

5100 PEEKSKILL'S COMPREHENSIVE ATTENDANCE POLICY

A. Objectives:

The Peekskill Board of Education recognizes that regular school attendance is a major component of students' academic success. Through implementation of this policy, the Board of Education expects to encourage full attendance by all students, and to reduce the level of unexcused absences, tardiness, and early departures. In order to accomplish these objectives, it is recognized that:

1. Regular school attendance is essential to a successful teaching and learning environment. Students' academic achievement and performance in school is directly related to their full participation in the educational process.
 - a. To encourage excellent school attendance, the Superintendent in collaboration with administration shall develop strategies that focus on prevention of and early intervention with attendance problems. Preventive strategies may include efforts to provide a safe and positive school environment, relevant and engaging learning experiences, and school activities that help develop students' feelings of connectedness with the schools.
2. Parents, school staff, and the students themselves all have a responsibility to contribute to a pattern of regular attendance.
 - a. Parents must ensure that their child(ren) arrive at school on time, remain in school for the full day and attend school consistently throughout the year; including prior to and after school vacations.
 - b. School staff must effectively communicate with parents and students regarding attendance patterns, especially when those patterns relate to ongoing absences, tardiness or early departures.
 - c. All students of compulsory age must ensure that they attend school every day (except for an excused absence), arrive on time, attend each of their classes on time, and not leave the school building and/or grounds without permission.

B. Definition:

1. Absence: a student's failure to attend any or all of his/her scheduled periods of actual instruction or supervised study activities for the full duration of said period(s) of instruction or activity.
2. Tardy: a student's late arrival to one or more of his/her scheduled periods of actual instruction or supervised study activities during the course of a school day.
3. Chronic absence means missing 10% or more of the school year for which a student is enrolled (equivalent to 18 days out of a 180 day school year) regardless of whether absences are excused or unexcused.
4. Severely chronic absenteeism means a student is absent for any reason for 20 percent or more of the school year for which he/she is enrolled.
5. Chronic Tardy: means a student's constant late arrival to one or more of his/her scheduled periods accounting for 10% or more of the school year.
6. Early Departure: a student's departure from and failure to return to any of his or her scheduled periods of actual instruction or supervised study activities prior to the official dismissal of said period of instruction or activity.

C. Classifying Absences:

1. **Excused and Unexcused Absences.** Student absence, late arrivals, and early departures shall be classified as either excused or unexcused.
 - a. Excused absences are those absences attributable to personal illness, illness or death in the family, religious observance, quarantine, and other educationally related activities (i.e. college visits), required court appearances, school emergency medical treatment or other special health related services.
 - b. Unexcused absences shall be those absences such as class cuts, extended vacations, undocumented absences and tardiness and unapproved early leaves.
 - c. The building principal shall have the discretion to designate an absence, late arrival or early departure as "excused", if the cause of the absence is not among those enumerated in part (a) of this section, upon a determination that the absence was unavoidable and/or otherwise not the fault of the student or the student's parent(s) legal guardian(s).

2. Attendance Register Codes:

Commencing in the 2015-2016 school year, nature of the absence, tardiness or early departure will be coded on a student's record. Student absence, tardiness and early departure data will be reviewed and monitored by the designated school personnel throughout the school year.

The codes currently in Infinite Campus are:

AE	Excused Absence
AED	Early Dismissal
AET	Excused Tardy
AFT	Field Trip
AHS	Hospitalized
AHT	Home Tutored
AHW	Hass's Way
AI	Illness
AIS	In-School Susp
AN	Nurse
APK	Pre-K No School
ARS	Absent-Related Services
ARE	Religious
ASU	Out of School Suspended
AT	Unexcused Tardy
ATP	Temporary Placement
AU	Unexcused Absence
PUE	Picked up early
PUL	Picked up late
TBU	Late bus

D. Attendance Procedures

Attendance will be recorded once a day at the elementary level. At the secondary level, attendance will be recorded during each period of instruction.

1. Educating and communicating to all parents and students the importance of excellent attendance and punctuality:

- a. Provide a summary of the attendance policy at the start of the school year, and request that parent(s)/guardian(s) sign and return a statement indicating that the attendance policy has been read and is understood.
- b. Encourage families to discuss the attendance policy with their children, reinforcing the school's expectations for excellent attendance.
- c. Encourage families to seek clarification from the specified school official in each building of any aspect of the school's attendance policy when anything is unclear, including the differences between excused and unexcused absences.
- d. Parent/guardian should notify the appropriate school by phone on the morning of the student's absence or tardy and provide a written excuse when the student returns to school.
- e. Families are expected to respond immediately to any call or letter from their child's school regarding attendance.

2. Communication:

- a. Post signage reminding parents to update phone numbers and address at their child's school.
- b. Reminders on school websites.
- c. Provide capability for parents to update information online.
- d. Blackboard Connect calls to parents reminding to update contact information.

3. Attendance Incentives:

The Peekskill City School District recognizes the importance of school attendance, and will encourage regular attendance by using incentives to acknowledge students who demonstrate excellent and improved attendance.

The Superintendent and building administrators will establish reasonable incentives to encourage student attendance. Such incentives may include but are not limited to: attendance certificates and awards; promptness awards; public recognition of student's attendance (morning announcements); special privileges such as lunch with a preferred adult, lining up first for lunch and dismissal, award of pens, pencils, posters, book covers or breakfast/lunch with building Principal; traveling trophy for each grade level or house with highest attendance; homework extension coupons, and homework passes.

4. Interventions to Address Patterns of Unexcused Absences:

- a. There will be a daily automated phone call to parents who have not contacted the school regarding their child's absence. **(See Table - Elementary vs. Secondary)**
- b. After 3 consecutive or patterned days of absences, tardiness or early departures per quarter, parents will be telephoned by classroom teacher notifying them of the impact that these absences may have on the student's educational achievement. Record of the communication will be placed in infinite campus contact log also known as PLP.
- c. After 5 days of absences, tardiness or early departures per quarter, parents will be contacted by telephone, email, or mailed letter notifying them of the impact that these absences may have on the student's educational achievement. School personnel and parents will have a discussion regarding reasons for the absence and develop a plan to address concerns. Record of the communication will be placed in infinite campus contact log.
- d. At the elementary level, after 10, 15 and 20 days of absences, tardiness or early departures, parents will be contacted by letter notifying them of the impact that these absences have on the student's educational achievement and inviting them to a parent conference to discuss the issues impacting attendance. A copy of the letter will be placed in the student's file. A home visit will be initiated by the attendance officer after the 15th to 20th absence if the parent has not attended any parent conferences or cooperated with the school to address the attendance issue.
- e. At the secondary level on the 3rd absence, the subject teacher will communicate with the parent/guardian by telephone and email to discuss the number of absences and the attendance policy. A summary of the communication will be placed in the student's file.

On the 5th absence, the subject teacher will arrange a conference with the parent/guardian to discuss the student's absences. Following the conference, a referral will be made to the student's school counselor or social worker to solicit intervention at that level.

On the 10th, 15th and 20th cumulative absence per subject, letters will be sent home from the school and the guidance office will arrange a conference with the student and his/her parent/guardian. The student and the parent will be informed of the consequences of further absences and a letter will be mailed home documenting that the conferences took place. A home visit will be initiated after the 15th to 20th cumulative absence per subject if the parent has not attended any parent conferences or cooperated with the school to address the attendance issue. Record of the communication will be placed in infinite campus contact log.

f. After all non-disciplinary interventions have been attempted, and the situation persists, parents will be notified by the principal or his/her designee to discuss the issue further. Any subsequent letters will be sent to the Superintendent's office as well as being placed in the student's file. In serious situations where patterns of poor attendance are impacting academic achievement and are not effectively addressed, the district may seek to have the student adjudicated by Family Court as a Person In Need of Supervision (PINS) and/or file educational neglect charges with Child Protective Services (CPS) as warranted against the parents. Children over the age of 16 run the risk of being dropped from enrollment.

Elementary - Absenteeism Progression	
Less than 5 days	The teacher will phone home/send email to the parent after 3 consecutive days of absence. A referral will be initiated to the school counselor and/or social worker.
Day 5	After 5 days of absences, tardiness or early departures, parents will be contacted by telephone, email, or mailed letter.
Day 10	The teacher will phone home/send email to the parent. A referral will be initiated to the school counselor and/or social worker. A letter will be mailed home and a parent teacher conference will be scheduled. CPS may be called.
Day 15	The teacher will phone home/send email to the parent. A referral will be initiated to the school counselor and/or social worker. A letter indicating chronic absence (missing 10% or more of the school year) will be mailed home and a parent teacher conference will be scheduled. A home visit may be conducted by the attendance officer. CPS may be called.
Day 20	The teacher will phone home/send email to the parent. A referral will be initiated to the school counselor and/or social worker. A letter will be mailed home indicating severely chronic absenteeism (missing 20 percent of the school year) and a parent teacher conference will be scheduled. A home visit will be conducted by the attendance officer. CPS will be called.

Secondary - Absenteeism Progression	
Less than 5 days	The teacher will phone home/send email to the parent. A referral will be initiated to the school counselor and/or social worker.
Day 5	On the 5th absence, the subject teacher will arrange a conference with the parent/guardian to discuss the student's absences. Referral to social worker and/or guidance counselor.
Day 10	The teacher will phone home/send email to the parent. A referral will be initiated to the school counselor and/or social worker. A letter will be mailed home and a parent teacher conference will be scheduled. CPS may be called.
Day 15	The teacher will phone home/send email to the parent. A referral will be initiated to the school counselor and/or social worker. A letter indicating chronic absence (missing 10% or more of the school year) will be mailed home and a parent teacher conference will be scheduled. A home visit may be conducted by the attendance officer. CPS may be called or the County Probation Office.
Day 20	The teacher will phone home/send email to the parent. A referral will be initiated to the school counselor and/or social worker. A letter will be mailed home indicating severely chronic absenteeism (missing 20 percent of the school year) and a parent teacher conference will be scheduled. A home visit will be conducted by the attendance officer. The student will be in jeopardy of being failed or dropped out of high school if over the age of 16. Referral to Child Protective Services or to the County Probation Office.

5. Attendance and Grading:

Each marking period, a student's final grade may be based on classroom participation as well as the student's performance on homework, tests, papers, projects, etc. Consistent with the importance of classroom participation, unexcused absences, tardiness or early departures will affect a student's class participation grade for the marking period and could result in the student's failure in his/ her current grade level.

At the high school level, students are expected to attend each of their assigned classes for at least 90% of the course. Furthermore, high school students may be denied credit for courses when they exceed, in total, 20 absences for which make-up assignments were not submitted in a timely manner.

All students with an absence are expected, upon their return, to consult with their teachers regarding missed work. Any student who is absent, tardy or leaves early from school or a class due to illness or any other excused reason will be afforded the opportunity to make up a test or other missed work. Make-up assignments must be completed by a date specified by the student's teacher for the class in question.

The decision to deny course credit to a student will be made by the Principal or his/her designee. If dissatisfied, the student and/or parent may appeal the Principal's decision to the Assistant Superintendent for Secondary Education within five school days after the date of the decision.

E. Policy Distribution:

To be successful in implementing this policy, it is critically important that all members of the school community are aware of its purpose and procedures, as well as the consequences for noncompliance. To ensure that students, parents, teachers and administrators are notified of and understand this policy, the following procedures shall be implemented:

1. A summary of the attendance policy will be included in all student handbooks and in the district calendar.
2. The district will provide a copy of the attendance policy to faculty and staff. New staff will receive a copy as part of their orientation process.
3. The attendance policy will be reviewed with staff and students at the start of each school year.
4. Parents will receive a plain language summary of this policy by mail at the start of each school year.
5. School newsletters and publications will include periodic reminders of the components of this policy.
6. Copies of this policy will also be made available to any community member, upon request. The policy will be prominently displayed on the district website.

F. Annual Review:

The Board of Education shall annually review the building level pupil attendance records, and if such records show a decline in pupil attendance, shall revise this policy as necessary to improve such attendance. Building Principals, along with the Assistant Superintendent for Elementary Education and Secondary Education will review attendance records on a quarterly basis. The data will be shared with the principals, Superintendent, and Board of Education.

Ref:

[Education Law §1709; 3024; 3025; 3202; 3205-3213; 3225](#)

[8 NYCRR §§ 104.1; 175.6](#)

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