

SCARSDALE PUBLIC SCHOOLS COMPREHENSIVE ATTENDANCE POLICY

- A. Objectives.** Daily attendance in all classes and homeroom is essential to academic success. It also represents each student's most basic responsibility as a member of the Scarsdale school community. Therefore, every student is to attend all classes, unless legitimately absent from school. The District will identify patterns of absence, tardiness and early departures from school, and, as appropriate, intervene to encourage student attendance and discourage unexcused absences.
- B. Definitions.** For the purposes of this policy, the term "absence" shall mean:
- failure to attend scheduled classes or supervised studies for their full duration;
 - late arrival to scheduled classes or supervised studies during a school day; and/or
 - departure from and failure to return to any scheduled classes or supervised studies prior to their official dismissal.
- C. Classifying Absences**
1. Excused and Unexcused Absences. Student absences, late arrivals, and early departures shall be either excused or unexcused.
 - a. Excused absences include:
 - Illness
 - Illness or death in the family
 - Religious observance or religious instruction
 - Required appearance in court
 - Remedial health treatment
 - Pre-approved college visits
 - b. Unexcused absences include:
 - Family vacations, visits, and events
 - Camp attendance
 - Lessons (tutoring, sports, music, dance, etc.)
 - Oversleeping
 - Car troubles

The building principal shall have discretion to designate an absence, late arrival or early departure as "excused," if the cause of the absence is not among those enumerated in part (b), if he or she determines that the absence was unavoidable and/or otherwise not the fault of the student or the student's parent(s)/legal guardian(s).

2. Attendance Register Codes. The district shall adopt codes to record student absences in the pupil attendance record. These codes are included in Regulation 1.

D. Strategies for Improving Student Attendance and Discouraging Unexcused Absences

1. Attendance Incentives. The District shall adopt strategies to improve attendance and discourage unexcused absences, including printing attendance policies in handbooks and newsletters, contacting parents, reviewing policies at parent and student meetings, recording attendance on reports home, and applying discipline.
2. Absence Procedures. Parents shall notify the school and provide an excuse. The school shall provide makeup work and assistance. The District may require a doctor's note in the event of illness. Specific procedures are found in Regulation 2.

Professional staff shall keep daily, accurate records of student attendance and shall report absences consistent with procedures at each level. Specific procedures are found in Regulation 3.

When a secondary student cuts a class, teachers shall confer with the student and notify the student's parents as soon as possible. If the student continues to cut, teachers shall discuss the situation with the student's dean or counselor and refer the situation to the Assistant principal.

At the secondary level, homeroom teachers shall take and report attendance consistent with procedures for each level. Specific procedures are found in Regulation 4.

3. Tardiness Procedures. Parents shall notify the school. The student shall report to the nurse or attendance office, as appropriate for the school. At the secondary level, the student shall be responsible for meeting with teachers to make arrangements for completing any missed work. Specific procedures are found in Regulation 5.

At the secondary level, the teacher shall admit the student and record the lateness in his or her records. A student who is chronically tardy shall be referred to the counselor or assistant principal, as appropriate to the school. Specific procedures are found in Regulation 6.

4. Non-Disciplinary Intervention.

The schools shall establish procedures for reviewing absences on an individual basis, contacting and involving parents, and addressing underlying issues through plans developed by building level teams, psychologists, counselors and/or administrators, in collaboration with the student and parents. Specific procedures are found in Regulation 7.

5. Discipline.

Unexcused absence may result in disciplinary action, determined on a case-by-case basis by school officials. Disciplinary action may include but is not limited to the following:

- A grade of “zero” for work not completed on the day of the absence
- Denial of teacher assistance in making up missed work
- Administrative and/or parent conference
- Elimination of free periods and assignment to supervised study halls
- Loss of privileges
- Loss of eligibility for teams, clubs, and school activities
- In- or after-school detention
- In- or out-of-school suspension
- Written personal reflections by students

Teachers, counselors or school officials shall notify parents or guardians by phone and/or writing, as appropriate.

Student rights and responsibilities are defined in the District’s Code of Conduct.

E. Policy Distribution.

Copies of this policy shall be retained at the Main Office in each school, and upon request shall be available for review by members of the community at that location.

Copies shall be distributed to teachers as soon as is practicable following its adoption and, if applicable, amendment. New teachers shall be given a copy of the policy upon their employment. In the first week of school, K-5 classroom teachers will review the specific applications of the policy and elementary procedures to their grades.

The Superintendent is directed to prepare a summary of this policy, in plain language.

This summary shall be distributed as follows:

- a. To parents and legal guardians at the beginning of each school year through PTA Handbooks, school and class newsletters, and review at a parent meeting. Parents enrolling their children after the beginning of school will be provided a copy of this policy at the time of registration.
- b. To middle and senior high school students at the beginning of each school year. through the student handbook.

F. Annual Review. The building administrator or his designee will provide the superintendent of schools with an annual report of student attendance.

The Board of Education shall annually review the building level attendance records, and if such records show a decline in pupil attendance, shall review and, if appropriate, revise this policy to improve attendance.

Regulation 1 – Attendance Codes

The following codes shall be used to record student absences:

- Excused absence E
- Unexcused absence U
- Excused tardy ET
- Unexcused tardy UT
- College visit CV
- Nurse N
- Religious R
- Early Dismissal X
- Physician P
- School Trip FT

Regulation 2 – Absence Procedures

Elementary School

- The parent or guardian should call the Nurse's Office either before the date of absence, if this is known, or before 9:15 a.m. on the actual day of the absence.
- The student may bring a note written and signed by a parent, guardian, or doctor to the classroom teacher on the day he/she returns to school.
- If a student is absent on a regular basis or for a prolonged period, the school may request a doctor's note.

Middle School

- The parent or guardian must notify the student's House Office before 10:00 a.m.
- It is the parent or guardian's responsibility to notify the school office each morning of the absence and provide a written excuse for each absence.
- Students will be responsible to meet with his or her teacher(s) immediately upon returning to school and to establish a make-up schedule for work missed during an absence. Teachers will bring students up to date on missed classroom work upon their return to school; however, after an absence of three days, parents should arrange to pick up assignments at the House Counselor's Office.

Senior High School

- A parent or guardian should call the Attendance Office either before the date of the absence, if this is known, or before noon on the actual day of the absence.
- If a call cannot be made, the student must bring a note written and signed by a parent, guardian, or doctor to the Attendance Office on the day he or she returns to school. The Attendance Office will provide an “admit” pass to be presented to subject teachers.
- Students whose absences have not been excused within 48 hours will be considered truant or cutting and will face disciplinary consequences.
- It is the student’s responsibility to meet with teachers immediately upon returning to school to establish a make-up schedule for missed work during a legal absence.
- If a student is absent on a regular basis or for a prolonged period, the school may request a doctor’s note.

Regulation 3 – Teacher Attendance Procedures

Elementary School

- The Nurse’s Office is expected to keep daily, accurate records of student attendance.
- Teachers must complete attendance forms daily and deliver them to the Nurse’s Office no later than 9:30 a.m. All attendance forms will be scanned by 3:00 p.m. daily.

Middle School

- Teachers are expected to keep daily, accurate records of student attendance.
- Teachers will receive a Daily School Absence List in their mailbox by 9:30 a.m. each day. This list will contain the names of students who have explained absences, tardiness, or early dismissals for the day. Students who are tardy to school and who have reported to the House Office are issued a pass that indicates the time of their arrival.
- Teachers should note that the time after a student’s name on the tardy list indicates time of arrival.
- If a student’s name does not appear on the absence list and the student was not present in class, the teacher should report the incident to the House Counselor.
- Any student who submits an absence note directly to the teacher should be sent to the House Office to ensure the accuracy of the school’s records.

Senior High School

- Teachers are expected to keep daily, accurate records of student attendance.
- Teachers must complete attendance forms daily and deliver them to the General Office no later than 2:30 p.m. All attendance forms will be scanned by 3:00 p.m. daily.
- Teachers will receive a Daily School Absence List in their mailbox by 3:45 p.m. each day. This list will contain the names of students who have

explained absences, tardiness, or early dismissals for the day. Students who are legally or illegally tardy for school and who have reported to the General Office are issued pink slips that indicate the time of their arrival.

- Any student whose legal or illegal absence is not reported until the following day is issued a green slip by the General Office. Since the student's name would not have appeared on the Daily Absence List, the student should show the green slip to each of his or her teachers.
- Teachers should note that the number after a student's name on the tardy list indicates the period during which the student arrived at school. Therefore, the student should have spent some portion of that period in class. The tardy slip given to the student in the General Office will show the exact time of arrival.
- If a student's name does not appear on the absence list or the student does not present a green slip upon returning to class, then he should be informed that he has an illegal class absence.
- Any student who submits an absence note directly to the teacher should be sent to the General Office to ensure the accuracy of the school's records. Although the Assistant Principal will contact cutters and their parents, it is essential that teachers contact the parents of students who miss classes, since only the teacher can provide the kind of context which the parent often expects.

Regulation 4 – Teacher Homeroom Procedures

Middle School

- Teachers should take attendance daily and send the cards of the absent students immediately following the homeroom period to the House Office.
- Students who report late for homeroom should be admitted and then sent to the House Office to report their tardiness.
- Teachers should assume personal responsibility for taking homeroom attendance and should not delegate this task to a student.

Senior High School

- Teachers should complete attendance scan forms daily and send them to the General Office immediately following the homeroom period.
- Students who report late for homeroom should be admitted and then sent to the General Office to report their tardiness. Teachers should not bar late students from homeroom.
- Teachers should assume personal responsibility for taking homeroom attendance and should not delegate this task to a student.

Regulation 5 – Tardiness Procedures

Elementary School

- Students who will be late to school must have a parent call the Nurse's Office in advance or must have a note written by a parent with them when they arrive at school.
- Regardless of the circumstances, all latecomers must report to the Nurse's Office immediately upon arrival for sign-in purposes.
- Any child arriving to school after the designated starting time is considered late. The child must report to the Nurse's Office before going to the classroom.

Middle School

- Students who will be late to school must have a parent or guardian call the House Office in advance or must have a note written by a parent with them when they arrive at school.
- Regardless of the circumstances, all latecomers must report to the House Office immediately upon arrival for sign-in purposes.
- On the day of a lateness it is the student's responsibility to meet with teachers to establish a schedule to complete work missed.

Senior High School

- Students who will be late to school must have a parent call the Attendance Office in advance or must have a note written by a parent or guardian with them when they arrive at school.
- Regardless of the circumstances, all latecomers must report to the Attendance Office immediately upon arrival for sign-in purposes. On the day of a legal tardy, it is the student's responsibility to meet with teachers to establish a schedule to complete work missed.

Regulation 6 – Teacher Procedures for Student Tardiness

Middle School

- Teachers should admit students who are tardy to class and record the lateness in their records. Students may not be barred from class because they are late.
- Students who are chronically tardy to class should be reported to the House Counselor.
- Teachers who must detain a student beyond the class bell should give the student a pass to the next class.

Senior High School

- Teachers should admit students who are tardy to class and record the lateness in their records. Students may not be barred from class because they are late.
- Once a student has been tardy to class three times in a marking period, each subsequent tardiness during the marking period, should be considered a cut.

- Students who are chronically tardy to class should be reported to the Assistant Principal.
- At the teacher's discretion, a student who arrives extremely late to class may be considered to have cut the class.
- Teachers who must detain a student beyond the class bell should give the student a pass to the next class. The teacher should use a printed form available from the Assistant Principal's Office.
- To mark a student late on the scan forms, teachers must darken both the absence bubble and the tardy bubble.

Regulation 7 – Non Disciplinary Interventions

All student absences are reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

- b. Teachers record class absences daily. These are collected, reviewed, and disseminated by nurses (elementary schools), house counselors (middle school), and the assistant principal for student services (high school).
- c. School officials (principals, assistant principals, counselors, nurses, school psychologists) will notify and involve parents by any of the following methods:
 - Phone calls
 - Written communications
 - Meetings

NOTE:

Proposed policy given a first reading on 6/17/02; revision suggested.

Second reading and adoption: 7/01/02.