

**STUDENT ABSENCES AND EXCUSES**

The Board requires that school-aged children enrolled in the district attend school in accordance with all applicable state laws and board policies. The educational program offered by the District is predicated upon the presence of the student and requires continuity of instruction and classroom participation in order for students to achieve academic standards and consistent educational progress. Students are required to maintain regular and **punctual** patterns of attendance. Each building principal is responsible for overseeing attendance procedures and for ensuring that:

1. Attendance is accurately checked, recorded, and reported to the school office each day for each class.
2. All student absences are recorded during the days and hours that school is in session unless the Principal excuses a student for temporary absences when receiving evidence of conditions or reasons that may reasonably cause the student's absence.
3. When truancy and/or repeated tardies continue, the school administrator may bring forth a referral to law enforcement for a violation of RSA 193:1 Duty of the Parent and/or RSA 169-D:2 II,a Definitions.

The Board considers the following to be excused absences:

1. Illness
2. Recovery from an accident
3. Required court attendance
4. Medical and dental appointments
5. Death in the immediate family
6. Observation or celebration of a bona fide religious holiday
7. Such other good cause as may be acceptable to the Principal or permitted by law

Any absence that has not been excused for any of these reasons will be considered an unexcused absence.

Tardiness: Frequent or habitual tardiness is subject to corrective actions.

In the event of any absence due to illness, **parents must call the school and inform the School of the student's illness and absence.** For all absences, parents must provide written notice or a written excuse that states one of these reasons for non-attendance. The Principal may require parents to provide additional documentation in support of their written notice, including but not limited to doctor's notes, court documents, obituaries, or other documents supporting the claimed reason for non-attendance.

Any absence other than excused absence is considered truancy. Absences other than for illness during the school year are discouraged.

Unauthorized absence from school is considered truancy and will be treated as such in accordance with the rules of the Parent/Student Manual. Truant students may be subject to school disciplinary measures in line with applicable Board policies.

Absent/Tardy students not having parent/guardian permission are considered as being truant. Students so identified, or parent/legal guardian, will be contacted by either a school official and/or a police officer. The school administration will send a letter to parents/guardian of the truant student. If the truancy problem continues, the school administrator will send by registered mail a letter to the parents of the truant student, indicating the nature and seriousness of the problem and enclose a copy of RSA 193:1.

### Truancy

Truancy is defined as any unexcused absence from class or school. Any absence that has not been excused for any of the reasons listed above will be considered an unexcused absence.

Ten half-days of unexcused absence during a school year constitutes habitual truancy.

A half-day absence is defined as a student missing more than two hours of instructional time and less than three and one-half hours of instructional time.

Any absence of more than three and one-half hours of instructional time shall be considered a full-day absence.

The Principal is hereby designated as the District employee responsible for overseeing truancy issues.

### Intervention Process to Address Truancy

The Principal shall ensure that the administrative guidelines on attendance properly address the matter of truancy by including a process that identifies students who are habitually truant, as defined above.

When the Principal identifies a student who is habitually truant or who is in danger of becoming habitually truant, he/she shall commence an intervention with the student, the student's parents/legal guardian, and other staff members as may be deemed necessary. The intervention shall include processes including, but not limited to:

1. Investigates the cause(s) of the student's truant behavior
2. Considers, when appropriate, modification of his/her educational program to meet particular needs that may be causing the truancy
3. Involves the parents/legal guardian in the development of a plan designed to reduce the truancy
4. Seeks alternative disciplinary measures, but still retains the right to impose discipline in accordance with the district's policies and administrative guidelines on student discipline.

### Parental Involvement in Truancy Intervention

When a student reaches the level of habitual truancy status or is in danger of reaching habitual truancy status, the Principal will send the student's parents/legal guardian a letter which includes:

1. A statement that the student has become or is in danger of becoming habitually truant. Violations are punishable by a fine up to a maximum \$1,240
2. A statement of the parents/legal guardian's responsibility to ensure that the student attends school
3. A request for a meeting between the parents/legal guardian and the Principal to discuss the student's truancy and to develop a plan for reducing the student's truancy.

The Superintendent shall also ensure that this policy is made available annually to all parents/legal guardians and students via student/parent handbook and district website.

**Legal References:**

RSA 193:1, Duty of Parent; Compulsory Attendance by Pupil

RSA 193:7 Penalty

RSA 193:8, Notice of Requirement

RSA 193:16 Bylaws as to Nonattendance

RSA 169-D:2 II a, Subject to compulsory school attendance

RSA 189:35 Truancy defined, no more than 20 half days absent

NH Administrative Rules Ed 306.04 (a)(1), Attendance and Absenteeism

NH Administrative Rules Ed.306.04 (c), Policy Relative to Attendance and Absenteeism

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