

3515 (JH) Attendance, Absenteeism, and Truancy 3515 (JH)

Absences

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.

Attendance shall be required of all students enrolled in the District during the days and hours that school is in session. The School Board recognizes that absences from school may be necessary under certain circumstances. The Board recognizes two general types of absences; excused and unexcused. School officials determine whether a student's absences are excused or unexcused.

In general, The Board considers the following to be excused absences:

1. Illness (including medical/dental appointments, recovery from an accident, or family emergencies)
2. Required court attendance
3. Death in the family
4. Observation or celebration of a bona fide religious holiday
5. Alternative Learning opportunities preapproved by the Principal
6. 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. Regardless of whether an absence is considered excused or unexcused, attendance is vital and required for the success of students. As a result, even excused absences will be subject to interventions when they are impacting a child's education. Interventions are defined in administrative procedure JH-R.

In the event of an illness, parents must call the school and inform the District of the student's illness and absence. For other 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.

If parents/guardians wish for their child to be absent for reasons other than those listed above, the parent/guardian must provide a written explanation of the reason for the absence and the length of time the student will be absent. The Principal/designee shall make a determination as to whether the request meets good cause. Should the Principal/designee not authorize the request, the parents/guardians may request a

conference with the Principal to again explain the reasons for non-attendance. The Principal may then reconsider their initial determination. However, at this juncture, the Principal's decision shall be final.

Truancy

Truancy is defined as any unexcused absence from class or school, as determined by the Principal/designee. Any absence that has not been excused for any of the reasons listed above will be considered an unexcused absence. Additionally, students may be considered truant even when absences are excused, if those absences have a detrimental effect on a child's academic success.

Five full days of school (or 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/designee is responsible for overseeing truancy issues.

Intervention Process to Address Truancy

The Principal/designee will implement an intervention process defined in administrative procedure JH-R. The Board encourages the administration to seek truancy-prevention and truancy-reduction strategies and Superintendent is authorized to develop and utilize other means, guidelines and programs aimed at preventing and reducing truancy.

1. Coordinate truancy-prevention strategies based on the early identification of truancy, such as prompt notification of absences to parents.
2. Assist school staff to develop site attendance plans by providing development strategies, resources, and referral procedures.
3. Encourage and coordinate the adoption of attendance-incentive programs at school sites and in individual classrooms that reward and celebrate good attendance and significant improvements in attendance.

Parental Notification of Truancy Policy

The Superintendent shall also ensure that this policy is included or referenced in the student handbook and is provided to parents annually at the beginning of each school year.

References:

HB 154
RSA 189:34, II
RSA 189:35-a

Adopted: 2/1973

Revised: 5/1975, 8/2001, 11/2010, 1/2014, 3/2024