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Student Attendance

First Supervisory District of Suffolk County
201 Sunrise Highway
Patchogue, New York 11772

The Board recognizes that regular attendance is a critical factor in student academic, social, and vocational success leading to the achievement of their life goals. In order to meet the Regents goals of raising student performance to higher levels and closing the gaps in student achievement, it is imperative that all students regularly attend class to receive instruction and to actively participate in authentic learning activities. These diverse activities often rely on teacher-to-student and student-to-student interaction that cannot be recreated or duplicated for the student who is absent. Recognizing that the classroom experience provides an educational value essential to achieving high standards, the Board enacts this policy aimed at encouraging full attendance by all students.

Through implementation of this policy, the Board expects to:

1. reduce the current level of unexcused absences, tardiness, and early departures (referred to in this policy as “ATEDs”);
2. adopt and maintain an adequate attendance recordkeeping system for the purpose of accountability;
3. identify patterns of student ATEDs; and
4. develop effective intervention strategies to improve attendance.

This policy shall apply to all Eastern Suffolk BOCES instructional programs at the elementary, middle, and secondary school levels, including summer programs and summer special education services.

Notice

To be successful in this endeavor, it is imperative that all members of the ESBOCES community are aware of this policy, its purpose, procedures, and the consequences of non-compliance. To ensure that students, parents, teachers, administrators, and all support staff are notified of and understand this policy, the following procedures shall be implemented.

1. The Building Principal will ensure that a summary of this policy is included in student handbooks and that the policy is reviewed with students at the start of each instructional year or upon entrance to the program.
2. Parents/persons in parental relation will receive a plain language summary of this policy by mail at the start of each instructional year or upon their child’s entrance to the program. The summary will indicate that parents/persons in parental relation will be provided with a copy of the full policy upon request.

3. The policy will be explained to parents/persons in parental relation at a back-to-school event held at the beginning of each school year. Parental/person in parental relation responsibility for ensuring their children's attendance will be stressed.
4. The Building Principal will provide a copy of this policy, related regulation(s), and any amendments to faculty and staff. New employees will receive a copy upon their employment.
5. Copies of this policy will be made available to any community member upon request.

Excused and Unexcused Absences

1. Definitions
 - a. Excused Absence - Excused ATEDs are defined as absences, tardiness, and early departures from class due to:

personal illness	illness or death in the family
impassable roads or weather	transportation delay
home district school closures	religious observances
quarantine	required court appearance
attendance at health clinics	approved college visits
military obligations	approved cooperative work programs
school related instruction/activities	DMV road test

or other such reasons as may be approved by building administration
 - b. Unexcused Absence - All other ATEDs are considered unexcused absences.
 - c. Absences Versus Tardiness/Early Departure - Any student who misses more than fifty percent (50%) of a particular class session for any non-ESBOCES related activity shall be considered absent for that class session for the purposes of determining eligibility for course credit and/or a secondary career education certificate of completion.
 - d. Suspension - Consequences of serious disciplinary infractions may include the removal of the student from the program for a specified period of time (NYS Education Law §3214). These removals are commonly referred to as "suspensions" and should be recorded as such. After the term of suspension, the student is responsible for making up all class work where possible.

2. Notification

- a. All ATEDS must be accounted for.
- b. Parents/persons in parental relation are encouraged to call the facility whenever their child will be absent or tardy regardless of the reason. All absences will be considered “unexcused” until ESBOCES has evaluated the reason for the absence submitted in writing by the parent/person in parental relation or through another form of contact with the parent/person in parental relation.
- c. It is the parent’s/person in parental relation’s responsibility to notify the ESBOCES office on the day of the ATED and to provide a written excuse upon the student’s return to class. After extended absence due to illness, medical documentation may be required. When the absence is the result of involvement with a community agency or organization (the Department of Corrections, Department of Motor Vehicles, Child Protection Services, or religious institutions for religious instruction, etc.), it is the parent’s/persons in parental relation’s responsibility to obtain written verification from that agency. Alternate documentation may be accepted at the discretion of the Building Principal. If no notification, either written or verbal, is received, then the student’s absence will be documented as unexcused.
- d. When a student is absent, tardy, or leaves class early without excuse, a designated employee will notify the student’s parents/persons in parental relation by telephone and/or by mail of the specific ATED, remind them of the Attendance Policy, and review ATED intervention procedures with them.
- e. The parents/persons in parental relation and the home district will be informed of any student who is absent three (3) consecutive days without notification by the parent/person in parental relation, has developed a repetitive pattern of absences, or has any type of questionable absence.

Disciplinary Consequences

Unexcused ATEDs will result in disciplinary action consistent with the ESBOCES Code of Conduct. Penalties for unexcused absences will be developed and implemented at the building level (e.g., students may be denied the privilege of participating in or attending extracurricular events). The Board does not support suspension for absence-related problems.

Notification and Intervention Procedures

A written warning notice will be sent by the Building Principal to the student, the student’s parents/persons in parental relation, and the student’s home district when a student’s pattern of excessive absences threatens the student’s ability to master course content and/or receive a passing grade due to lack of classroom participation. In such instances, appropriate ESBOCES employees will counsel the student regarding the importance of regular attendance and will continue to monitor the student’s attendance at least weekly.

Course Credit

Academic credit for ESBOCES courses taken by students attending ESBOCES programs is awarded by local school districts. At the end of each academic period (semester for half year courses; year for full year courses), ESBOCES will report the student's examination results (where applicable), final grade(s), and attendance (including which absences were excused and which were unexcused) to the student's home school district.

ESBOCES will advise students and their parents/persons in parental relation to consult with their local district regarding any policies linking the award of course credit to attendance that may be enforced at the local level.

Annual Review

The Board directs the District Superintendent, Chief Operating Officer, or designee to annually review building-level student attendance records. If such records show an improvement, the Board shall recognize this achievement and if such records show a decline in student attendance, the Board shall review and revise this comprehensive Attendance Policy in order to improve student attendance.

References:

- NYS Education Law §3214
- Administrative Regulation 6110R.1 - Student Attendance

First Adopted: 7/1/2003
Readopted: 7/11/2007
Readopted: 2/25/2009
Readopted: 11/20/2013