



## STUDENTS

5113

### Attendance Policy

#### School Attendance

Good teachers and the best curriculum are of little consequence if students do not attend school on a regular basis. Time lost from the classroom is essentially irretrievable; the experiences, discussions and the uniqueness of the classroom learning process require school attendance. Establishing good attendance habits early will better equip young people toward being productive members of society. Classroom attendance is considered to be an integral part of the student's course of study.

#### 1. Attendance

Connecticut state law requires parents to cause their children, ages five through eighteen inclusive, to attend school regularly during the hours and terms the public school is in session. Parents or persons having control of a child five years of age have the option of not sending the child to school until ages six or seven. Mandatory attendance terminates upon graduation or withdrawal with written parental/guardian consent at age eighteen.

#### 2. Excused Absences and Dismissals

Contact must be made between the school and parent/guardian on the day of the absence or confirmation of absence must be secured upon the student's return to school.

The following constitute excused absences/dismissals:

- A. 1. Medical/illness or injury which requires the student's presence at home. Three or more absences in a week or a pattern of excessive absence due to illness may require a physician's note at the discretion of the principal or his/her designee
2. Death in the family which requires the student's presence at home
3. Religious observances which require the student's presence at home
4. School sponsored activities, including field trips, interscholastic competitions
5. Court appearances
6. Expulsion and Out of School suspension
7. In-school appointments (counselor, administrator, nurse, etc.)
8. Testing for a driver's license
9. College visits
10. Such others that the principal judges as warranted

- B. In case of illness or other emergencies necessitating early dismissal, the school will notify parent/guardian or designated emergency person, if it is possible to do so, before dismissing the pupil. No pupil shall be dismissed from the school grounds without the approval of the principal or his/her designee.

### 3. Unexcused Absences

- A. All other absences with or without written explanation shall be considered unexcused.
- B. Family vacations/trips are considered unexcused.

### 4. Responsibility

It is the teacher's responsibility to:

- A. Keep accurate attendance records
- B. Provide a schedule of assignments and make-up work when appropriate

It is the principal's or his/her designee's responsibility to:

- A. Assist the teacher, students and parents by establishing clear procedures
- B. Communicate this policy to staff, students and parents
- C. Enforce this policy
- D. Follow through on unexcused absences and scheduled deadlines

It is the student's responsibility to:

- A. Complete missed classwork assigned on the day of the absence within five (5) days of return to school. Students returning from an absence must be prepared to participate in previously announced tests/quizzes/assignments immediately upon return to school, unless other arrangements have been made with the teacher prior to an excused planned absence or extended illness.

### 5. Elementary School

Regular student attendance is expected. If a student is not prompt and regular in attendance, proper measures shall be taken to encourage regular attendance. If such encouragement is not successful in improving the situation, a review of assessment of student learning shall be conducted and a range of interventions up to and including retention shall be instituted. The final intervention plan or decision to retain rests with the school principal.

#### A. Elementary School Attendance Procedures

1. The homeroom teacher is responsible to take daily attendance with the district-wide student information system.
2. The school secretary will contact parent/guardian for each absence by telephone/Global Connect/automated telephone system.
3. A doctor's note may be requested for contagious illnesses, accidents, and extended school absences of a medical nature. A certificate allowing a child to return to school may be required following an illness of three (3) consecutive school days for reasons of illness or injury. If the child has been sick, a doctor's certificate is preferred. If a doctor has seen the child, the school nurse can meet with the parent/guardian and certify the child's return to school.

4. The school secretary will provide written notification to parents at two unexcused absences per month and/or five unexcused absences in a year. The school secretary shall send written notification of total absences to parents/guardians beginning at five absences and at each additional five absences, i.e. 10, 15, 20 absences.
5. Administrator or designee shall track attendance regularly. Any student with ten (10) or more excused or unexcused absences shall be the focus of a parent meeting where a plan to improve student attendance is formulated; or earlier at the discretion of the principal.
6. If the attendance does not improve, the school may seek further assistance through a Family with Service Needs Referral and/or the School Resource Officer or D.A.R.E. Officer.
7. Continued absences may also be reported to the Division of Children and Families (D.C.F.) as educational neglect per DCF Policy 37-7-7 of four unexcused days per month or ten unexcused days per year if the circumstances are warranted.
8. A letter will be sent to the parent/guardian for habitual tardiness or early dismissals from school. Students may be required to serve after-school detentions with his/her teacher to make up missed work.

B. Sample Elementary School Attendance Letter:

*School attendance is considered to be an integral part of a student's course of study. The experiences, discussions, and the uniqueness of the classroom learning process require regular school attendance.*

*As of [date], our records indicate that [student name] has been absent from school a total of [number of days]. All absences must be excused by a parent/guardian or doctor's note, and regular student attendance is expected.*

*You have been contacted by a school secretary or through automated telephone system to inform you of your child's absence for each instance when you have not previously contacted the school.*

*Two unexcused absences in one month and/or five unexcused absences in a year require a meeting between the parent/guardian and a representative of the school, at which time state's statutes and Montville Public School's Attendance Policy will be reviewed.*

*We are requesting that you attend a meeting on [date and time] so that we may work with you to ensure that your child's education is not impacted by further absences from school. We hope to solve the attendance problem before other measures up to including retention are necessary.*

6. Middle School

Regular student attendance is expected. If a student is not prompt and regular in attendance, proper measures shall be taken to encourage regular attendance. If such encouragement is not successful in improving the situation, a review of assessment of student learning shall be conducted and a range of interventions up to and including retention shall be instituted. The final intervention plan or decision to retain rests with the school principal.

#### A. Middle School Attendance Procedures

1. The homeroom teacher is responsible to take daily attendance with the district-wide student information database.
2. The school secretary will contact parent/guardian of daily unexcused absences through the automated telephone system.
3. The school secretary will provide written notification to parents at two (2) unexcused absences per month, five (5) unexcused absences in a year, and subsequently at each additional five (5) absences, i.e. 10, 15, 20 absences.
4. All absences should be excused by a parent through a phone call, parent note, doctor note, and/or court documentation.
5. A doctor's note may be requested for contagious illnesses, accidents, and extended school absences of a medical nature.
6. Administration or their designee shall track attendance regularly. Five (5) unexcused or ten (10) or more excused absences result in a mandatory parent meeting with administration and the guidance counselor where an intervention plan will be formulated to assist with more regular attendance.
7. If the attendance does not improve, the school may seek further assistance through a Family with Service Needs Referral and/or the School Resource Officer or D.A.R.E. Officer.
8. Continued absences may also be reported to the Division of Children and Families (D.C.F.) as educational neglect if the circumstances warrant it.
9. If interventions are unsuccessful and academic progress is affected, students may be referred to a summer school program at the expense of the parent or retained.
10. Excessive tardiness to school or excessive early dismissals may result in office detentions being issued. In addition, a letter will be sent home to parents requesting a mandatory parent meeting with administration and the guidance counselor where an intervention plan will be formulated to assist with punctuality.

Note: Parents may access student attendance at any time through the Aspen Parent Portal.

#### B. Sample Middle School Attendance Letter:

*As of [date], our records indicate that [student name] has been absent from school a total of [number of days]. All absences must be excused by a parent or doctor's note. Two unexcused absences in one month and/or five unexcused absences in a year require a meeting between the parent/guardian and a representative of the school, at which time State statutes and Montville School's Attendance Policy will be reviewed.*

*You have received regular phone calls for each unexcused absence through our automated telephone system. At this time, you need to schedule a mandatory meeting with [name of student's], guidance counselor to address [his/her] absences.*

*It is imperative we meet with you as soon as possible. Should [name of student] continue to be absent, the school may file truancy with the Superior court pursuant to existing law.*

*Please contact the guidance counselor at 860-848-2822.*

## 7. Montville High School

Regular student attendance is expected. To earn credit for a course, the student may not exceed the allowable limit of absences (6 for semester classes and 12 for full year classes).

A student will receive no credit when seven (7) unexcused absences for semester courses and thirteen (13) unexcused absences for full year courses have been reached.

A student will receive one unexcused absence per class for every three (3) tardies that he/she accumulates in that particular class. However, a student who is not present for at least sixty (60) minutes of the block will be counted as absent. Tardies/early dismissals with proper documentation\* will not count as a class absence.

For students losing credit due to attendance, the grade earned will appear on the report card/transcript with a comment that no credit earned is due to attendance.

Parents are asked to call the school on the day of the absence or send in written notification upon the student's return to school.

Students with chronic illnesses should document their condition with the nurse. In extreme cases of illness, hospitalization or family issues, a meeting must be scheduled with an administrator, school counselor and parent(s) or person(s) having control of the student prior to the absences to determine a plan regarding continued academic progress.

The high school mails home weekly notifications to the families of students that have accrued excessive absences in their courses. Warning letters are sent after 3, 6, 9, and 12 class absences. It is the responsibility of the student and family to monitor the attendance of their child(ren) and initiate the appeals proceedings, if warranted.

### A. High School Attendance Procedures

1. The classroom teacher is responsible to take daily attendance with the district-wide student information database. Classroom teachers are responsible for recording class attendance each block during the day for the purpose of determining when a student has been absent too many times to earn credit in the course.
2. The school secretary will contact parent/guardian of daily unexcused absences through the automated telephone system.
3. The school secretary will provide written notification to the families of student that have accrued three unexcused absences. Follow up letters are sent after 6, 9, 12, and subsequently at each additional three absences, i.e. 15, 18, 21 absences.
4. All absences should be reported by a parent through a phone call, parent note, doctor note, and/or court documentation.
5. A doctor's note may be requested for contagious illnesses, accidents, and extended school absences of a medical nature.
6. Administration or their designee shall track attendance regularly. Five unexcused or ten or more excused absences result in a mandatory parent meeting with administration and the guidance counselor where an intervention plan will be formulated to assist with more regular attendance.
7. If the attendance does not improve, the school may seek further assistance through a Family with Service Needs Referral and/or the School Resource Officer or D.A.R.E. Officer.
8. Continued absences may also be reported to D.C.F. as educational neglect if the circumstances warrant it.

9. If interventions are unsuccessful and academic progress is affected, students may be referred to a summer school program at the expense of the parent or retained.
10. Excessive tardiness to school or excessive early dismissals may result in office detentions being issued. In addition, a letter will be sent home to parents requesting a mandatory parent meeting with administration and the guidance counselor where an intervention plan will be formulated to assist with punctuality.

Note: Parents may access student attendance at any time through the Aspen Parent Portal.

B. Documentation is defined as authentic and original correspondence regarding the following:

- Medical appointments
- Legal meetings
- Bereavement
- Passes from a teacher, counselor, nurse, or administrator

All documentation must be submitted within two (2) weeks from the date of absence(s).

C. Options for Credit Recovery

A student who has lost credit due to excessive absence as defined by the Attendance Policy may recover credit in one of four ways:

1. Through a successful attendance appeals process.
2. Retaking the course the next semester or school year.
3. Taking the course in summer school (if offered)
4. Making up the instructional time lost through our on-line credit recovery program while remaining in, and attending regularly, the original course. Missed time must be made up after school, at home or during study hall. Students must make up time for ALL absences accumulated, not just enough to reduce their number of absences to get below the attendance limit (e.g. if a student has accumulated 14 absences, he/she must make up 14 days' worth of instructional time).

D. Sample High School Attendance Letter:

*This letter is to inform you that your child, [student's name], has exceeded three (3) absences in a particular class. These absences represent classes missed due to tardiness, dismissals, and absences from school.*

*Board of Education policy states that credit will not be earned in any course in which a student accumulates thirteen (13) absences in a full year course or seven (7) absences in a semester course. If your child accumulates the number of absences mentioned above, he/she will be in danger of losing credit for the following course(s).*

*Per the attendance policy, students earn an additional absence for every three (3) unexcused tardies. When tracking attendance toward loss of credit, be sure to calculate and include absences due to tardies.*

<i>[Course]</i>	<i>Absences [#]</i>	<i>Tardies [#]</i>
-----------------	---------------------	--------------------

<i>[Course]</i>	<i>Absences [#]</i>	<i>Tardies [#]</i>
-----------------	---------------------	--------------------

*If you have any questions regarding this matter, please call my office at 860-848-9208 at your earliest convenience.*

## HIGH SCHOOL APPEALS PROCESS

Students who have lost credit due to absences and tardies may appeal only absences that they believe should be excused under the criteria listed above. Class tardies may not be appealed.

The high school mails home weekly notifications to the families of students that have accrued excessive absences in their courses. Warning letters are sent after 3, 6, 9, and 12 absences. It is the responsibility of the student and family to monitor their attendance numbers and to initiate any appeals proceedings. Parent(s)/Guardian(s) may also use the Aspen Parent Portal to monitor their child(ren)'s attendance at any time.

Appeals will be heard twice per year: once after the first semester and once in June.

Students may obtain an appeals application from the main office and submit the completed packet to the main office.

The Appeals Committee will be composed of a minimum of the following members:

1. Administrator
2. School Counselor
3. Teacher

The Appeals Committee will review applications and any related documentation and will make determinations on which absences, if any, to excuse.

The Appeals Committee's decision will be final.

Students will be notified by letter of the outcome of their appeal(s) and their credit status.

Legal Reference: Connecticut General Statutes

10-184 Duties of parents as amended by PA 98-243 and PA 00-157

10-185 Penalty

10-199 through 10-202 Attendance, truancy – in general

Policy Adopted: 6/07/79

Revised: 6/18/85

Revised: 11/19/85

Revised: 5/19/92

Revised: 6/20/95

Revised: 7/15/97

Revised: 8/18/98

Revised: 6/19/01

Revised: 6/19/12