Marlboro Central School District
Board of Education

POLICY

7110

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Students

SUBJECT: COMPREHENSIVE STUDENT ATTENDANCE

Statement of Overall Objectives

School attendance is both a right and a responsibility. The District is an active partner with students and parents in the task of ensuring that all students meet or exceed the New York State Learning Standards. Because the District recognizes that consistent school attendance, academic success and school completion have a positive correlation, the District has developed, and, if necessary, will revise a Comprehensive Student Attendance Policy 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 know the whereabouts of every student for safety and other reasons;

e) To verify that individual students are complying with education laws relating to compulsory attendance;

f) To determine the District's average daily attendance for State aid purposes.

Description of Strategies to Meet Objectives

The District will:

a) Create and maintain a positive school building culture by fostering a positive physical and psychological environment where the presence of strong adult role models encourages respectful and nurturing interactions between adults and students. This positive school culture is aimed at encouraging a high level of student bonding to the school, which in turn should lead to increased attendance.

b) Maintain accurate recordkeeping via a Register of Attendance to record attendance, absence, tardiness or early departure of each student.

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c) Utilize data analysis systems for tracking individual student attendance and individual and group trends in student attendance problems.

d) Develop early intervention strategies to improve school attendance for all students.

Determination of Excused and Unexcused Absences, Tardiness and Early Departures

Based upon our District's education and community needs, values and priorities, the District has determined that absences, tardiness and early departures will be considered excused or unexcused according to the following standards.

a) **Excused**: An absence, tardiness or early departure may be excused if due to personal illness, illness, or death in the family, impassable roads due to inclement weather, religious observance, quarantine, required court appearances, attendance at health clinics, approved college visits, approved cooperative work programs, military obligations or other such reasons as may be approved by the Board of Education.

b) **Unexcused**: An absence, tardiness or early departure is considered unexcused if the reason for the lack of attendance does not fall into the above categories (e.g., family vacation, hunting, babysitting, haircut, obtaining learner's permit, road test, oversleeping, etc.).

A written excuse, signed by a parent/person in parental relation should be presented by the student when returning to school following each absence.

Student Attendance Record keeping/Data Collection

The record of each student's presence, absence, tardiness and early departure will be kept in a register of attendance in a manner consistent with Commissioner's Regulations. An absence, tardiness or early departure will be entered as "excused" or "unexcused" along with the District code for the reason.

Attendance will be taken and recorded in accordance with the following:

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a) For students in non-departmentalized kindergarten through grade eight (i.e., self-contained classrooms and supervised group movement to other scheduled school activities such as physical education in the gym, assembly, etc.), such student's presence or absence will be recorded after the taking of attendance once per school day, provided that students are not dismissed from school grounds during a lunch period. Where students are dismissed for lunch, their presence or absence will also be recorded after the taking of attendance a second time upon the student's return from lunch.

b) For students in grades 9 through 12 or in departmentalized schools at any grade level (i.e., students pass individually to different classes throughout the day), each student's presence or absence will be recorded after the taking of attendance in each period of scheduled instruction.

c) Any absence for a school day or portion thereof will be recorded as excused or unexcused in accordance with the standards articulated in this policy.

d) In the event that a student at any instructional level from grades K through 12 arrives late for or departs early from scheduled instruction, such tardiness or early departure will be recorded as excused or unexcused in accordance with the standards articulated in this policy.

A record will 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.

Attendance records will also indicate the date when a student withdraws from enrollment or is dropped from enrollment in accordance with Education Law Section 3202(1-a).

At the conclusion of each class period or school day, all attendance information will be compiled and provided to the designated school personnel who are responsible for attendance. The nature of the absence, tardiness or early departure will be coded on a student's record in accordance with the established District/building procedures.

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If deemed necessary by appropriate school officials, or if requested by the parent/person in parental relation, a school conference will be scheduled between the parent/person in parental relation 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.

Student Attendance / Course Credit

The District believes that classroom participation is related to and affects a student's performance and grasp of the subject matter and, as such, is properly reflected in a student's final grade. For purposes of this policy, classroom participation means that a student is in class and prepared to work.

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.

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 will be counted as the equivalent of regular attendance in class.

Minimum Attendance Rule

All registered students are expected to attend all classes as scheduled. Specifically, each student should attend at least 85% of all classes per course. High School students who exceed 28 absences in a full year course or 14 absences in a half year course may not receive course credit IF required work is not made up. Physical Education falls into the half year category.

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Attendance Incentives

The District and building teams will design and implement incentives to acknowledge students' efforts to maintain or improve school attendance. Incentives will be approved by the Superintendent or his/her designee.

Disciplinary Consequences

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.

Parents/persons in parental relation will be notified by designated District personnel at periodic intervals to discuss their child's absences, tardiness, or early departures and the importance of class attendance and appropriate interventions. Individual buildings/grade levels will address procedures to implement the notification process to the parent/person in parental relation.

Intervention Strategy 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 specific elements of pattern (e.g., grade level, building, time frame, type of unexcused absences, tardiness or early departures);

b) Contact the District staff most closely associated with the element. In specific cases where the pattern involves an individual student, the student and parent/person in parental relation will be contacted.

c) Discuss strategies to directly intervene with specific element;

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d) Recommend intervention to Superintendent or his/her designee if it related to change in District policy or procedure;

e) Implement changes, as approved by appropriate administration;

f) Utilize appropriate District and/or community resources to address and help remediate student unexcused absences, tardiness or early departures;

g) Monitor and report short and long term effects of intervention.

Chronic Absenteeism

Chronic absenteeism is defined as missing at least 10% of enrolled school days in a year for any reason, excused or unexcused. Chronic absenteeism differs from truancy because it emphasizes missed instructional time rather than unexcused absences. Missed instructional time can increase a student's risk of disengagement, low achievement, and dripping out, among other things.

Intervention will be implemented for students that are at risk of becoming chronically absent as indicated by attendance benchmarks throughout the school year.

Makeup Policy

Upon returning to school following a properly excused absence, tardiness or early departure, it is the responsibility of the student/parent or guardian to consult with the 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 absents from class due to their participation in a school-sponsored activity must arrange with teachers to make up any work missed in a timely manner as determined by the student's teacher.

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Summer School Courses

Students may complete a course in summer school only if they have attended the regular school year course for all quarters of the course and have not exceeded 50 absences in a full year course or 25 absences in a half year course. (Physical Education falls in the 25-absence category).

Community Awareness

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

a) Providing a plain language summary of the policy to parents or persons in parental relation to students at the beginning of each school year and promoting the understanding of such a policy to students and their parents/persons in parental relation;

b) Providing each teacher, at the beginning of the school year or upon employment, with a copy of the policy; and

c) 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 Date: June 15, 2017
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