Families are encouraged to plan vacations at times when school is not in session. The Principal or his/her designee *may* grant approval of an excused absence for one family vacation of up to 5 days per school year, provided written approval is given in advance. Parent/guardian is asked to write a note/email to their child's Principal at least two weeks before the trip. This advance planning will allow the teacher(s) enough time to work with parent/guardian and the student regarding class assignments and homework completion.

INTERVENTION PROCESS TO ADDRESS TRUANCY

The Principal/designee is hereby designated as the District employee responsible for overseeing truancy issues

The Principal/designee shall ensure that the administrative procedures on attendance properly address the matter of truancy by including a process that identifies students who are habitually truant, as defined above.

**ATTENDANCE, ABSENTEEISM, AND TRUANCY
(Continued)**

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

1. Investigates the cause(s) of the student's truant behavior;
2. Considers, when appropriate, modification of his/her educational program to meet particular needs that may be causing the truancy;
3. Involves the parent/guardian in the development of a plan designed to reduce the truancy;
4. Seeks alternative disciplinary measures but still retains the right to impose discipline in accordance with the District's policies and administrative guidelines on student discipline.

Parental Involvement in Truancy Intervention

When a student reaches habitual truancy status or is in danger of reaching habitual truancy status, the Principal 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/guardian's responsibility to ensure that the student attend school; and
3. A request for a meeting between the parent/guardian and the Principal to discuss the student's truancy and to develop a plan for reducing the student's truancy.

Developing and Coordinating Strategies for Truancy Reduction

The Board encourages the administration to seek truancy-prevention and truancy-reduction strategies such as the recommendations listed below. However, these guidelines shall be advisory only. 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 parent/guardian.
2. Assist school staff to develop site attendance plans by providing development strategies, resources, and referral procedures.
3. Encourage and coordinate the adoption of attendance-incentive programs at school sites and in individual classrooms that reward and celebrate good attendance and significant improvement in attendance.

**ATTENDANCE, ABSENTEEISM, AND TRUANCY
(Continued)**

Parental Notification of Truancy Policy

Prior to adopting this policy, the Board will place the item on the agenda of a school board meeting and will allow two weeks for public input as to the policy's provisions. Any public input shall be advisory only and final adoption as to the policy's provisions will remain solely with the Board.

Additionally, the Superintendent shall also ensure that this policy is included in or referenced in the student handbook(s) and is provided to parent/guardian annually at the beginning of each school year.

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 Penalty, RSA 193:8, Notice Requirements RSA 193:16 Bylaws as to Nonattendance

NH Code of Administrative Rules, Section Ed 306.04 (a) (1), Attendance and Absenteeism
NH Code of Administrative Rules, Section Ed 306.04 (c), Policy Relative to Attendance and Absenteeism

First Reading: November 2, 2015
Second Reading: November 16, 2015
Adopted: November 16, 2015