

STUDENT ATTENDANCE

The Board of Education, in accordance with the State Education Law, requires that each minor regularly attend school full-time from the first day of session in September of the school year in which the minor becomes six years of age. The Syracuse City School District encourages the enrollment of a child who has turned five on or before December 1st. Student must be enrolled through the last day of the school year in which such minor becomes sixteen years of age, unless he/she has completed a four-year high school course of study. He/she may attend a school other than a public school or receive home instruction, provided the instruction is equivalent to that given in the public schools.

Each school and alternative education program shall have a written attendance plan as part of the School Improvement Plan, developed in concert with staff, students, parents, with input from appropriate community agencies. The plan will include specific procedures for reducing illegal absences.

Each school will designate a staff person as having prime responsibility for ensuring the effective operation of the plan. Each school will have regular attendance meetings that include the school-based staff, the district attendance personnel and community agencies that are working with the student and family.

Each school will record and document all efforts to improve attendance on the official attendance card. Middle school and high school documentation will occur on the Record of Efforts to Improve Attendance (5100-E.1)

The attendance policy will be communicated to teachers, families, students by school and district communications.

The school will notify parents/caregivers by phone and in writing of legal and illegal student absences.

The Board of Education shall annually review the attendance policy and will make any revisions to the policy deemed necessary to improve student attendance.

Education Law §§1709; 3024; 3025; 3202; 3205-3213; 3225

8 NYCRR §§104.1; 175.6

1741, Home Instruction

4321, Programs for Students with Disabilities

4327, Homebound Instruction

4710, Grading Systems

5140, Entrance Age

5160, Student Absences and Excuses

STUDENT ATTENDANCE REGULATIONS

- Provide a plain language summary of the policy to each parent at the start of the school year.
- Make available the attendance policy and all letters associated with the policy in languages other than English to schools for parents and families.
- For students in non-departmentalized kindergarten through grade six, attendance shall be taken once per school day, provided students are not dismissed from school grounds during the lunch period. If students are dismissed for lunch, attendance will be taken a second time upon the student's return.
- For students in middle schools, attendance shall be taken twice a day.
- For students in high schools grades nine through twelve, attendance shall be taken after each period of scheduled instruction, except where students do not change classrooms for scheduled instruction.
- Any absence for a school day or a portion thereof, shall be recorded as excused or unexcused in accordance with standards as defined in these regulations.
- Attendance records will indicate the date when a student enters or withdraws from enrollment.
- Classroom teacher sends attendance cards of children who are absent from school to attendance secretary each day. Secretary logs absences into the computer. The teacher keeps any absence notes.
- Classroom teacher documents on the attendance card, the content of conversations, who conversations were with, as well as any attempts to contact family.
- Attendance personnel (or principals designee) call home to ascertain why students are absent each day.
- If a student has three or more days of unexcused absences, the social worker will contact family for investigation/home visit.
- If a student is absent five or more days, a letter will be generated and home visit arranged by the social worker. The visit will focus on the importance of school attendance, and the impact on non-attendance.

- If the student is absent five or more unexcused days, a second letter will be generated in which the parent will be informed of the Compulsory Education Law in New York State. The parent will also be advised if this attendance pattern continues, their case will be reported to Child Protective Services for prosecution under New York State guidelines.
- Principal or designee will present the attendance policy to parents at the first "Back to School" night.
- Principal or designee will provide the phone number of the attendance staff member, attendance office, administrative office, guidance counselor, or social worker in the Student Handbook and/or Student Agenda books.
- When a student is absent from school, the school will notify the parent by phone or by mail, remind them of the attendance policy and possible intervention strategies.
- Social Workers can refer student/families to either PST or SBIT (where available) teams at the building level to review records, and examine social, emotional issues and devise intervention strategies.
- A referral to the Attendance Assistant at the District Office will be made at this time for a home visit and further investigation.
- Once a student reaches 20% of days as unexcused absence for the year, a referral will be made to Child Protective for educational neglect or to the Probation Department.
- A 20% absence attendance report for students may be obtained by school secretary.
- Each school Attendance team is responsible for the creation of a documentation folder for each student to be shared with the Principal and the District Attendance Assistant.
- Attendance personnel (principal's designee) call home to ascertain why a student is absent.
- If a student is not in class and name does not appear on the daily absence list, the student's name is submitted to the office for further investigation. Parent contact is made if student is unexcused absent from class.
- If a student has three or more full day unexcused absences, their name is given to the Attendance Team for review. The attendance team includes, but is not limited to, an administrator, guidance counselor, school social worker, attendance secretary and district attendance teacher assistant designated to the school.

- Result of attendance meeting could include: phone call to parent, family conference, home-visit by school personnel, attendance assistant, or letter to family.
- In the event a student is unexcused absent for five additional days, the attendance assistant will make a home visit to stress the importance of school attendance to student and their family. A letter is also mailed to home expressing concern and highlighting days missed.
- If the student is absent five additional days, a second letter will be sent highlighting days absent and informing the parent/guardian of the Compulsory Education Law in New York State. The parent will be advised of a potential future referral to Child Protective Services or to Onondaga County Probation Department for prosecution under New York State guidelines.
- Once a student reaches 20% of school days as unexcused absence for the year, a referral will be made to Probation Intake via School District Attendance Teaching Assistants for truancy.
- Opportunities to make up missed work and class participation grades are linked to excused or unexcused absences. The State Education Department defines excused absences as absences due to personal illness, illness or death in the family, impassable roads or weather, religious observation, 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 Commissioner of Education. The Syracuse City School District also recognizes school-sponsored activities such as Superintendent's Student Cabinet, Youth Roundtable, and/or field/trips as excused absences.
- Therefore, only students who have excused absences will be provided make-up work opportunities such as an assignment, test, quiz, or class participation credit. If a student has an unexcused or illegal absence, no make up opportunity will be provided. This will be reflected in the student's report card grade.
- It is the responsibility of the school administration to determine whether an absence is excused or unexcused and to notify teachers of that determination. If a student demonstrates a pattern of absences due to illness, the school may require medical verification.
- All teachers will know that they are the key figures in monitoring student attendance. They will establish a positive, appropriate environment for learning. All teachers will know the rules of the attendance policy and explain these rules to their students. Each teacher will communicate with the non-attending students' parents or guardian about the pupil's attendance. All teachers will know the attendance rules and follow the attendance taking procedures consistently to ensure accurate attendance records.

- The administration will be responsible for the overall implementation and monitoring of the Attendance Policy including the development of attendance incentives and intervention strategies. The building principal will be responsible for forming an attendance team comprised of staff, students, community partners and parents. This committee will be addressing long range, comprehensive issues regarding the improvement of student attendance.
- It is the responsibility of the school administration to determine whether an absence is excused or unexcused and to notify teachers of that determination. All administrators will enforce the attendance policy consistently and fairly. They will develop a communication plan to disseminate the rules of the attendance policy to all staff and parents and specific personnel. If a parent is unable to attend a conference, but a phone conference is held, this will meet the conferencing criteria.
- All students are responsible for knowing the rules of the attendance policy. They are also responsible for being in school and in classes on time every day. When a student does miss class, he or she is responsible for presenting his or her teachers with a written excuse, and for completing the missed work in a timely manner.
- All parents/guardians will know the rules of the attendance policy. Each parent or guardian will be responsible for ensuring that his or her child attends school on a regular basis. They will stress the importance of daily attendance and class attendance to their child, and they will support the school in efforts to maintain high attendance standards.
- Parents and guardians will provide a written excuse to the school for their child's absences, early dismissals, or late arrivals. Written excuses should be provided on the day following a student's absence. If an excuse is not received by three (3) days after the student's absence, that absence will be designated unexcused. If a student demonstrates a pattern of absences due to illness, the school may require medical verification.
- Support personnel will know the rules of the attendance policy and will encourage students to attend class and be on time.

Classroom Attendance Policy Notification System

Classes that meet 90 sessions/year	Classes that meet 45 sessions/year	
4 absences	4 absences	Parent contact by teacher either by phone or postcard Request Parent conferences
12 absences	6 absences	Letter sent to improve student's attendance. Parent conference held with appropriate staff to develop interventions
16 absences	8 absences	Parent contact by teachers with comments and/or effort to improve class performance.
20 absences	10 absences	Second warning letter sent, which notifies parent/guardian of student's absences. Parent conference held with teacher(s), administrators, and support staff.
28 absences	14 absences	Final letter sent indicating the student's attendance record.

