

SUBJECT: ATTENDANCE

Statement of Overall Objectives

School attendance is both a right and a responsibility. The School District is an active partner with students and parents in the task of ensuring that all students meet or exceed the New York Learning Standards. Because the School District recognizes that the educational 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 for this purpose. Absences have a highly adverse effect on the student as well as the entire educational program. Therefore, the School District will develop, review and if necessary, revise a Comprehensive Student Attendance Policy to meet the following objectives:

- a) To insure successful completion of graduation requirements for all students;
- b) To raise student achievement and improve academic deficiencies in student performance;
- c) To identify patterns in order to design attendance improvement intervention strategies;
- d) To establish a practical mechanism to account for the whereabouts of all students throughout the school day;
- e) To verify that individual students comply with education laws relating to compulsory attendance;
- f) To determine the District's average daily attendance for state aid purposes.

Guiding Principles

Student attendance in school is driven by environment, relationships and instruction. Students are motivated to attend school when:

- a) The environment is nurturing;
- b) The environment is physically and emotionally safe and secure;
- c) Positive relationships are developed with teachers and other adults in the school;
- d) Interactions between staff and students are respectful and supportive;

- e) They are engaged in school and feel a sense of belonging leading to a bond with the school community;
- f) They experience success in school;
- g) They feel that instruction is tailored to their differentiated needs;
- h) High expectations are held for their performance;
- i) The work is meaningful and stimulating;
- j) The student, their parents and their school perceive attendance as essential to school success.

Description of Strategies to Meet Objectives

In order to create and maintain a positive, protective school that encourages increased pupil attendance, the School District will:

- a) Foster a positive nurturing school environment;
- b) Provide a presence of strong adult role models in students' lives;
- c) Develop respectful and supportive interactions among staff and students;
- d) Promote student engagement which will enable a high level of student bonding to the school community;
- e) Maintain accurate recordkeeping via a register of attendance to record attendance, absences, tardiness and early departure of each student;
- f) Utilize data analysis systems for tracking student attendance and trends for individuals and groups with chronic attendance problems;
- g) Develop early intervention strategies by the Attendance Support Staff to improve student attendance which would include but not be limited to parental contacts, home visits and counseling strategies.

Determination of Excused and Unexcused Absences, Tardiness and Early Departures for all Students K through 12 for the Purpose of the Attendance Register

Based upon the William Floyd Union Free School District's education and community needs, values and priorities, the School District has determined that absences, tardiness and early departures will be considered excused or unexcused for the purpose of recordkeeping in the Attendance Register according to the following standards:

- a) Excused: An absence, tardiness or early departure will be excused, if documented, for school sponsored music programs (i.e. Lessons, NYSSMA), school sponsored trips and events, personal illness, medical appointments, court appearances, military testing, college visits, death in the family, impassible roads, homeless awaiting transportation, religious observation, scouting trips and other reasons approved by the Board of Education. Excused absences will not count against student grades, including participation grades.
- b) Unexcused: An absence, tardiness or early departure will be considered unexcused for any reason other than the reasons listed above. In addition, an absence can be considered unexcused if the reason is not verifiable.

Description of the Coding System Used to Identify the Reason for a Pupil's Absence, Tardiness or Early Departure

Each building will keep both an attendance card and an electronic Register of Attendance. At the High School and Middle School level, attendance will be taken every period recording daily as well as period by period attendance. At the Elementary Schools attendance will be taken at the beginning of the school day recording daily attendance. At all schools tardiness and early departures will be recorded both on the attendance card and in the electronic register.

Attendance records shall also indicate the date of entry, date of withdrawal from enrollment in the District, and the reason for withdrawal. The following coding symbols will be used on the attendance cards:

<X	excused absence
<U	unexcused absence
\+time	tardiness + time of arrival
/+time	early departure + time of departure
S	ISS
<O	other excused or OSS

Attendance Incentives

In order to encourage student attendance, the William Floyd Union Free School District will develop and implement grade-appropriate building level strategies and programs including but not limited to:

- a) Posting attendance honor rolls;
- b) Monthly drawings for prizes for outstanding attendance;
- c) Quarterly certificates and coupons for outstanding attendance;
- d) Classroom acknowledgement of good attendance;
- e) Renaissance recognition for good attendance at schools participating in the Renaissance program.

Disciplinary Consequences

Unexcused absences, tardiness and early departures will result in disciplinary sanctions as described by the William Floyd Union Free School 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 Notification

It is the goal that all parents/persons in parental relation be notified of each absence, tardiness or early departure from school without proper excuse. Parents/persons in parental relation will be notified by the designated William Floyd Union Free School District personnel to discuss their child's absences and patterns of attendance and the importance of class attendance and appropriate interventions. Individual buildings will address procedures to implement the notification process to the parent/person in parental relation.

Personnel Responsible for Reviewing Pupil Attendance Records and Initiating Appropriate Intervention Strategies

The William Floyd Union Free School District Attendance Teachers will collaborate with Building Administrators to review all records and initiate intervention strategies.

Intervention Strategy Process

In order to effectively intervene when an identified pattern of poor attendance or unexcused absence occurs, the designated William Floyd Union Free School District personnel will pursue one or more of the following as deemed necessary to resolve the problem:

- a) Identify the problem or pattern of poor attendance;

- b) Notify the parents/persons in parental relation;
- c) Send referral to the Attendance Teacher for a home visit;
- d) Arrange a conference with parents/persons in parental relation, student William Floyd Union Free School District building support staff, teacher and/or administrator;
- e) Send referral to William Floyd Union Free School District building support staff for counseling or remediation services;
- f) Send referral to community or government agencies for remediation services;
- g) Monitor and report short and long term effects of interventions.

Building Review of Attendance Records

Commencing with the 2003-04 school year, the Building Principals will work in conjunction with the William Floyd Union Free School District Attendance Teachers, the building attendance aide and other designated staff in reviewing attendance records at the end of each term. This review will be conducted to identify individual and group attendance patterns, and to initiate appropriate action to address the problem or unexcused absences, tardiness and early departures.

Annual Review by the Board of Education

The Board of Education will annually review the building level average daily attendance, and if such records show a decline in student attendance, the Board will make revisions to the Policy to improve student attendance.

Community Awareness

The Board of Education will promote necessary awareness of the William Floyd Union Free School District Comprehensive Attendance Policy by:

- a) Providing a plain language summary of the policy at the beginning of each school year to students and to parent/persons in parental relation to them;
- b) Promoting the understanding of such policy to student and their parents/persons in parental relation;

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Students

- c) Providing each teacher at the beginning of each school year or upon employment a copy of the policy,
- d) Providing copies of the policy to any other members of the community upon request.

Education Law Sections 3024, 3025, 3202, 3205, 3206, 3210, 3211, 3213
8 NYCRR Sections 104.1, 109.2, and 175.6

Adopted: 10/28/02

Revised: 9/26/17; 11/13/18