

POLICY

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COMPREHENSIVE ATTENDANCE POLICY

The Board of Education recognizes that regular school attendance is a major component of academic success. Consistent school attendance, improved academic performance and school completion have a positive correlation. It is the goal of the Catskill Central School District to assure that each student attends school on time and for the maximum number of days to support his/her efforts to reach the high standards established by the Board of Regents. This Comprehensive Attendance Policy provides the regulatory structure to achieve this goal.

Through implementation of this policy, the Board expects to reduce unexcused absences, tardiness, and early departures and encourage full day attendance by all students. The District will maintain an adequate attendance record keeping system, identify patterns of student absence/tardies and develop effective intervention strategies to improve school attendance.

Notification

A successful attendance policy requires that all members of the school community are aware of this policy, its purpose, procedures and the consequences of non-compliance.

The attendance policy will be included in student handbooks and will be reviewed with students at the start of the school year.

- A back-to-school event will be held at the beginning of each school year to explain this policy and stress the parents' responsibility for ensuring their children's attendance.
- School newsletters and publications will include periodic reminders of the components of this policy.
- All faculty and staff will meet at the beginning of each school year to review the attendance policy to clarify individual roles in its implementation. New staff members will receive a copy of this policy in the orientation packet upon being employed.

1. New York State Attendance Law

New York State Mandatory Attendance Requirement

In accordance with the requirements of the Education Law 3205, each minor shall regularly attend school on a full time basis from the age of six years to the last day of the school year in which they turn sixteen (16) years of age, unless she/he has successfully completed a four year high school course of study. Additionally, each District has the authority to require minor students to attend throughout

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the school year they turn seventeen (17) years of age if they are not employed full-time.

A. School Entrance Age

A minor who becomes six (6) years of age on or before the first of December in any school year shall be required to attend school for full time instruction from the first day that the appropriate public school is in session starting in September of such school year. A minor who become six (6) years of age after the first of December in any school year shall be required to attend school for full time instruction starting on the first day of session in the **following** September.

B. Greene County Compulsory Attendance Age

In accordance with its authority under Education Law Section 3205, the Board of Education of the Catskill Central School District hereby establishes the ending compulsory attendance age of minors to be seventeen (17) years of age. Thus, such minors from the age of sixteen (16) to seventeen (17) years of age, who are NOT employed full-time, shall attend full time instruction until the last day of session in the school year in which the student becomes seventeen (17) years of age.

C. Drop from enrollment Over Compulsory Age

Section 3202.1a – No pupil over the compulsory attendance age in his or her school district shall be dropped from enrollment unless he or she has been absent *twenty consecutive school days* and the following procedure is complied with.

- The Principal or Superintendent shall schedule and notify, in writing, at the last known address, both the student and the person in parental relation to the student, of an informal conference.
- At the conference, the Principal or Superintendent shall determine both the reasons for the student's absence and whether reasonable changes to the student's educational program would encourage and facilitate his or her re-entry or continuance of study.
- The pupil and the person in parental relation shall be informed orally and in writing of the student's right to re-enroll at anytime in the public school maintained in the district where the student resides.
- If the student and the person in parental relationship fail, after reasonable notice, to attend the informal conference, the pupil may be dropped from enrollment provided that he or she and the person in parental relation are notified in writing of the right to re-enter at any time, if otherwise qualified under this section.

2. Statement of Principles

School attendance is both a right and responsibility. The District recognizes that there is a strong correlation between a student's class attendance, their academic success and their

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opportunity for post-high school success. The Board of Education in conjunction with the Greene County Truancy Task Force, have established the following as the Comprehensive Student Attendance Policy. This policy has been developed to meet the following objectives:

- Set the expectation that students will attend school each day for the full day;
- Instill cooperation among all members of the education community, inclusive of parents, students, teachers, administrators and support staff to uphold the expectation of regular school attendance;
- Recognize that regular class participation and contact between students and teachers is an essential part of the educational process;
- Provide for early identification of attendance problems and the implementation of effective methods of intervention to address issues in order to reduce dropout rates and increase graduation rates;
- Identify the daily whereabouts of every student for safety and accountability;
- Verify that individual students are complying with education laws pertaining to compulsory attendance;
- Calculate the District's average daily attendance for state aid and school improvement purposes.

3. Notifications

Effective implementation of an attendance policy requires all participants to be informed and to understand fully its purpose, procedures, and the consequences of non-compliance. To ensure that students, parents, teachers and administrators are notified of and understand this policy the following notifications will take place:

- A. At the start of each school year, each student and their family shall be provided a copy of the attendance policy and an explanation thereof. This policy can also be found in the School Calendar, on the CCSD Website or upon request at the main office of any school building.
- B. Parents will be asked to sign and return a statement indicating that they have read and understand the policy. This form will be kept in the main office of each school building.
- C. In the event that the policy is changed by Board action, each teacher and administrator shall

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receive a copy of the policy incorporating those changes.

- D. The attendance policy shall also be included in materials describing the District's student conduct and discipline policy.
- E. A student whose instances of tardiness in a class have accumulated to constitute an instance of class absence shall promptly be so notified by his/her *teacher*. Each five (5) unexcused class tardy incidents will equal one (1) class absence.
- F. Notification of unexcused absences shall be sent to the parent or guardian of a student. All absences are indicated on interim / grading reports.
- G. The Building Principal has the ability to place students on Attendance Probation as necessary. Attendance Probation is related to any student that is tardy to school or leaves early. Such students will not be able to participate in after-school activities that particular day.
- H. Other notification procedures shall be implemented as required by the Board or the School Superintendent.

4. Accounting for Absences

- A. Attendance is to be taken daily at the start of the day and during each class period at the start of that class period.
- B. Where consistent with other school practices, teachers and staff shall redirect students who are in the hallways and absent from a class period without excuse, and shall take the student back to class. If more than 10 minutes of the class period has expired, then the student shall be taken to the principal's office or to the principal's designee and receive an unexcused tardy for that class. Periodic hall sweeps shall be conducted by school staff to identify students who are out of class.
- C. Student absence data shall be made available by the building principal or his / her designee as soon as practical, but no later than the following school day. This information should be reviewed by administrators, teachers, counselors, attendance officers, or other appropriate school personnel.
- D. The student's parent or guardian or the student who is otherwise legally emancipated, shall be responsible for notifying the school of the student's absence on any day on which the student is absent. Such notification shall be made to the building principal or designee no later than 10:00 a.m. each day a student is absent.

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- E. A written excuse, signed by a parent/person in parental relations, or guardian, needs to be presented by the student when returning to school following each absence or within the next consecutive 5 (five) school days. A student who is legally emancipated and who also does not live with his/her parent or guardian shall provide his/her own written explanation for being absent following each absence. If no written excuse is submitted within the next five (5) consecutive school days the absence will be noted as “unexcused”.
- F. Any excuse submitted for a student’s absence for part of a school day or a whole school day shall give:
1. *The reason for the absence*
 2. *The date and time of absence (whole day / part of day)*
 3. *Shall be signed by the student’s parent / guardian or themselves if legally emancipated*
- G. A new note is required for each absence event.

5. INTERVENTIONS

The Catskill Central School District will use a checklist of school level interventions to address students with attendance concerns aligned to the new guidelines below. Whenever a student exhibits the pattern of unexcused absence, tardiness or early departure, notice will be given to the parents in writing and /or by telephone and email communication in an effort to remediate the underlying problem. (Note: Cumulative absence totals will follow the student throughout the County.)

Five (5) Unexcused Absences / Unexcused School Tardies

The school principal or designee will review the student’s attendance. Contact will be made to the parent / guardian at this time. The student will serve one (1) after-school detention as directed by the principal or designee for each instance of five (5) unexcused absences or tardies.

Ten (10) + Absences (Excused or Unexcused)

These steps and this documentation format are recommended for district attendance alignment across the County. Districts may add steps for specific needs, but these steps are those that are required to ensure consistent expectations county-wide, which include:

<u># of Absences</u>	<u>Interventions</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Initials</u>	<u>Academic Impact</u>
<u>5</u>	<u>1. Official Attendance Letter</u> <i>The principal or designee will send the official letter outlining absences/tardies to the student’s parent / guardian. Students who have five (5) unexcused absences/tardies will be assigned one</i>			

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	<i>afterschool detention. (K-5 Lunch detention)</i>			
<u>10</u>	<p><u>2. Create Attendance File</u> <i>The principal or designee will start an official file using the designated form to document the school based interventions as they are implemented.</i> <i>A student with ten (10) unexcused absences or tardies will be assigned one day in In School Suspension (ISS).</i></p>			
<u>10</u>	<p><u>3. Administrator Contact Parent /Guardian</u> <i>Provide copy of Attendance Policy</i> <i>Review Attendance Policy</i> <i>Contact outside agencies if needed</i> <i>Determine intervention steps</i></p>			
	<p><u>4. Attendance Intervention</u> <i>The student and/or parent shall be conferred with by designated school personnel regarding the attendance problem in an effort to <u>remediate</u> the underlying problem(s).</i> <i>Suggested options;</i> <i>Parent / Teacher / Admin Conference</i> <i>Home Visit</i> <i>Outside Agency Support</i> <i>Counseling Resources Provided</i> <i>School Refusal Assessment Scale – Revised (Parent and Child)</i></p>			
<u>20</u>	<p><u>1. Official Attendance Letter</u></p>			
	<p><u>2. Administrator Contact</u> <i>Provide copy of Attendance Policy</i> <i>Review Attendance Policy</i> <i>Provide Greene County Mental Health Brochure</i></p>			
	<p><u>3. Copy of Letter to District Attorney</u> <i>The copy of the attendance letter and a copy of the student attendance file with listed school based interventions must be sent together. This is a discretionary decision determined case by case.</i></p>			

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	<p><u>4. Attendance Intervention</u> <i>Examples of school based interventions include a meeting with the student/parent and counselor and / or principal and teachers, phone contacts between the school and the parent, a report to Child Protective Services for educational neglect and / or a referral to Pre-PINS or PINS, home visits, outside agency support, completion of the School Refusal Assessment Scale (to be completed separately by both parent and child)</i></p>			
<u>21-29</u>	<p><u>1. Administrator Contact</u></p>			
	<p><u>2. Review Case for Educational Neglect</u> <i>Contact Outside Agencies for support:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre-Pins / Pins • CPS • Greene County Mental Health 			
	<p><u>3. Copy of Letter to District Attorney</u></p>			
	<p><u>4. Attendance Intervention</u></p>			
<u>30</u>	<p><u>1. Official Attendance Letter</u> The copy of the attendance letter and a copy of the student attendance file with listed school based interventions must be sent together. This is a discretionary decision determined case by case.</p>			
	<p><u>2. Contact District Attorney</u> A copy of the student’s attendance file (inclusive of all attendance letters and a copy of the information reflected on this template will be sent to the District Attorney.</p>			
	<p><u>3, District Attorney Intervention</u> At that time, the District Attorney will determine if the parent and / or guardian is criminally liable for not sending a child to school. 3 Year Probation or 1 year in Jail Class A Misdemeanor – Criminally liable</p>			

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	for endangering the welfare of a child			
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6. Determination of Excused and Unexcused Absences

Based upon the Catskill School District's educational and community needs, values and priorities, it has been determined that absences, tardiness, and early departure will be considered excused or unexcused according to the following standards. Excused absences still count toward the cumulative total of student absences.

Excused Absences

- a. An absence, tardy, or early departure when accompanied by written documentation may be excused **if** due to:
 1. Student illness
 2. Illness or death in the student's family
 3. Religious observance
 4. Student appointment with physician or other health care provider (*documentation from practitioner required*)
 5. Medical quarantine of the student (*practitioner documentation required*)
 6. Required appearance by the student in court (*documentation required*)
 7. College visit by the student that has been approved by the building principal or guidance counselor (*documentation required*)
 8. Student participation in an approved cooperative work program (*documentation required*)
 9. Military obligations (*documentation required*)
 10. Such reasons as may be approved by the School Principal, Superintendent of School and/or the Board of Education (*documentation required*)
- b. Students in grades Pre K – 12 are allowed parent-written legal absence notes for personal absences **up to 6 non-consecutive days**. This includes, but is not limited to parent-written notes for illness, medical appointments and acts of nature.
- c. In grades 6 – 12, absences **BEYOND 6 DAYS** will exceed the parent limit for notes and will be considered an **UNEXCUSED absence** pending receipt within the next five (5) consecutive days of school, of necessary legal, practitioner or medical documentation or validation for any additional excused absences.
- d. **Absences of More Than Five (5) Consecutive Days**
 A student who is absent for more than five (5) consecutive school days due to illness shall, upon returning to school, present a signed written explanation from his/her parent/guardian. Additionally, at the request of the Principal or Superintendent of Schools, a physician's note must be submitted, as required by the Board of

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Education's established Attendance Policy. In the event that a student fails to present one of both written notices upon returning to school, the building principal or designee shall contact the parent/guardian and request an explanation for the student's absence. If the Principal believes that the explanation is inadequate, or does not receive written documentation within five (5) working days of the request, the Principal shall refer the matter to the **Superintendent of Schools**. The Superintendent will review the matter and take such action as deemed appropriate.

e. Unexcused absences

1. A student's absence from school for any reason other than those enumerated in this policy shall be considered unexcused
2. Any question of whether an absence shall be deemed excused or unexcused shall be decided by the building principal based on the aforementioned policy.
3. Absences due to vacations will be **unexcused**.
4. A student who is absent from school for an unexcused absence will **NOT be permitted to participate in extracurricular activities or school events on the day of the absence**.

f. Class Absence

1. A "class absence" shall be a student's failure to be in class within 10 minutes after the final class bell, without an appropriate pass.
2. An instance of "class tardiness" shall be a student's arrival in class after the final bell but less than 10 minutes after the start of class without an appropriate pass.
3. Each five (5) instances of tardiness shall count as one (1) "class absence."
4. Five (5) instances of ***school tardiness***, after the final class bell, will result in the student serving one (1) after school detention at the discretion of the Principal or Principal's designee.
5. Five (5) instances of early departure or excessive instances of early departure will result in being noted as a class absence as determined by the building principal and class teacher.

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6. **Excessive absences (more than 90% of days) and excessive tardiness may result in the loss of course credit at the discretion of the Principal after collaboration with the class teacher.**

Class Tardiness

1. A student's arrival in class (without an appropriate pass) after the final bell but less than ten (10) minutes after the start of class, is an instance of "class tardiness".
2. Each five (5) instances of class tardiness without an appropriate pass shall count as one (1) "*class absence*".

STUDENT RESPONSIBILITY AND COURSE CREDIT RELATED TO ATTENDANCE

The success of the District educational program is based upon the principle that regular class participation and contact between students and teachers is an essential part of the education process. The Board is concerned about student work that is missed due to absences. Therefore, in the interest of student achievement, there must be a concerted effort by *students, parents and teachers* to ensure students are able to complete missed work within two weeks of the absence and maintain high academic standing.

- a.) Upon return from any absence, a student must be afforded the opportunity to make-up work that was missed. This work must be turned in to the teacher in the specified amount of time "**NOT TO EXCEED TWO (2) WEEKS**".
- b.) When a student is absent for a third consecutive day, or when a student is diagnosed as having a potential long-term illness, the student or his/her parent/guardian should contact the building principal or designee to discuss meeting the educational needs of the student.
- c.) A student who is excused from attendance for a full school day for reasons other than illness shall hand in all assignments for classes at the **NEXT** scheduled meeting of each class, following the absence. Special arrangements made *in advance* by the student with the teacher can be made in some instances.
- d.) Students knowing in advance that he/she will be absent for an excusable reason for an extended period of time, shall be responsible for completing all assignments missed during that absence.

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- It shall be the **student's responsibility** to collect all class assignments from teachers.
 - Assignments not completed by the teacher's specified deadline, will result in detention **the next scheduled day regardless of whether the work is handed in before that detention period.**
- e.) **Denial of course credit may occur for a student who has exceeded the allowable number of class absences for a particular course.** Students must maintain a 90% attendance rate for half-year and full year courses.
- f.) The District believes that classroom attendance is related to and affects a student's performance and grasp of subject matter. Thus, students are expected to attend all scheduled classes. Consistent with the importance of classroom participation, unexcused student absences, tardiness, and early departures **will affect a student's grade, including credit for class participation during each marking period.**
- g.) A student's final grade for each marking period will include a certain percentage based on class participation, class attendance, preparedness and individual contribution. This percent will be combined with student performance on homework, tests, papers, projects, etc. as determined by the building principal and/or classroom teacher.
- h.) Senior students who have the privilege of "*late arrival*" must arrive on time for their first scheduled class. *Students with "late arrival" privilege who are tardy to their first scheduled class will not be eligible to participate in extracurricular activities, athletic practice, club practices or events for that day.* Students with ten (10) tardies to their first scheduled class will lose the "late arrival privilege". The building principal will provide written notification to the parent and the student of this action.
- i.) Senior students who lose the "late arrival" privilege *may*, after fifteen (15) consecutive school days of "*on time arrival*", at the discretion of the Principal, be reinstated with the senior privilege of "late arrival". The Principal will provide written notification to the student and parents of this consequence and reinstatement.

DATA COLLECTION AND CORRECTION

The Board of Education supports the process of collecting data for analysis purposes in support of improving the overall attendance rate for the District and for NYS calculations for aid and attendance compliance. The Board will annually review building level student attendance records to ensure accuracy and compliance with NYSED regulations. The Board will also revise the Comprehensive

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Attendance Policy and make revisions to the plan as it deems necessary to improve overall student attendance.

Ensuring accuracy and assessment of attendance compliance will include the following:

- a. The duration of each absence (full day, half day, tardy, early release, appointment, etc.) shall be coded on individual student records. Attendance shall be calculated in conformance with the Commissioner's Regulations relating to length of daily sessions for purposes of state aid calculations. (8NYCRR 175.1)
- b. When/if additional information is received from a student during a student-staff conference that requires corrections to be made to the student's attendance records, such correction shall be made immediately. Notice of such change shall be sent to the student's teachers, attendance officer, and other staff designated by the building principal or Superintendent.
- c. Attendance data will be analyzed regularly by the building principal, attendance committee or designee to identify patterns or trends in student absences.
- d. The School Board will receive quarterly attendance reports from each building principal or designee. The Board will annually review the attendance policy for possible revisions.

Cross-ref: 4750, Promotion and Retention of Students

Ref: Education Law §§1709; 3024; 3025; 3202; 3205-3213; 3225
8 NYCRR §§104.1; 175.6

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