

**ATTENDANCE, TARDINESS, AND TRUANCY POLICY**

A core value of SAU 50 is the importance of regular attendance at school. This value is consistent with the State of New Hampshire statutes and laws that are intended to insure a student's attendance. Lack of regular attendance and school truancy increases the risk of poor academic progress and performance, delinquent behavior, school avoidance and poor self-esteem. Tardiness to class and frequent absences from school causes a disruption to the teaching and learning process and is a distraction to both teachers and students. The Greenland, New Castle, Newington, and Rye School Districts' staff and administration are committed to working collaboratively with parents and students with issues associated with attendance.

- 1.) Tardiness: Tardiness is a disruption to the educational process: it sets a tone that de-values education, detracts from learning, is discourteous to the teacher and other students and results in a loss of instructional time. Being present on time is a life skill to be cultivated so students are expected to arrive at school on time. A pattern of tardiness puts students at a disadvantage in school. We ask that parent(s)/guardian(s) work with the school to ensure that students arrive on time.
- 2.) Absenteeism: A parent(s)/guardian(s) duty is to verify his/her child's absence with the child's school. The administration's duty is to determine whether the absence is excused or unexcused.
  - a) Verified Absence  
Contact occurs between parent(s)/guardian(s) and school and consensus is obtained, i.e., family vacations, etc.
  - b) Excused Absence
    1. Personal illness (may require physician's documentation)
    2. Death in the family
    3. Professional appointments
    4. Religious holidays
    5. School-related functions
    6. Required court attendance
    7. Suspension from school
    8. Significant extenuating circumstances as acceptable to the building administrator or permitted by law.
  - c) Unexcused Absence
    1. Excessive parent/guardian-verified absences
    2. Failure to follow school's absence/tardy policy and procedures
    3. Truancy
- 3.) Truancy: Any student who is absent from school and/or class without the knowledge and permission of his/her parent(s)/guardian(s) or school



authorities is truant. Parent(s)/guardian(s) must verify all absences. While parent(s)/guardian(s) maintain the right to excuse children from school, not all absences are approved by the school administration, and the consequences for school-approved absences and non-school approved absences may differ. When questions arise as to whether an excused absence is school-approved or non-school approved, the decision will be made by the school administration. Absences, even with the approval of the parent(s)/guardian(s), which are excessive and/or which interfere with the student's educational program will be interpreted as truancy and follow-up actions may be instituted. A student shall be declared habitually truant when he/she has had 10 half-days of non-approved absences in one school year. A half-day absence is defined as missing up to half of the total minutes in a school's day. Missing more than half the total minutes in a school's day constitutes two half-day absences.

### **Responsibilities of Parent/Guardian, School and Students**

#### 1.) Parent(s)/Guardian(s)/Students:

- a) Will notify the school in advance of a student's absence, whenever possible.
- b) Students are responsible for making up school work missed due to absences.

#### 2.) Building Administrator or Designee:

- a.) Shall be notified daily of student absences (See policy JHBC, Absentee and Attendance Procedure.)
- b.) Shall determine if it is a valid absence and, if necessary, attempt to contact parent(s)/guardian(s) by telephone to confirm the cause of absence. However, it is the parent(s)/guardian(s)' responsibility to notify the school in advance if the student is going to be absent. Lack of parent(s)/guardian(s) contact with the school will result in an unexcused absence.

#### 3.) School:

- a) Shall annually document the cumulative absences on each student, as the number of absences will determine the thresholds for intervention as described in the Protocol for Excessive Unexcused Absences.
- b) State law requires that student attendance be taken and recorded accurately during each school day.

### **Protocol for Tardiness**

Each school will decide upon the appropriate method of parent(s)/guardian(s) contact and resulting disciplinary action for excessive tardiness, which will be outlined in the school's student handbook.



## **Protocol for Excessive Unexcused Absences**

1.) 5 or more half-day unexcused absences:

- At 5 half-day unexcused absences, administration will determine the appropriate intervention to include one or more of the following:
  - Contact by administration or designee to parent(s)/guardian(s)
  - Meeting with the guidance counselor, student and parent(s)/guardian(s)
  - Letter(s) reviewing the policy sent to the parent(s)/guardian(s); it will advise the parent that, should absences continue, s/he may be contacted to attend a meeting to create a plan addressing the problem
  - A meeting with administration, parent(s)/guardian(s) and student to develop a plan
  - Special education referral/notification
  - A referral to the police, court/diversion and/or DCYF

2.) 10 half-day unexcused absences:

- At 10 half-day unexcused absences, actions by administration will include one or more of the following:
  - Contact by administration or designee to parent(s)/guardian(s)
  - Letter(s) reviewing the policy sent to the parent(s)/guardian(s) advising that s/he will be contacted to attend a meeting to address the problem
  - Special education referral/notification
  - A referral to the police, court/diversion and/or DCYF
  - Report filed with DCYF by appropriate school personnel
  - Child in Need of Services (CHINS) petition/affidavit

Attendance procedures are located in the principal's office of each school.

### **Legal References:**

RSA 189:34, *School Boards, Superintendents, Teachers, and Truant Officers: Appointment*  
RSA 189.35-a, *School Boards, Superintendents, Teachers, and Truant Officers: Truancy Defined*  
RSA 193:1, *Pupils: Duty of Parent; Compulsory Attendance by Pupil*  
RSA 193:7, *Pupils: Penalty*  
RSA 193:8, *Pupils: Notice Requirements*  
RSA 193:16, *Pupils: Bylaws as to Nonattendance*  
NH Code of Administrative Rules, Section ED 306.04 (a) (1), *Policy Development: Attendance and Absenteeism*  
NH Code of Administrative Rules, Section ED 306.04 (c), *Policy Development: Attendance and Absenteeism*

Adopted 2011

