

Attendance: Absences and Tardies**I. EXCUSED VERSUS UNEXCUSED ABSENCES****A. Definitions**

- 1. 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 for at least half of the regular school day. A student who is serving an out-of-school suspension or expulsion should be considered absent. An absence in the following categories may be considered excused if the reason for the absence is validated. All other absences shall be considered "unexcused."
 - a. Illness or injury
 - b. Serious illness in the family that necessitates the student's absence from school
 - c. Death in the family
 - d. Prearranged appointments with physicians and/or dentists
 - e. Observance of religious holidays
 - f. College visitations (at the high school level)
 - g. Validated court appointments
 - h. School sponsored activities
 - i. Failure of sending towns to provide transportation for nonresident students enrolled in Wallingford schools
 - j. Family vacations or trips totaling no more than five school days in a school year; absences beyond the total of five school days will be considered "unexcused"
 - k. Family emergencies or other exceptional circumstances as approved by the principal
 - l. Suspension

- 2. Class Cut:** 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.
 - a. A class cut will be considered an "unexcused absence" and will count toward the potential loss of credit at the high school level.
 - b. Excessive unexcused absences may result in court action under the truancy law (see policy JEDA).

- 3. Family Vacations and Trips**
 - a. Parents should be strongly encouraged to schedule family vacations and trips when school is not in session.

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- b. Students will be held responsible for the material missed during such absence.
- c. Parents should be strongly encouraged to notify the school in writing of a pending absence due to a family vacation or trip.

I. EXCUSED VERSUS UNEXCUSED ABSENCES

B. Notification and Validation of Absences

1. Parents/guardians will be expected to call their child's school to notify the administration that their child will be absent on that day. If the parent/guardian of an absent student does not contact the school regarding the absence, the school shall make a reasonable effort to notify the parent/guardian by telephone that the student is absent. The school shall maintain a record of the contact or the attempt to contact. If telephone contact is not made, the parent shall be notified of the absence in writing.
2. The building administration shall determine whether absences are excused or unexcused. Parent verification of an absence does not necessarily mean that an absence will be determined to be excused.
3. Doctor's verification may be required for absences due to illness of four or more consecutive days or when there are frequent absences due to illness.

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

- A. Twelve Absences:** Students at the high school level who are absent more than six times (excused and/or unexcused) in a .5 credit course (i.e., a half year course), more than twelve times (excused and/or unexcused) in a 1.0 credit course (i.e., a full year course), or more than 18 times in a course that is a 1.5 credit course 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.

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- B. Unexcused Absences:** Students will lose credit in a course upon the fourth unexcused absence in a full year course or the third unexcused absence in a half-year course.
- C. Warnings of Loss of Credit:** Parents 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 unexcused absence in a full year course. For half-year courses, the notification shall be made upon the third excused absence and each unexcused absence.
- D. 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.
- E. Appeals:** A student who has lost credit due to violations of the attendance policy may appeal this decision using the procedure below.
 - 1. 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.
 - 2. 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.
 - 3. The appeals board will consist of one administrator, a guidance counselor, and a teacher. The administrator shall notify the student and the student's parents of the date of the appeal meeting.
 - 4. The decision of the appeals board shall be rendered in writing within three school days of the appeal meeting.
 - 5. 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.

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F. 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 permanent record card.
2. Grades earned by students in courses for which they lose credit due to excessive absence will be included in the calculation of the quality point average.

III. 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.

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