

ABSENCES AND EXCUSES

In order for the Holmdel Township Board of Education to fulfill its responsibility for providing a thorough and efficient education for each pupil, the complete cooperation of parents/guardians and pupils is required to maintain a high level of school attendance.

The frequent absence of pupils from classroom learning experiences disrupts the continuity of the instructional process and limits the ability of pupils to complete the prescribed curriculum requirements successfully.

The Board directs the Superintendent of Schools to develop appropriate regulations to implement this policy, in accordance with state law, for each school in the district. The Superintendent is requested to involve staff -- administrators, guidance personnel and teachers -- in the design of building-level regulations. These regulations shall include, but not be limited to:

- A. Ensure a school session which is in conformity with requirements of the rules of the state board;
- B. Identify potentially missing pupils;
- C. Govern the keeping of attendance records in accordance with rules of the state board, including pupils serving in- or out-of-school suspensions, or excluded for health and cleanliness reasons;
- D. Impose on truant pupils such disciplinary measures as may be appropriate for infractions of school regulations, but no such penalty may have an irredeemable negative effect on the pupil's record of achievement beyond that which naturally follows his/her absence from school activities;
- E. Identify the habitual truant, investigate the causes of his/her behavior, and consider modification of his/her educational program to meet his/her particular needs and interests;
- F. Address tardiness and class cutting in terms of this policy;
- G. Ensure that pupils absent for excused reasons have an opportunity to make up work they missed; and
- H. Recognize exemplary attendance.

Truancy

The Board will report to appropriate authorities infractions of the law regarding the attendance of pupils below the age of 16. Repeated infractions by enrolled pupils over the age of 16 may result in the suspension or expulsion of the pupil.

It shall be the policy of the Board to consider the effectiveness and appropriateness of the educational program that is offered each pupil who is habitually and repeatedly absent from his/her assigned program and to consult first with the building-level Pupil Assistance Committee (PAC) then, if necessary, with the Child Study Team for its recommendations.

Excused Absences

The Board considers the following as cause for excused absence:

- A. Disabling illness
- B. Recovery from accident
- C. Required court attendance
- D. Death in the family
- E. Religious observance--In accordance with statute, no pupil absent for religious observance of a day recognized by the Commissioner of Education or this Board of Education shall be charged with an unexcused absence, deprived of an award or eligibility/opportunity to compete for an award, or of the right to take an alternate to a test or examination missed through such absence.
- F. Such causes as may be acceptable to the principal

Attendance need not always be within the school facilities. A pupil will be considered to be in attendance if he/she is present at any place where school is in session by authority of the board. The Board shall consider each pupil assigned to a program of independent study, with parent/guardian permission, to be in regular attendance for that program, provided that he/she is under the guidance of a staff member so assigned, reports daily or weekly, as prescribed, to such staff member the place in which he/she is conducting his/her study, and regularly demonstrates progress toward the objectives of his/her course of study.

Regular Release of Pupils Before the End of the Normal School Day

There are varying situations which may justify release of certain pupils from school before the normal time for closing. Such situations are justifiable only if the release can be shown to have positive benefits for the pupil.

Late Arrival and Early Dismissal

The Board recognizes that from time to time compelling circumstances will require that a pupil be late to school or dismissed before the end of the school day.

As agent responsible for the education of the children of this district, the Board shall require that the school be notified in advance of such absences by written request of the pupil's parent/guardian, which shall state the reason for the tardiness or early dismissal. Justifiable reasons may include:

- A. Medical or dental appointments which cannot be scheduled outside of school hours;
- B. Medical disability;
- C. Motor vehicle driver's test;
- D. Interview for college entrance or employment;
- F. Court appearance;
- G. Such causes as may be acceptable to the administration.

No pupil in grades kindergarten through eight shall be permitted to leave the school before the close of the school day unless he/she is met in the school office by his/her parent/guardian or a person authorized by the parent/guardian to act in the pupil's behalf.

Tardiness not covered by the causes listed above shall be cumulative, and may result in the loss of course credit at specified grade levels.

Legal Custody

A record shall be kept indicating the legal guardian of each pupil. Such guardian shall be responsible for informing the Board of any change in the pupil's guardian. If one parent/guardian has been awarded custody of the pupil in a divorce settlement, the other parent/guardian shall present to the principal a letter authorizing him/her to accompany the child from school before the child may be released to him/her. The principal may take such steps as deemed necessary to ensure that the child is released only to proper custody.

Potentially Missing Children

- A. If daily attendance records indicate a child is absent, and the parent/guardian has not called, principal/designee shall attempt to contact them.

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- B. If no telephone contact can be made, the building principal/designee shall investigate.
- C. If the building principal/designee cannot locate a child, he/she shall inform the appropriate local authorities.
- D. If a child who was present in the morning is absent after lunch, the principal or designee shall inform the appropriate local authorities.

Source: Regular Board Meeting

Date: August 20, 1986

Revised: January 14, 1998

Legal References:	<u>N.J.S.A.</u> 18A:11-1	General mandatory powers and duties
	<u>N.J.S.A.</u> 18A:35-4.9	Pupil promotion and remediation; policies and procedures
	<u>N.J.S.A.</u> 18A:36-14, -15, -16	Religious holidays; absence of pupils on; effect...
	<u>N.J.S.A.</u> 18A:36-19a	Newly enrolled students; records and identification
	<u>N.J.S.A.</u> 18A:36-24 through -26	Missing children; legislative findings and declarations...
	<u>N.J.S.A.</u> 18A:38-25	Attendance required of children between six and 16; exceptions
	<u>N.J.S.A.</u> 18A:38-26	Days when attendance required; exceptions
	<u>N.J.S.A.</u> 18A:38-27	Truancy and juvenile delinquency defined
	<u>N.J.S.A.</u> 18A:38-31	Violations of article by parents or guardians; penalties
	<u>N.J.S.A.</u> 18A:38-32	District and county vocational school attendance officer
	<u>N.J.S.A.</u> 18A:40-7	Exclusion of pupils who are ill
	<u>N.J.S.A.</u> 18A:40-8	Exclusion of pupils whose presence is detrimental to health and cleanliness
	<u>N.J.S.A.</u> 18A:40-10	Exclusion of teachers and pupils exposed to disease
	<u>N.J.S.A.</u> 18A:40-11	Exclusion of pupils having communicable tuberculosis
	<u>N.J.S.A.</u> 18A:46-16, -17	Exclusion of pupils pending examination and classification

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<u>N.J.S.A.</u>	18A:54-20	Powers of board (county vocational schools)
<u>N.J.AC.</u>	6:8-4.7	Pupil behavior
<u>N.J.AC.</u>	6:8-7.1 (d)2	Promotion and high school graduation requirements and procedures
<u>N.J.AC.</u>	6:20-1.1 <u>et seq.</u>	Attendance and pupil accounting
<u>N.J.AC.</u>	6:28-3.6(d)5iv, 5vi, 5ix	Individualized education program
<u>N.J.AC.</u>	6:28-4.1(e)	General requirements

New Jersey State Board of Education Resolution, May 2, 1984, requires local boards to adopt policy on academic eligibility for extracurricular activities. Must address grade point average, attendance requirements and course failure rate.

Wetherell v. Board of Education of Township of Burlington, 1978 S.L.D. 794

Wheatley v. Board of Education of City of Burlington, 1974 S.L.D. 851

C.R., on behalf of J.R., v. Board of Education of the Scotch Plains-Fanwood Regional School District, 1988 S.L.D. (June 22)

Manual for the Evaluation of Local School Districts (June 1993)

Possible

Cross References:

	*5020	Role of parents/guardians
	*5114	Suspension and expulsion
	*5124	Reporting to parents/guardians
	*5141.2	Illness
	*5141.4	Child abuse and neglect
	*6146	Graduation requirements
	*6146.2	Promotion/retention
		*6147
Standards of proficiency		
	*6147.1	Evaluation of individual student performance
	*6154	Homework/makeup work
	*6171.4	Special education
	*6173	Home instruction

*Indicates policy is included in the Critical Policy Reference Manual.



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