

## ATTENDANCE POLICY

The Board of Education recognizes that regular school attendance is a major component of academic success. Through implementation of this policy, the Board expects to reduce the current level of unexcused absences, tardiness, and early departures (referred to in this policy as “ATEDs”), encourage full attendance by all students, maintain an adequate attendance recordkeeping system, identify patterns of student ATEDs and develop effective intervention strategies to improve school attendance.

- I. No pupil over the compulsory attendance age shall be dropped from the enrollment unless the student has been absent twenty (20) consecutive school days, and the following procedures shall be complied with:
  - A. The Superintendent shall schedule a conference with the student and person(s) in parental relation to the student. Notice of such conference shall be sent to the student and his/her parent(s) by certified mail.
  - B. At the conference, the Superintendent shall attempt to determine the reason(s) for the pupil’s absence, and whether reasonable changes in the pupil’s educational program would encourage and facilitate the student’s continuance in school.
  - C. If the pupil wishes to drop out of school, the pupil and the person in parental relation shall be informed orally, and in writing, of the pupil’s right to re-enroll at anytime in the School District.
  - D. If the pupil and the person(s) in parental relation to the student fail to contact the Superintendent within ten days after the notice of conference was mailed, or fail to attend the conference, the pupil will be dropped. The student and the person(s) in parental relation to the student will be notified by certified letter of this action, and informed of the student’s right to re-enter at any time.

## COMPREHENSIVE ATTENDANCE POLICY

### I. OBJECTIVES OF ATTENDANCE POLICY

Education Law requires that the students enrolled in the schools of this district attend school on every school day unless legally excused. The education program offered by this district is predicated upon the presence of the student and requires continuity of instruction and classroom participation. The regular contact of students with one another in the classroom and their participation in a well-planned instructional activity under the tutelage of a competent teacher are vital to this purpose. Unexcused absences (those which are not congruent with state regulations for acceptable absences), which especially occur at or near vacation periods, have highly adverse effects on the student as well as the entire educational program. Therefore, the Board of Education urges all parents to make every effort for their children to be in attendance.

The objectives of this attendance policy are:

- a. To accurately track the attendance, absence, tardiness and departure to and from the school;
- b. To ensure sufficient pupil attendance of classes so that pupils may achieve State mandated education standards;
- c. To track student location for safety reasons and to account to parents regarding the location of children during school hours.
- d. To improve student learning through:
  - 1) Consistent student attendance
  - 2) Preservation of continuity in classes for presentation of content and skills by teachers
  - 3) Improved class dynamics

The above objectives can best be met through regular school attendance. Students at Stamford Central School are required to maintain regular attendance. Ten (10) or more unexcused absences will result in loss of credit.

The Board of Education recognizes an important relationship between class attendance and student performance. Consequently, each marking period a student’s report card grade may be based on classroom participation as well as student’s performance on homework, tests, papers, projects, etc. Students are expected to attend all scheduled classes. Consistent with the importance of classroom participation, unexcused absences/ tardies/early dismissals (ATED’s) will affect a student’s class participation grade for the marking period.

Any student with more than 10 ATEDs for a full year will not have met course requirements and therefore will not be allowed to sit for the final exam.

Accordingly, if the final average for the course including a zero for the final exam is not passing, s/he will not receive credit for that course. However, students with properly excused ATEDs may make up the work for each ATED, and those ATEDs will not count toward the minimum attendance standard of no more than eighteen (18) unexcused absences.

To ensure that the parents and students are aware of the implications of this minimum attendance requirement, the teacher or other designated staff member(s) will advise the student and contact the parent(s) by telephone and mail at appropriate intervals prior to the student reaching ten (10) ATEDs.

In implementing this policy set forth above, students who are unable to attend school or class on a given day due to their participation in a school-sponsored activity (i.e. curricular field trip, participation in interscholastic sports, testing, etc.), may arrange with their teachers to make up any work missed. This also applies to any student who is absent, tardy or leaves early from school or a class due to illness or any other excused reason.

All students with an excused ATED are expected upon their return to consult with their teachers regarding missed work.

Only those students with excused ATEDs will be given the opportunity to make up a test or other missed work and/or turn in a late assignment for inclusion in their final grade. Make-up opportunities must be completed by a date specified by the student's teacher for the class in question and follow these guidelines:

Students may make up work which is factored into the student's class average. Absences for any reason will seriously jeopardize the student's ability to pass and receive credit for a course.

The following is a suggested guideline for make-up work. However, make-up dates/timelines are specified by the teachers who must consistently apply the same make-up policies among the students in their classes.

- When a student has an excused absence for 1 day, they have 1 day to make up the work. For example, if a student is absent on Monday and comes to school on Tuesday, all of Monday's work, as prescribed by the

assignment will be due on Wednesday, in addition to work assigned on Tuesday and due on Wednesday.

- The same formula holds true for 2 & 3 day excused absences. However, for more than 3 excused absences, make-up work will be handled on a case-by-case basis pending receipt of a Doctor's note.

## II. ATTENDANCE DEFINITIONS

Whenever used within the Comprehensive Attendance Policy, the following definitions apply.

### 1. SCHEDULED INSTRUCTION

- Every period that a pupil is scheduled to attend instructional or supervised study activities during the course of a school day during the school year.

### 2. ABSENCES

- Excused: Absences for illness, religious holidays, sickness or death in the family, court ordered appearance, college visitations, attendance at health clinics or other medical visits, military obligations, other instruction as approved by the Superintendent.
- If a student has 3 or more medical appointments in a 4-week period, a doctor's note is needed to count the absence as excused.
- Unexcused: Absences when for all other reasons, such as hunting, family trips, work, etc. even if a note is submitted to the nurse.
- Truancy: Absent from school without consent of parent or guardian.
- Early departure: The pupil leaves prior to the end of the pupil's scheduled instruction. This is considered an absence, and a note must be brought in explaining the reason for early departure.

### 3. TARDINESS

Students who arrive late to school must sign in at the Nurse's Office. A note signed by a parent or guardian, with phone number, must be presented at the time of arrival. The nurse will issue a pass so that tardy students are admitted to class.

Students who are late to a class are expected to present a signed pass from a teacher indicating the reason for lateness. Unexcused tardies carry consequences for students affecting the student's class participation grade. (See grading information in Section I and make-up information in Section III-C3). In addition, students who are late to class 3 times in a quarter will be issued after-school detention. Students who are chronically tardy will have consequences as set forth in section III-D of this policy.

- Excused: When a student is late to a class or to school for a legitimate reason. That student will present a pass to the classroom teacher signed by another teacher or a note from a parent, as defined in section 2.
- Unexcused: When a student is late to class or school and fails to produce a pass or a note. See definitions in Section II-2.

### 4. CLARIFICATIONS

- Students more than 15 minutes late to a class will be considered absent for that class.
- Students must arrive at school by 9:30 a.m., and will stay in school for the remainder of the day after entering the building, in order to participate in after-school activities unless the student has a legal excuse.
- Absences caused by conflicts within the school program (i.e. testing, athletic events, instructional field trips, etc.) will be resolved on an individual basis by the teachers and administrators involved and may not be counted as an absence. These arrangements should be completed in advance whenever possible. The staff member in charge must notify the attendance officer of the students affected by 9:00 a.m. on day of the scheduled event.

## III. STRATEGIES AND INCENTIVES TO ENCOURAGE STUDENT ATTENDANCE

### A. Minimum Attendance for Course Credit and steps taken to prevent loss of credit.

1. In cases of medical emergency or extended illness requiring more than two weeks absence from school, it is the responsibility of the parent or guardian to notify the school that such a condition exists and provide a doctor's note. Students and their families must make a request with the Guidance Counselor for a supervised program of home tutoring as soon as possible. After receiving medical documentation that a student's medical condition requires an extended absence from school warranting home tutoring, the district will provide a tutor for the student. Every two hours of supervised home tutoring will count as a day of attendance for the student.
2. Each marking period, the number of tardies and absences a student has accumulated in his/her classes will be recorded on the student's report card. The report card will serve as notification to students, parents and/or guardians of the student's attendance status.
3. At the end of each marking period, the attendance officer will review the total number of absences that a student has accumulated in each class. When a student reaches a certain number of absences, the principal will notify parents or guardians by letter of the dangers of excessive absenteeism. Parents or guardians may request a meeting at that time if they wish.
4. Parents may request an attendance conference at any time. The purpose of this conference will be to review attendance records and to give students and parents an opportunity to verify absences, to assess the underlying causes of absences, and to develop a remedial plan to improve attendance. The emphasis in this conference will be on helping the student to correct the problems leading to absence. This may include referral to an appropriate social service agency, referral to counseling, participation in a dropout prevention program, etc.

5. Incentives may include monthly drawings for Perfect Attendance and awards at the end of the year for Perfect Attendance and Excellent Attendance.

In both cases, the definitions are as follows:

- ❖ Perfect attendance - present 100% of the time – no absences (excused or unexcused), no dismissals and no tardies, except tardies excused by another teacher or staff member for testing or curriculum purposes
- ❖ Excellent attendance - no more than 3 absences – either excused or unexcused. Three (3) tardies and/or dismissals = 1 absence.
- ❖ In-school suspension counts as an absence for attendance award purposes.

#### B. NOTICE OF ABSENCES

If a student is to be absent on a school day, parents should call the Nurse's Office (652-1266) at the school by 9:00 a.m. to inform the school and by 10:00 a.m. to request assignments. If a pupil is marked as absent from school and if the school has not been notified of a pupil's absence, the district shall attempt to contact the pupil's parent (s) or person in parental relation to learn the nature of the pupil's absence and notify the parent that the pupil has not arrived at school.

The student must present a written excuse, signed by parent/legal guardian, on the day he/she is returning to school following each absence. An absence will be considered unexcused unless school authorities are given a written note from the parent/guardian within three (3) school days or fourteen (14) calendar days of the absence, whichever comes first.

The school will call home when a student does not bring a written excuse to the Nurse's Office explaining the absence or tardiness. If phone contact is unable to be made or if the student has an excessive number of absences or tardies, a letter will be sent home reminding parents about the policies regarding attendance and the consequences of having unexcused absences or tardies. A parent may request a conference to discuss the absences or tardies with the Principal.

If attendance has not improved following the letter to the parent(s), a meeting will be held with the Principal. The purpose of this meeting will be to review

attendance records, to give students and parents an opportunity to verify absences, to assess the underlying causes of absences, to develop a remedial plan to improve attendance and to establish an attendance contract that will prevent a loss of credit. The emphasis in the meeting will be on helping the students to correct the problems leading to absences. This may include referral to an appropriate social service agency, referral to counseling, participating in a dropout prevention program, etc.

#### C. MAKE-UP ASSIGNMENT PROCEDURE

1. All students are encouraged to obtain and to complete make-up assignments to compensate for their absences. Students must request make-up work from their teachers on the next day the class meets when the students return to school after the absence. Individual teachers will determine the make-up work required and establish both the procedures and the time guidelines. (Ordinarily, a student will have one day for each day absent to make up work.) Students who fail to follow these procedures and time guidelines will forfeit the right to make up work.
2. Excessive absence may seriously compromise the student's ability to pass and earn credit.
3. Tardiness is disruptive to the education of both the tardy student and to the other students in the class. In cases of repeated tardiness, students fail to demonstrate the appropriate learning behaviors required of students in a classroom. Excessive tardiness will impact the class participation grade that a student receives as part of their academic grade.

#### D. DISCIPLINARY CONSEQUENCES OF ABSENCES AND TARDIES

1. Whenever a student is absent from school for either the whole day or part of the day, the student is required to provide a written note from a parent or guardian explaining the reason for the absence. This note must be given to the school nurse on the day s/he returns to school from an absence.

2. Attendance code violations (unexcused absences, truancies, class skips, and unexcused tardies) are disciplinary infractions that violate both the educational laws of New York State and the discipline and attendance policies of the school district. Consequences for such violations will be determined individually, and may include, but are not limited to the following guidelines:
  - 3 unexcused tardies to school and/or any given class in a quarter will result in 1 after-school detention (Teachers will keep track of their students' tardies and issue the detention).
  - 1<sup>st</sup> Violation (of a class skip) – 1 after-school detention will be assigned and parents will be notified.
  - 2<sup>nd</sup> Violation (of a class skip) – 2 after-school detentions will be assigned as well as a conference with the parents.
  - 3<sup>rd</sup> Violation (of a class skip) – will be handled by Administration on a case-by-case basis.
  - 2 lunch detentions will be equal to 1 after-school detention, if circumstances do not allow for an after-school detention.
3. Students who accumulate a total of 5 unexcused class absences in a quarter shall be deemed chronic attendance code violators.
4. Chronic attendance code violators are not be allowed to attend special school functions, such as: non-instructional field trips, including, but not limited to ski trips, club trips, work study, prom, senior trip, and dances.
5. For the purpose of disciplinary hearings, students classified as chronic attendance code violators will be addressed on a case-by-case basis and will be deemed to have committed serious infractions of the school's disciplinary code and such infractions may warrant more severe penalties. Subsequent attendance code violations will be dealt with progressively within the context of the school's disciplinary code. In addition, if deemed warranted, assistance from agencies such as social services will be contacted to address possible educational neglect.
6. A student who has been designated as a chronic attendance code violator may regain privileges by attending school regularly.

#### E. INCENTIVES

Teachers shall work with the Administrators and Attendance Officer to create and implement classroom and school-wide based programs for excellent attendance, including but not limited to additional privileges, recognition events and awards, and other school traditions.

#### F. INTERVENTION STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT

The administration shall meet after each marking period with the Attendance Officer and other teachers as administration determines necessary to review student attendance records, address identified patterns of unexcused pupil absence, tardiness and early departure, and review current intervention methods. Where the administration determines that existing intervention policies or practices are insufficient, the Administrator shall notify the Board of Education prior to its annual review of the building's attendance records, of both insufficient practices and any proposed changes needing Board approval to implement.

#### IV. ATTENDANCE SUPERVISION OFFICER

The School Nurse shall be designated as the Attendance Officer. The Attendance Officer is responsible for gathering and inputting attendance data, pupil attendance records and initiating communication with the Principal to address unexcused pupil absence, tardiness and early departure.

#### V. ANNUAL REVIEW

The Board shall annually review building-level student attendance records and, if such records show a decline in student attendance, the Board shall revise this comprehensive attendance policy and make any revisions to the plan it deems necessary to improve student attendance.

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Stamford Central School District

Adopted:

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