

MAYFIELD CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

COMPREHENSIVE ATTENDANCE POLICY

Philosophy:

Mayfield Central School District recognizes that student attendance in school is an important component of student success. Student interaction with teachers and other students in class helps to enhance the academic learning experience and provides a basis by which students can demonstrate mastery of subject matter. Every student has the right to the educational opportunities that will enable the student to develop his or her fullest potential. To maximize these opportunities, it is the responsibility of the student to be in attendance daily. Mayfield Central School District is committed to the philosophy that every student should attend every class every day. Regular attendance and promptness are expected in all classes and are essential for student success in school.

This philosophy is based on the following beliefs:

1. Regular attendance is an important aspect of a student's educational program.
2. The educational process requires a continuity of instruction and active classroom participation.
3. Students enhance their learning by interaction with their teachers and peers, which occurs through regular attendance.
4. Regular attendance is a major component of academic success. It increases student achievement and reduces the drop out rate.
5. Regular attendance prepares students for success after high school.

Mayfield Central School District shall promote community awareness of this District comprehensive attendance policy by providing a plain language summary of the policy to the parents or persons in parental relation to students at the beginning of each school year and taking such other steps deemed necessary to promote the understanding of such policy by students and their parents or persons in parental relations. Copies of the complete comprehensive attendance policy shall be available in the District central office and in each school building and will be provided to any member of the community upon request.

I. Overall Objectives of the Policy

The major objectives of the comprehensive attendance policy in the Mayfield Central School District are to:

- a) Ensure the maintenance of an adequate record verifying the attendance of all children at instruction in accordance with Education Law,
- b) Establish a practical mechanism for recording and analyzing student attendance in each school within the Mayfield Central School District,
- c) Ensure sufficient pupil attendance at all scheduled periods of actual instruction or supervised study activities to permit such pupils to succeed at meeting the State learning standards.

II. Specific Strategies to Accomplish These Objectives.

The Board of Education charges the Superintendent or designee to develop system of pupil attendance record keeping in each school in a register of attendance that shall provide an accurate record of each pupil's presence, absence, tardiness, and early departure. The register of attendance shall set forth the following for each pupil: name; date of birth; full names of parents or persons in parental relation may be contacted; date of the pupil's enrollment; and a record of the pupil's attendance on each day of scheduled instruction.

Record Keeping

In order to regularly monitor student attendance records and identify related attendance concerns and issues, a daily register of school attendance will be maintained in a database.

Student absences, tardiness, and early departures will be recorded as excused or unexcused as defined by our attendance policy. The school, on a regular basis, will review the attendance data to identify patterns or trends in student absences. The school will implement student and parent accountability measures. The school will assist with the accountability measures through its parent notification and reporting procedures.

At the elementary level, teachers will take attendance in homeroom on a daily basis.

The school nurse will make a phone call home after three consecutive days of absence and the building administrator will send a letter home if a pattern of excessive or unusual absences occurs.

At the junior and senior high levels, teachers will take attendance in 1st period (homeroom) and in each class period on a daily basis. A daily attendance bulletin will be published in a timely manner. A student absent from class during 1st period (homeroom) will be immediately reported to the attendance office. A daily phone call will be made to the home unless the attendance office is notified of the reason for the absence during the day.

The attendance office will call home or send a letter if a pattern of excessive or unusual absences occurs. Parent notification for unexcused absences and tardies will be made through the mail. If a student does not bring in an absence note within seventy-two hours, an unexcused absence will be recorded. The administration will have the right to request a doctor's note for excessive absences. If a student has excessive absences without proper documentation from a doctor, or is believed to be excessively absent without good reason, the parent/guardian will be notified with an explanation of the additional steps the district will take.

It is the parent/guardian's responsibility to provide a written excuse upon the student's return to school following an excused absence. Any absence not provided for on the excused list shall be deemed an unexcused absence.

Any absence for a school day or portion thereof shall be recorded as excused or unexcused in accordance with the standards articulated in Section 3 of this policy. In the event that a pupil, at any instructional level, arrives late for or departs early from scheduled instruction, such tardiness or early departure shall be recorded as excused or unexcused in accordance with the standards articulated in Section 3 of this policy.

Unexcused absences, tardies and early dismissals will result in disciplinary action consistent with the district's Code of Conduct.

III. Excused vs. Unexcused Absences, Tardiness, and Early Departures

The following reasons for pupil absences, tardiness, and early departure shall be considered by the Board of Education to be excused:

- a) Illness;
- b) Illness or death in the immediate family;
- c) Unsafe travel conditions;
- d) Religious observance;
- e) Medical appointments;
- f) Quarantine;
- g) Required court appearances;
- i) Approved college visits;
- j) Approved cooperative work programs;
- k) Documented family emergency such as fire or flood;

- l) Other reasons excused per district discretion.

Any other pupil absence, tardiness, or early departure is considered by the Board of Education to be **unexcused**. Each absence, tardiness and early departure shall be accounted for by the school attendance officer in the register of attendance (database) and shall be entered as excused or unexcused.

The following are examples of unexcused excuses for tardiness or absence:

- a) Oversleeping
- b) Late ride
- c) Missing the school bus
- d) Traffic delay
- e) A note stating, "Please excuse ...for being late," with no other explanation
- f) Family vacation

Tardy to School or Class:

Tardy is defined as any student not present in their scheduled class by the time the bell rings.

Arriving Late to School:

A student who arrives within the first 15 minutes of the school day will be marked tardy and sent to his/her first period class with a pass. Any student arriving between 8:15am and 8:45am will remain in the office thus not to disrupt their first period class.

Arriving Late to Class:

A student who is not in the classroom by the time the bell rings will be considered tardy to class. Students will be allowed to remain in the classroom if they are tardy if they have a valid pass. A student who is illegally tardy will be allowed to remain in the classroom. A student who is considered illegally tardy is responsible for making up the time they missed after school or at an agreed upon time during the day between teacher and student. The following discipline measures will be enforced on those students who are considered illegally tardy. We use progressive discipline to deal with tardies:

- For the first three tardies students will receive a verbal warning. Furthermore, students are responsible for making up time missed in the classroom.

- The fourth to the seventh tardy will result in a computer referral to the Asst. Principal. A student will receive a lunch detention which is ½ hour in duration. Furthermore, students are responsible for making up time missed in the classroom.
- The eighth to the tenth tardy will result in a 9th period detention which is from 2:22 pm to 2:52 pm after school. Furthermore, students are responsible for making up time missed in the classroom.

It is important to note that all absences, whether excused or unexcused, count toward the maximum allowed before denial of course credit. Participation in a school-sponsored activity is not considered an absence. Students on approved home teaching are considered to be in attendance.

It is the responsibility of the parents or persons in parental relation of the pupil to notify the school by telephone on the morning of the absence or tardiness or at the time of early departure as to the reason for such absence, tardiness or early departure. As a follow up to any oral notification, parents, or person in parental relation to the pupil, shall provide a written excuse within **three (3)** school days of the students return to school. The written excuse must contain the date of the absence, tardiness, or early departure and reason for such. All unexcused student absences will carry specified disciplinary sanctions, as outlined in the district code of conduct and/or this policy.

IV. Coding System Identifying Reasons for Absence, Tardiness, or Early Departure

The Board of Education shall charge the Superintendent or designee to design a coding system that will be used by all teachers in recording pupil absences, tardiness or early departure in their registers or attendance.

For any absence, tardiness or early departure that is excused, the coding system shall identify the reason for such absence, tardiness or early departure. An absence, tardiness or early departure shall be assumed to be unexcused until the school receives either oral or written confirmation that such absence, tardiness or early departure is in fact excused with appropriate reason.

Along with coding for whether an absence, tardiness or early departure is excused or unexcused and, if excused, the reason for such, the school shall record the time of entry of a student due to tardiness and the time of exit of a student due to early departure.

V. Student Attendance and Course Credit

Regular student attendance in classes is essential to the total learning process. Although some class absence may be unavoidable, each student is expected to make every effort to attend each assigned class. The underlying rationale for an attendance policy that denies course credit for non-attendance is based on recognition of the vital role classroom attendance and participation plays in academic achievement.

Elementary School: Elementary children's attendance is dependent upon the parents. Therefore, absences, excused or unexcused, will not impact the children's grades if the work is made up in a timely manner. However, due to the nature of the classroom work, it may not be possible to replicate class work and the children's grades will reflect that loss of instruction.

Junior-Senior High School: At the junior high and senior high-level, students who are absent from school and/or a class are responsible for completing all missed class work and homework within three (3) days of their return to class. The student and parent are responsible to check with his/her teacher/guidance counselor to determine the class work or homework that must be completed. Assignments not completed within the three-day time limit will receive no credit.

Unexcused absences, tardies, and early dismissals will affect a student's class grade for the marking period. If a student has an unexcused absence on the day of a quiz, test or exam, he or she will receive a zero on the quiz, test or exam. If a student has an unexcused absence on the day of a local final exam, he or she will receive a zero on that test.

Absence Threshold for Course Credit:

In order for a student in the high school or junior high school to receive credit for a course, it is important that the student attend regular class meetings. For the purpose of assigning eligibility for course credit, all absences, whether excused or unexcused, will accumulate towards the maximum allowable absence total.

For a full-year course, **Twenty (20) absences** shall result in a loss of credit.

For a half-year course, **Ten (10) absences** shall result in a loss of credit.

A student whose absences exceed these numbers will be subject to loss of course credit.

While all absences, whether excused or unexcused, will accumulate towards the threshold limit per individual class, an unexcused absence, tardy, or early dismissal will also result in disciplinary action following the Mayfield Jr. Sr. High School Code of Conduct.

All legitimate excuses shall be submitted within **three (3) days** of the student's return to school in order to be considered as a valid excuse for the student's absence.

In-school suspension, for which the student is doing work related to his or her particular classes, and out of school suspension, where the student takes advantage of alternative educational services provided by the District, shall not count as unexcused absences from class under this section of the policy. If a student fails to satisfactorily complete the work related to a suspended student's classes, these absences will be recorded as unexcused and fall under the same sanctions as any other unexcused absence under this comprehensive attendance policy and the Mayfield Jr. Sr. High School Code of Conduct.

The principal reserves the right to review each student's attendance and academic performance for the purpose of determining the student's eligibility for course credit under this policy. Each student's attendance situation concerning the loss of course credit will be judged on a case-by-case basis by the building principal.

Summer School: For purposes of consistently applying this policy throughout the school year, the number of days allowed before denial of course credit will be determined on a *pro rata* basis as determined by the principal. If a student is enrolled in a summer school course because they had failed the course during the regular school year, and/or had disciplinary problems that limited academic performance, and/or had attendance problems that negatively impacted academic performance, the level of school intervention (i.e. parental notification or disciplinary action) will be appropriately modified. The principal and/or his designee will deal with summer school attendance issues on a case-by-case basis and implement appropriate corrective actions if student absenteeism becomes a problem academically. The classroom teacher or building administrator will inform Mayfield summer students of specific attendance information during the first week of summer school.

Parental Notification of Student Attendance Problems:

Sufficient notice to a pupil's parents or persons in parental relation regarding absences and the potential for denial of course credit shall be implemented at the discretion of the building principal. Each building principal will implement intervention strategies prior to the denial of course credits to a student for insufficient attendance.

It is the school's goal to minimize the negative effects of poor school attendance on classroom performance. At any time during the school year and at the principal's discretion, an individualized student attendance plan, including incentives and sanctions, may be implemented to prevent the reoccurrence of poor attendance cycles from forming or continuing. The following student actions are indicators that will initiate school intervention when observed in any of our students: unexcused absences, truancy, continual tardiness, poor academic performance linked with attendance issues, disciplinary problems related to attendance problems, or other individual attendance patterns found by the school. The school will act if a student's attendance begins to take on patterns of past attendance history for that student. Actions may include, but not limited to: counseling, referral to the court system, contacting Child Protective Services, disciplinary sanction, and suspension from extracurricular participation/ attendance. Social workers, guidance counselors, school psychologists, teachers, nurses, administrators, and other school personnel may be involved in attendance intervention.

On the **twentieth (20) absence** [**tenth (10th) absence** in a half-year course], the student shall receive no credit for the course. The principal shall notify the student' parents or persons in parental relation of this situation by letter. The student shall not be able to receive course credit for the course.

20 Consecutive Day Rule: A student who has completed the academic year in which they turn 16 years of age and accumulates 20 consecutive days of absence in any year thereafter may be dropped from enrollment. Parents or persons in parental relation will be notified of this decision and will be afforded an informal hearing with the principal if they so desire.

VI. Incentives and Disciplinary Sanctions

Incentives: Schools may set up program of incentives and sanctions to encourage responsible attendance. Incentives could include a letter from the building administrator for perfect attendance, attendance commendation certificates, school recognition for perfect attendance each marking period, end of the year ceremony for students with perfect attendance, consideration of students with good attendance for special privileges and activities that are unavailable to all students.

Sanctions: Schools will enforce the sanctions in the district's Code of Conduct as it applies to unexcused absences, tardies and early dismissals from school or class. The Code of Conduct prescribes a range of disciplinary steps dependent upon the level of school and severity of the problem.

VII. Notice to Parents or Persons in Parental Relation

Generally, the school nurse, or designee, shall call a parent or person in parental relation to notify him/her if their student is absent or found to be truant. A parent may make an official request to be deleted from this routine call list at the beginning of each school year. However, the school reserves the right to call a parent to verify the whereabouts of their child whenever necessary, especially where the student has been absent three or more consecutive days or has a record of truancy.

As noted in Section 3 of this policy, any pupil absence, tardiness or early departure other than those specified in the policy is defined as unexcused. It is the responsibility of the parents or persons in parental relation of the pupil to notify the office by telephone on the morning of the absence or tardiness or at the time of early departure as to the reason for such absence, tardiness or early departure.

As a follow up to any oral notification, parents, or person in parental relation to the pupil shall provide a written excuse within **three (3) school days** which shall include the following: child's name (including first and last name), date of absence, tardiness, or early departure and reason for such.

VIII. Intervention Strategies to Identify Patterns of Student Absence, Tardiness, or Early Departure

Each building principal shall be charged with monitoring overall pupil attendance and determining and addressing specific patterns of unexcused pupil absence, tardiness, or early departure.

IX. Parties Responsible for Student Attendance in Each School

The building principal and/or his/her administrative designee shall be responsible for reviewing student attendance records and initiating appropriate action consistent with this policy.

X. Annual Review of Policy by the Board

The Board of Education shall annually review building-level student attendance records and, if such records show a decline in student attendance, the Board shall revise this comprehensive attendance policy and make any revision to the plan it deems necessary to improve student attendance.

Adopted by BOE: August 13, 2002

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