

**Attendance, Absences, Tardiness/Dismissals and Truancy**

To achieve college and career readiness, all students must be in attendance and punctual every day throughout their school years. To that end, the administration has established an attendance regulation which reflects that time lost from class is essentially irretrievable in terms of opportunity for instructional exchange; that excessive absences rob teachers and students of teaching time that could be better spent on programs and activities; and that a student has an obligation to give, as well as receive, in the context of the classroom setting.

**I. EXCUSED VERSUS UNEXCUSED ABSENCES****A. Definitions**

**Excused and Unexcused:** A student is considered to be “in attendance” if present at his/her assigned school, or an activity sponsored by the school (e.g., field trip), for at least half of the regular school day. An absence due to an out-of-school suspension or expulsion should always be considered an excused absence.

For absences one through nine, an absence shall be considered “excused” when a child does not attend school and appropriate documentation has been submitted within ten school days of the student’s return to school by the student’s parent or guardian approving the absence, due to:

1. Illness or injury,
2. Death in the family or other emergency beyond the control of the student’s family,
3. Observance of religious holiday,
4. Mandated Court appearances,
5. School sponsored activity,
6. Lack of transportation that is normally provided by a district other than the one the student attends, (This reason does not require documentation.)
7. Extraordinary educational opportunities pre-approved by a district administrator and in accordance with State Department of Education guidelines. Written excuse for such absences should be submitted to school officials by the child’s parent or guardian. All other absences with or without written explanation shall be considered unexcused.
8. Suspension, (This reason does not require documentation.)

For the tenth absence and all others thereafter, the same reasons cited above shall still constitute “excused” absences; however documentation by a medical professional is now required for illness, regardless of the length of the absence. All absences will be recorded as “unexcused” unless documentation is submitted within ten days of the date of the absence and satisfies the definition of “excused” absence.

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**B. High School Class Cuts:** Notwithstanding the foregoing, if a student misses a class and is in school, such absence will be considered a “class cut”, unless such class absence has been authorized by a school official.

1. When a student is truant, he/she will receive a “class cut” in each class that is missed on the day the truancy occurred.
2. On the high school level, students who arrive to school after 8:10 a.m. shall be assigned a cut in their period 1A/1B class. Further, students who arrive 25 minutes or more late to class (period) without a pass are given a cut.
3. A “class cut” will be considered an “unexcused absence” and will count toward the potential loss of credit at the high school level.
4. Excessive unexcused absences may result in court action under the truancy law (see Policy 5113 – Attendance, Absences, Tardiness/Dismissals and Truancy).

**II. ATTENDANCE – GRADES K-8**

Students in grades K-8 could face retention when their excused and/or unexcused absence from school exceeds 20% of the school year. Notification shall be made periodically to the parent or guardian regarding attendance records of students. In addition to the report card system, the parent or guardian will be notified by mail. All absences from school/class will count toward the number of allowable absences per year. The following interventions will take place when the specific numbers of excused absences have been accumulated:

1. At 10 absences, the school administrator or school counselor shall meet with the student and the parent or guardian to discuss his/her attendance.
2. At 25 absences, a second meeting with the parent or guardian shall be held with the teachers and a building administrator. At this time possible retention and/or required attendance at summer school shall be discussed if further absences occur. The student and an administrator shall attend this meeting. Excessive absences due to unavoidable circumstances will be reviewed at this meeting. If the student has kept up with his/her work and had no control over his/her absence, retention shall not have to be an option.

**Note: A combination of a student being tardy or dismissed early from school five times will result in one absence.**

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**A. Appeal Procedure**

If the parent or guardian is dissatisfied with the decision of the building administrator, he/she may appeal, in writing, to the superintendent of schools. All such appeals must be received prior to the last week of school in June. A decision will be rendered by the superintendent of schools prior to the last day of school in June.

**III. LOSS OF CREDIT AT THE HIGH SCHOOL LEVEL DUE TO ATTENDANCE PROBLEMS**

1. **Absences (Excused and/or Unexcused):** Students at the high school level who are absent more than six times in a 0.5 credit course (i.e., a half year course), more than twelve times in a 1.0 credit course (i.e., a full year course), more than 16 times in a 1.5 credit course, or more than 18 times in a course that meets daily for the entire school year will lose credit for that course. Absences due to suspension from school, participation in an authorized school activity, observance of religious holidays or as a result of the failure of sending towns to provide transportation for nonresident students enrolled in Wallingford schools shall not be counted toward the loss of credit.

Similarly, absences necessitated as a result of a chronic medical condition or absences resulting from a major medical procedure will not be counted toward the loss of credit limit provided that a written excuse from a physician or a dentist is received. Such excuses should be received within ten school days after the student returns to school.

2. **High School Class Cuts:** Students will lose credit in a course upon the fourth “class cut” in a full year course or the third “class cut” in a half-year course.
3. **Warnings of Loss of Credit:** The parent or guardian will be informed in writing when their son/daughter’s attendance is such that it suggests that he/she might be in danger of losing credit. Such notification will occur upon the sixth absence and upon each “class cut” in a full year course. For half-year courses, the notification shall be made upon the third absence and each “class cut”.
4. **Credit Review:** The building administration will conduct a credit review for each student who might lose credit in a course as a result of excessive absence. Such review shall occur before the credit is removed.
5. **Appeals:** A student who has lost credit due to violations of the attendance policy may appeal this decision using the procedure below.
  - a. The appeal must be made in writing and presented to the assistant principal assigned to the student within five school days after being notified in writing of the loss of credit. Such appeals will be conducted at the end of the semester in which the course is completed.

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**Appeals (continued)**

- b. Appeals must be based on unusual mitigating circumstances. If the mitigating circumstances are of a medical nature, the student must provide a written explanation of the circumstances from a physician.
- c. The appeals board will consist of one administrator, a school counselor, and a teacher. The administrator shall notify the student and the student's parent or guardian of the date of the appeal meeting.
- d. The decision of the appeals board shall be rendered in writing within three school days of the appeal meeting.
- e. The decision of the appeals board may be appealed to the building principal. The appeal shall be made in writing and shall explain the unusual mitigating circumstances that the student believes justify the reinstatement of the credit. The decision of the principal shall be final.

**IV. IMPACT OF LOSS OF CREDIT**

- 1. Grades earned by students in courses for which they lose credit due to excessive absence will be recorded on their high school transcript.
- 2. Grades earned by students in courses for which they lose credit due to excessive absence will not be included in the calculation of the quality point average.

**V. ABSENCES AND PARTICIPATION IN SCHOOL ACTIVITIES**

Students who are absent from school will not be permitted to participate in interscholastic athletic contests, athletic practices, extracurricular activities, or other school-sponsored activities on the day of the absence. However, building principals may make exceptions to this regulation due to extraordinary, mitigating circumstances, and such exceptions must be in writing.

**Regulation Approved: 06/17/13**