



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.

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

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