



Ocean County Vocational Technical School District

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< Prev Next >

To Regulation

To Statutes:

To Codes:

To Digest



Search District
Policies

District Policies TOC

Print Version

District Policy

5210- ACADEMY STUDENT ATTENDANCE

Section: Students
Date Created: October 2007
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The Board of Education has an obligation to require that the pupils of this district be present in school in order that they may receive a thorough and efficient education. This policy is for the benefit of the pupils, their parents, and the community at large. Pupil participation in regularly-scheduled classroom learning activities in each area of study is essential in order for each pupil to receive the maximum benefits of a thorough educational program. The entire process of education requires a regular continuity of instruction, classroom participation, learning experiences, and study. The regular contact of pupils 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 the purpose.

Absence from school jeopardizes the ability of a student to satisfactorily complete the course of study and violates the statutes requiring children to regularly attend school (NJSA 18:38-25 and 26). Consequently, pupil attendance is the direct responsibility of the parent/legal guardian and the student.

Absenteeism

Absence Verification:

The school will require a note to be submitted following each individual absence. Absentee notes must be submitted to the Attendance Office. However, parent/guardian and student must maintain an accurate and verifiable record of each absence (i.e., medical and legal notes) required for presentation in the event of an appeal proceeding.

Loss of Course Credit:

Students missing over 9 school days each semester will not have completed the course of study as prescribed and as such will not qualify to receive the assigned credit for the course, subject to Section 5000 (High School Graduation). This is not a permissive regulation establishing or "licensing" a limit which may be missed with no harm, but rather assumes absences will occur for personal or family problems and professional appointments which cannot be scheduled at non-school times. Appeals for review of a no-credit status are provided in this document.

Sponsored Activities:

Students shall not be considered absent while participating in a school-sponsored activity. However, it shall be the responsibility of the student to confirm his/her absence in advance and to make up any work missed. Failure to do so will be considered a cut.

Incomplete School Day:

- i. Students who sign in after 9:30 a.m. will be counted absent for the a.m. session.
- ii. Students who leave school before 11:30 a.m. will be counted absent for the p.m. session.
- iii. Students arriving late to school as a result of a verified appointment with a physician, dentist, or State driver's test will not be marked tardy for the purpose of this policy.

Notification of Absence

On the fourth day of a student's absence and again on the sixth day of absence, notification is sent to the parent or legal guardian that the student is jeopardizing his/her ability to satisfactorily complete the prescribed course of study.

Parents/Guardians of students who have accumulated nine absences each semester and are of the compulsory school age (under 16 years of age) may be in violation of the statutes of NJSA 18A: 38-25 and 26.

Excessive Absences

Any student who exceeds nine days of unexcused absences each semester will have achieved a "no credit" status in all courses of study. At this point the student desiring to submit an appeal to the Attendance Review Committee must do so within five school days after the receipt of notification of a no-credit status.

- i. Any student who misses thirteen consecutive school days, does not appear on home assignment, home instruction, and/or is not medically verified as incapacitated will be issued a written notification to report back to school within five school days. Failure to respond will result in the following:
- ii. Students under the compulsory school age (below 16 years of age) shall have presented to their parent/guardian a formal written notice to cause the child to attend school (NJSA 18A: 38-29). Failure to comply with the provisions of the law may cause the parent/guardian to be deemed a disorderly person and be subject to a fine (NJSA 18A: 38-29).
- iii. Students above the compulsory age, but not complying with the notice to return to school will be notified that within ten days they may present to the High School Principal an explanation of their absence and that failing to do so may be brought up for administrative review.
- iv. Students, who during a school year miss over thirty days of school in a non-consecutive fashion, will be notified and also their parent/guardian that a conference will be required with the High School Principal within five school days of such notification to determine the reasons for the absence. Students above the compulsory school age who during a school year

miss over thirty days of school in a non-consecutive fashion, will have notification mailed to them and their parent/guardian that failing adequate explanation of absences in such conference, such students may be brought to the Board of Education for a hearing to consider exclusion from school if such recommendation is made by the Superintendent of School.

Homebound Instruction

Homebound instruction shall be assigned to students meeting current regulations pertaining to such assignment. It is the responsibility of the parent to notify the school regarding the need for homebound instruction. Names of students properly assigned shall be placed in a separate and specific attendance register and these students will not be considered absent for the purpose of this policy.

Tardiness and Early Release

The orderly conduct of class activity is predicated upon the prompt and precise beginning of the class. Tardiness and Early Release hinder the proper conduct of the class, impose a distraction which leads to a loss of instructional time for students properly in attendance, and denote school time lost by the tardy student.

i. Tardiness

Students who are tardy to school shall refer to the school discipline code, found within the student handbook.

ii. Early Release

The school recognizes four emergencies which create a legitimate need for release from school before the end of the student day:

- a. Illness which manifested itself after the student reported to school;
- b. Verified appointment with a physician/dentist
- c. Driver's test with verification of appointment; or
- d. Court-issued orders.

Make-up Work

All students absent, regardless of the reason, will be given the opportunity to make up work which in the professional opinion of the teacher is necessary to assure the continuity of the instructional program. Failure to make up work is reflected in the grading.

Appeals

An appeal procedure has been established and forms are available in the main office.

Petition for Hearing:

A meeting with the Building Principal is necessary to appeal the withdrawal of credit. This meeting must take place within fourteen calendar days from the date of the withdrawal of credit letter. Appropriate documentation supporting the appeal must be presented at the meeting.

Attendance Review Committee (ARC):

In keeping with the dictates of fairness and procedural due process, an Attendance Review Committee (ARC) will be established to hear cases brought by petition from parent(s)/guardian(s) or students eighteen or older concerning a no-credit status.

The Committee will hear appeals as deemed necessary by the Building Principal.

The Attendance Review Committee (ARC) shall consist of two members selected from: Administration; and/or Guidance Counselors.

Guidelines for the Attendance Review Committee:

1. The appeal must cover a specific date;
2. The appeal must be based on a specific reason for the specific date; and
3. Reasons to be considered* by the ARC as acceptable:
 - a. Documented medical appointments;
 - b. Daytime court appearances;
 - c. Illness certified by medical/dental professionals;
 - d. Death in the family;
 - e. Documented religious holiday;
 - f. Documented college visit; or
 - g. Others for extenuating circumstances.

* "considered" does not mean automatic approval.

Appeals to the Assistant Superintendent of Schools relating to the decisions of the ARC must be presented in writing to the Assistant Superintendent of Schools within seven days of receipt of the ARC's decision. The Assistant Superintendent, or his/her designee, hears the appeal and shall give a decision within three school days.

Appeals to the Superintendent of Schools relating to the decisions of the ARC must be presented in writing to the Superintendent of Schools within seven days of receipt of the ARC's decision. The Superintendent, or his/her designee, hears the appeal and shall give a decision within three school days.

Appeals to the Board of Education relating to the decision of the Superintendent of Schools must be made in writing within ten days of receipt of the

Superintendent's decision. The Board shall hear the appeal within fifteen days of the receipt of the appeal and give its decision within five days of the hearing.

Board of Education decisions may be appealed to the Commissioner of Education.

Recordkeeping

Reporting Absences:

Absences and tardiness from school shall be recorded in an appropriate manner on report cards issued at the end of each marking period.

Letters of notification will be mailed to the parent/guardian, alerting them of the danger of non-compliance with the attendance requirements. Letters will be mailed on the fourth and sixth absences. A letter of more than nine absences indicates the student is in a withdrawal of credit status.

Other procedures:

Each Academy will be responsible for maintaining a total alphabetical list of students by grade, indicating year to date absences.

A student, upon returning to school after an absence, submits his/her absentee note to the Attendance Secretary in the Main Office.

A student who cuts a class four times will receive withdrawal of credit for that class.

Class Cut Policy: Refer to Student Handbook for consequences.

Late to School: Refer to Student Handbook for consequences.

Late to Class: Refer to Student Handbook for student consequences.

Suspension

"The school cannot teach pupils who are not present." Therefore, any suspension is an absence, but cannot be used in Attendance Policy Law.

Absences in individual classes are monitored as well. A student who has more than nine unexcused absences, or four cuts in a class will have withdrawal of credit in that class.

Discipline

- i) Pupils may be denied participation in co-curricular activities if their attendance fails to meet the standards set forth in Policy No. 2430.

- ii) No pupil who is absent from school for observance of a religious holiday may be deprived of any award or of eligibility for or opportunity to compete for any award because of the absence.
- iii) The absence of a pupil missing from school for unexplained reasons will be handled in accordance with Policy No. 8462.

Recording Attendance

Teachers must accurately record the pupils present, tardy, and absent each day in each session or each class. Attendance records must also record pupils' attendance at out-of-school curricular events such as field trips.

A report card will record the number of times the pupil was absent and tardy in each marking period.

A pupil's absence for observance of a religious holiday will not be recorded as such on any transcript or application or employment form.

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