

## **COMPREHENSIVE STUDENT ATTENDANCE POLICY**

### **Statement of Overall Objectives**

School attendance is both a right and a responsibility. Niskayuna School District partners with students and parents, recognizing that consistent school attendance is related to academic success and school completion. The Comprehensive Student Attendance Policy has been developed 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 verify that individual students are complying with education laws relating to compulsory attendance;
- e) To determine the District's average daily attendance for State aid purposes;
- f) To maintain legal documentation in the event of requests for information by the court.

### **Description of Strategies to Meet Objectives**

The School District is committed to creating and maintaining a positive school building culture by fostering a positive physical and psychological environment, and encouraging respectful and nurturing interactions between adults and students. This positive school culture is aimed at building student connection to the school, leading, in turn, to increased attendance. This will include:

- a) Maintaining accurate recordkeeping to record attendance, absence, tardiness or early departure of each student;
- b) Utilizing data analysis systems for tracking individual student attendance and individual and group trends in student attendance problems;
- c) Developing early intervention strategies to improve school attendance for all students.

### **Student Attendance Recordkeeping/Data Collection**

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

- a) For students in kindergarten through grade five, each student's presence or absence shall be recorded after the taking of attendance once per school day. When a student is dismissed but returns to school the same day, their presence shall also be recorded upon the student's return;

**COMPREHENSIVE STUDENT ATTENDANCE POLICY** *(Continued)*

- b) For students in grades 6 through 12 or at any grade level where 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;
- c) 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;
- d) 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).

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

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 the Commissioner's Regulations. An absence, tardiness or early departure will be entered as "excused" or "unexcused" along with the District code for the reason. Absences, tardiness and early departures will be considered excused or unexcused according to the following standards.

Excused Absences - Tardiness and absence for the following reasons is excused:

- a) Personal illness or injury
- b) Death or emergency illness in the immediate family
- c) Obligatory religious observance
- d) Required court appearance
- e) Medical and dental appointments
- f) School-sponsored events
- g) College visits and interviews
- h) Career development or explorations programs approved by the Principal
- i) Driver's road test (not permit tests)
- j) Late arriving bus
- k) Impassable roads or weather making travel unsafe
- l) Music lessons (must be approved by the building principal and scheduled to minimize the effect on the learning environment)
- m) Others as authorized by the Principal

**COMPREHENSIVE STUDENT ATTENDANCE POLICY** *(Continued)*Coding System

The attendance recording system shall identify the following reasons for pupil absence or tardiness. All attendance information shall be compiled and provided to the designated school personnel who are responsible for attendance.

Absent (A)	Absent (Tutored) (AT)
Early Dismissal (D)	Early Dismissal (Field Trip) (DF)
In-School Suspension (IS)	
Out-of-School Suspension (O)	
Out-of-School Suspension, Instructed (OI) (includes Alt Ed)	
Tardy or Late (T)	
Unexcused Absence (UA)	
Unexcused Tardiness (UT)	

**Student Attendance/Course Credit**

Students will be considered in attendance if the student is:

- a) Physically present in the classroom or working under the direction of the classroom teacher during the class scheduled meeting time; or
- b) Working pursuant to an approved independent study program; or
- c) Receiving approved alternative instruction.

Classroom attendance and participation are related to and affect a student's performance and grasp of the subject matter. Consistent with this, unexcused student absences, tardiness, and early departures may affect a student's grade for the marking period. At the middle school/senior high school level, lack of attendance can affect a student's ability to receive credit for the course. For transfer students, students re-enrolling after having dropped out, summer school and  $\frac{1}{4}$  or  $\frac{1}{2}$  year courses, the same policy regarding grading and potential loss of credit will apply and a calculation of the absences will be prorated accordingly. Specific direction on how attendance may affect course credit is outlined in the Code of Conduct.

Upon returning to school following an absence, it shall be the responsibility of the student to consult with his/her teacher(s) regarding arrangements to make up missed work, assignments and/or tests in accordance with the time schedule specified by the teacher. Students who are absent from class due to their participation in a school sponsored activity are to arrange with their teachers to make up any work missed in a timely manner as determined by the student's teacher. Attendance at school sponsored events where instruction is substantially equivalent to the instruction which was missed may be counted as the equivalent of regular attendance in class.

Students

**COMPREHENSIVE STUDENT ATTENDANCE POLICY** *(Continued)***Unexcused Absences and Notification Process**

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, detention and denial of participation in interscholastic and extracurricular activities.

For excessive or unexcused absences, a designated staff member(s) will notify the parent of the student's absence and explain the District's Comprehensive Student Attendance Policy, the District and/or building level intervention procedures and the relationship of the student's attendance to his/her ability to receive course credit. Individual buildings/grade levels will address procedures to implement the notification process to the parent/person in parental relation.

A designated staff member will review the District's Attendance Policy with a student who has excessive and/or unexcused absences, tardiness or early departures. Further, appropriate student support services/personnel within the District, as well as the possible collaboration/referral to community support services and agencies, will be implemented **prior to the denial of course credit for insufficient attendance by the student.**

If deemed necessary by appropriate school officials, or if requested by the parent, a school conference shall be scheduled between the parent 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.

**Appeal Process**

A parent may request a building level review of their child's attendance record.

**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 least quarterly. 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.

**Pattern of Absence Intervention Process**

In order to effectively intervene when an identified pattern of unexcused absences, tardiness or early departures occur, designated District personnel will pursue the following:

- a) Identify the pattern of absenteeism (e.g., grade level, building, time frame, type of unexcused absences, tardiness or early departures);

## Students

**COMPREHENSIVE STUDENT ATTENDANCE POLICY** *(Continued)*

- b) Contact the District staff most closely associated with and/or able to address the issue. When the pattern involves an individual student, the student and parent will be contacted; Utilize appropriate District and/or community resources to address and help remediate student unexcused absences, tardiness or early departures;
- c) Discuss strategies to directly intervene with the pattern of absenteeism;
- d) If the absenteeism relates to District policy or procedure, further discussion should include the Superintendent or designee;
- e) Implement program for change, as approved by appropriate administration;
- f) Monitor and report short and long term effects of intervention.

**Policy Awareness**

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

- a) Providing a plain language summary of the policy to parents at the beginning of each school year and promoting the understanding of such a policy to students and their parents;
- b) Providing each teacher, at the beginning of the school year or upon employment, with a copy of the policy; and
- c) Posting copies of the Attendance Policy and Code of Conduct on the District website;
- d) 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  
8 NYCRR Sections 104.1, 109.2 and 175.6

Adopted February 1, 2017