



Griswold High School

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ATTENDANCE POLICY UPDATE!!!

PLEASE READ AND KEEP FOR YOUR RECORDS

Griswold Public Schools feels strongly that positive school attendance is the foundation for student success. For several years, Griswold High School has focused on improving its students' attendance rates; research supports the link between positive student attendance with increased levels of student success in school. The State of CT has affirmed that notion with its new guidelines for excused and unexcused absences. These new guidelines align with the state's definition of "truancy." The state of CT created these guidelines while working closely with the national organization www.attendanceworks.org, whose primary focus is to reduce chronic absenteeism to improve student success. A complete copy of these guidelines can be found on the Griswold High School website under *Parent Resources* and under *Student Resources*, titled CT State Department of Education Guidelines for Excused and Unexcused Absences.

The guidelines contain several pieces, including the definition of an "absence," the two-tier approach to excused absences and documentation, and absenteeism prevention and intervention strategies. The table below breaks down the new policy on excused versus unexcused absences very clearly:

Level	Total # of days absent*	Acceptable reasons for a Student Absence to be Considered Excused	Documentation Required within 10 Days
1	One through nine	Any reason that the student's parent or guardian approves	Parent or guardian note only
2	10 and above	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student illness (<i>Note: to be deemed excused an appropriately licensed medical professional must verify all student illness absences, regardless of the absence's length</i>). • Student's observance of a religious holiday. • Death in the student's family or other emergency beyond the control of the student's family. • Mandated court appearances (additional documentation required). • The lack of transportation that is normally provided by a district other than the one the student attends (parental documentation is not required for this reason). • Extraordinary educational opportunities pre-approved by district administrators (Opportunities must meet certain criteria). 	Parent or guardian note and in some cases additional documentation (see details of specific reason)

*Note: the total # of days absent includes both excused and unexcused absences.

This new policy has taken effect across the entire State of CT. Starting on the first day of the 2013-2014 school year, we will be strictly following this policy as we determine if absences will be considered excused or unexcused.

The remainder of our attendance policy about maximum number of allowed unexcused absences and tardies and attendance failures will remain the same. **Please refer to our entire attendance policy, which is outlined in the Student/Parent/Teacher Handbook on pages 26-29, to answer any questions about vacations, excused versus unexcused absences and tardies, and many other parts of our policy.** Hopefully, this notice has been helpful in educating you and your family about the changes that are designed to improve student attendance for the purpose of increasing student learning. If you have any questions, feel free to contact me any time via email at mpeel@griswold.k12.ct.us or call the main office at (860) 376-7640. Thank you.

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