

STUDENT ATTENDANCE

The Board of Education recognizes that regular school attendance is a critical factor for academic success. Consistent school attendance, academic success and school completion have a positive correlation. Since school is a partnership, parents are expected to make sure their children attend school on a regular basis.

Although accurate record keeping and analysis of data are critical, we believe the ultimate success of the school attendance program is determined by the quality of the school culture. Creating a positive school culture is a prerequisite for good attendance. By school culture, we mean the overall physical and psychological atmosphere in a school: the behaviors, attitudes and beliefs exhibited by staff, students, parents and community workers. The Lindenhurst culture is accepting and inclusive with opportunities to learn.

Lindenhurst strives to build:

- A positive physical and psychological environment.
- Positive, strong adult role models for students.
- Respectful and nurturing interactions between adults and students.
- Positive student-to-student relationships.
- A challenging academic program.

Through implementation of this policy, the Board expects to reduce the current level of unexcused absences, tardiness, and early departures (referred to in this policy as “ATEDs”), encourage full attendance by all students, maintain an adequate attendance recordkeeping system, identify patterns of student ATEDs and develop effective intervention strategies to improve school attendance.

Notice

To be successful in this endeavor, it is imperative that all members of the school community are aware of this policy, its purpose, procedures and the consequences of non-compliance. To ensure that students, parents, teachers and administrators are notified of and understand this policy, the following procedures shall be implemented.

- The attendance policy will be included in student handbooks and will be reviewed with students at the start of the school year.
- Parents will receive a plain language summary of this policy by mail at the start of the school year. Parents will be asked to sign and return a statement indicating that they have read and understand the policy.

- When a student is absent, tardy, or leaves early from class or school without excuse, designated staff member(s) will notify the student's parent(s) by phone and mail of the specific ATED, remind them of the attendance policy, and review ATED intervention procedures with them.
- The district will provide a copy of the attendance policy and any amendments thereto to faculty and staff. New staff will receive a copy upon their employment. All faculty and staff will meet at the beginning of each school year to review the attendance policy to clarify individual roles in its implementation.
- Student ATED data shall be available to and should be reviewed by the designated school personnel in an expeditious manner.
- Where additional information is received that requires corrections to be made to a student's attendance records, such correction will be made immediately. Notice of such a change will be sent to appropriate school personnel subject to applicable confidentiality rules.
- Attendance data will be analyzed periodically to identify patterns or trends in student absences.
- Where consistent with other school practices, teachers and staff shall detain students in the hallways who are absent from a class period without excuse and refer the students to the Building Principal.

Attendance Incentives

The district will design and implement systems to acknowledge a student's efforts to maintain or improve school attendance.

Disciplinary Consequences

Unexcused ATEDs will result in disciplinary action consistent with the district's code of conduct. Those penalties may include, for example, detention or in-school suspension. Students may also be denied the privilege of participating in or attending extracurricular events.

In addition, designated staff member(s) will contact the student's parents and the student's guidance counselor. Such staff member(s) shall remind parents of the attendance policy, explain the ramifications of unexcused ATEDs, stress the importance of class attendance and discuss appropriate intervention strategies to correct the situation.

Attendance/Grade Policy

The Board of Education recognizes an important relationship between class attendance and student performance. Consequently, each marking period a student's final grade may be based on classroom participation as well as student's performance on homework, tests, papers, projects, etc.

All students with an excused ATED are expected upon their return to consult with their teachers regarding missed work.

Overall Objectives

This attendance policy takes into account the importance of creating a positive learning atmosphere while:

1. Maintaining a register of attendance in accordance with Section 104.1(d) of the Regulations of the Commissioner of Education.
2. Establishing a practical mechanism to account to parents for the whereabouts of their children throughout each school day. This information is necessary for safety and school management.
3. Establishing a system to determine the district's average daily attendance for State aid computations.
4. Confirming that individual students are complying with Education Law in relation to compulsory attendance.
5. Identifying individual and group attendance patterns to guide improvement efforts.
6. Providing data to develop interventions to help close the gap in student performance, given the high correlation between attendance and achievement.

Annual Review

The Board 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 revisions to the plan it deems necessary to improve student attendance.

Since different grade levels have varying needs, the regulations for the attendance policy is organized into two sections: elementary, middle school and high school.

Ref: Education Law §§1709; 3024; 3025; 3202; 3205-3213; 3225
8 NYCRR §§104.1; 175.6

Adoption date: February 4, 2009

ATTENDANCE REGULATION

Middle School and High School

Notification

Parents/Guardians

- Incoming 6th grade will receive a letter regarding the attendance policy and a copy of the policy. Parents will sign a form indicating receipt of the policy.
- Incoming 9th grade course selection packet (for 8th graders) will include a letter regarding the attendance policy and a copy of the policy. Parents/guardians will sign a form indicating receipt of the policy.
- When the attendance policy is revised, a general mailing (principal's letter and copy of the policy) to all parents/guardians.
- Presentation and handout at orientation in August for 6th/9th grade parents/guardians and students.
- Policy included in the High School Course Selection Guide.
- Letter mailed with the 2nd and 3rd quarter report card, or periodic intervals at the middle school.
- Annual presentation at high school PTSA meeting.
- Handout of policy and letter for new entrant registration.
- A copy of policy to be sent with incremental attendance notifications.

Teachers

- Memo from the Principal and copy of the policy
- High School newspaper
- Staff newsletter
- Lindenhurst District Newsletter
- Faculty meeting presentation
- Attendance data will be made available in the Attendance Office

Students

- Student handbook/planner
- School newspaper
- Orientation assembly for each grade-level (with emphasis on incentives to encourage attendance, i.e. increase in participation grade)
- Announcements
- High School Course Selection Guide
- Presentations in freshman English or Social Studies.

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- Letter to be sent with the 2nd and 3rd quarter report cards.
- Handout for every new entrant registration.

Community

- Lindenhurst District newsletter

Attendance Incentives

The school will design and implement systems to acknowledge a student's efforts to maintain or improve school attendance. For example:

1. An attendance honor roll shall be maintained and published quarterly identifying those students with perfect attendance, as well as those students whose attendance has improved significantly.
2. Attendance certificates will be given to students on the attendance honor roll.
3. Good attendance will be one criterion for attending the Middle School Recognition Breakfast. Breakfasts will be held at the high school to honor students with outstanding attendance or students who have shown significant improvement. Breakfasts will be held quarterly.
4. Free lunch coupons will be distributed to high school students with outstanding attendance, as well as those students whose attendance has improved significantly.
5. Awards at the 8th grade Promotion Exercise and at the end-of-year 6th and 7th grade assemblies will be given to students with outstanding attendance or to those students whose attendance has improved significantly.

Attendance Requirements

Applicability

1. This policy will apply to students in grades 6-12.
2. This policy will apply to each course individually.
3. This policy will apply to students with a handicapping condition unless, pursuant to state and federal law, a student's failure to adhere to the policy shall be determined to be a manifestation of their disability.
4. Students attending classes at other facilities, such as a BOCES center, will be subject to the attendance policies at those facilities except that this policy shall apply to the portion of the students' program for which they are enrolled at Lindenhurst Middle or High School.

Requirements

1. Full-year course: A high school student may be absent no more than **20 periods**. A student will be in violation on the 21st absence. A middle school student may be absent for no more than **28 times** and will be in violation on the 29th absence.
2. Half-year credit courses and physical education: A high school student may be absent no more than **10 periods**. A student will be in violation on the 11th absence. A middle school student may be absent no more than **14 times** and will be in violation on the 15th time.
3. Ten-week/Quarter Year Classes: A middle school student may be absent no more than 7 times and will be in violation on the 8th time.
4. Lateness: Tardiness to class of more than 15 minutes will be considered an absence at the high school. A middle school student will be considered absent if they are more than 20 minutes late.
5. Double period classes: Absence from both classes of a double period course (science labs, math extended) will count as **one absence**. However, both class periods will have to be made up for the one (1) absence to be removed from the student's attendance record in that course.
6. Absence notes: Students are required to bring an absence note on the day they return to school, but no later than 5 days after the actual absence. The Attendance Office will issue a notice the student must show to teachers informing them that an unexcused absence has been changed to an excused absence.

Guidelines

A student will not be considered absent from the class for the following reasons: (Although the absence does not impact the attendance policy, it is expected that work be made up.)

1. In-school suspension
2. Out-of-school suspension
3. Home instruction
4. School mandated testing, including advanced placement testing (test period only) and psycho-educational testing
5. Scheduled school meetings
6. Mandated curriculum based performances and/or experiences (e.g. L.E.F.T. would not be counted as an absence because instruction is provided.)

All absences apply to the attendance policy. However, absences that are excused may be made up.

Excused absences are as follows: (Students must make up work missed in these classes or absence counts against the policy in each course not attended.) Students must initiate the make-up opportunity.

1. Sickness
2. Death in family
3. Religious observance
4. Court appearance
5. Medical appointment
6. Field trip
7. Testing (SAT, ACT, course make-up exams)
8. College interview or visits
9. Travel for school athletics and activities
10. School approved modified schedules such as:
 - a. student initiated school personnel meeting
 - b. special rehearsals
 - c.
11. Impassable roads due to inclement weather

Unexcused absences are (but not limited to) the following: Cutting, truancy, family vacations, missed class due to student wishing to see a faculty member who was not available. Unexcused absences cannot be made up.

Make-up options for excused absences:

Teachers and students will mutually agree on what constitutes an appropriate make-up of an excused absence from a number of options. Some of which are the following:

1. An after school make-up class
2. A free period/lunch make-up class
3. A before school make-up class
4. The completion of specific reading assignments
5. The completion of all classwork and exams
6. A conference with the teacher
7. The completion of alternative projects:
 - a. Reports or projects on related topic
 - b. Class presentation
 - c. Article review
 - d. Internal research
8. Peer tutoring
9. Independent study assignments
10. Other – as determined by the teacher.

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This list is not inclusive of all options available. It is the responsibility of the classroom teacher to select the options available to the students. Required make-up work will be determined on an individual student basis. This requirement does not constitute a precedent for other students.

Attendance Procedures

Students are required to submit absence notes from their parents/guardians when they have stayed home from school.

Teachers will be provided with a daily attendance report that will list the reasons for their students' absences. Teachers will be required to maintain attendance records in three categories:

1. Excused absences: work may be made up for these absences but it must be done within five school days of the student's return. If work is not completed, these absences count toward the total absences permitted.
2. Unexcused absences: these absences count toward the attendance total whether or not work is made up.
3. Total absences: the number of excused and unexcused absences.

The existence of unexcused absences will be reported in the comments section of both the interim and quarterly report card grades. This will provide the opportunity for seven (7) official notifications of concern regarding the student's absences, i.e. four interims and three report cards.

When a student has reached the eighth and sixteenth absence in a full year high school course (ninth and eighteenth for middle school) or the fourth and eighth absence in a half-year or alternating day high school course (fifth and tenth for a half year middle school course; or third and fifth absence in a ten week/quarter year middle school class), the teacher will complete the Attendance Policy Referral Form.

- Teachers will be provided with a form for submission to the grade-level administrator, department head, the student's guidance counselor, the student and his/her parent or guardian. The third notification via this form will be sent out by certified mail.
- The Attendance Office will provide the principal with a cumulative attendance report on the first school day of each month. Ultimate responsibility for the review of attendance records and for the initiation of intervention strategies rests with the principal.
- Attendance data will be analyzed periodically to identify patterns or trends in student absences.

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- Continuous monitoring will be conducted to identify students who are cutting class. A well-defined cutting policy will be utilized for this purpose.
- On notification of the 16th (18th at the middle school) absence for a full-year class and the 8th (10th at the middle school) absence for a half-year course, or 5th for a ten-week middle school class the student's guidance counselor will arrange a conference to include the student, the parent or guardian, and the teacher to advise that course credit is in jeopardy due to unexcused absences. At this meeting, the attendance policy will be reviewed and the make-up policy will be outlined again.

When a student exceeds twenty (28 at the middle school) absences for a full year course or ten (14 for the middle school) absences for a half-year course, the teacher will provide written notification of denial of course credit to the guidance counselor, Principal, and department supervisor. A certified letter will be sent to the student and parents/guardians informing them credit has been denied after exceeding the allowable absences and outlining the appeals procedures.

After the 10/20 (7/14/28) unexcused absences, course credit will be denied. Students denied credit must remain enrolled in the course if they wish to attend summer school. Students may not exceed thirty (35 for the middle school) absences in a full-year course and fifteen (20 for the middle school) absences in a half-year course if they are to enroll in summer school. Middle school students may not exceed ten absences in a ten week/quarter year course if they are to enroll in summer school. Absences in excess of those listed will eliminate summer school as an option.

Intervention Strategies

For students with excessive numbers of days absent or tardy, district pupil personnel service professionals, i.e., guidance counselors, social workers, psychologists, will try to identify the root causes and seek solutions to the problems. They will work with families and look for ways to foster better family relationships and improve student attendance. Where necessary, they will help parents find ways to set appropriate limits for children. In addition, referrals to outside agencies may be made.

Due Process Rights Regarding Credit Denial

The principal or his/her designee will hear the appeal by the parent/guardian and the student. Only reasons for absence or recordkeeping can be questioned. The appeals hearing will involve the principal or his/her designee,

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guidance counselor, classroom teacher, student and parent/guardian. If so desired the student may have additional representation at the appeals hearing.

The appeal must be initiated by the parent/guardian and student in writing to the principal no later than five school days after the student and parent have been notified of the denial of credit.

The hearing will be convened within five school days of the receipt of the written appeal. The student and parent/guardian should attend this meeting.

Elementary Schools

Notice

To be successful in this endeavor, it is imperative that all members of the school community are aware of this policy, its purpose, procedures and the consequences of non-compliance. To ensure that students, parents/guardians, teachers, and administrators are notified of and understand this policy, the following procedures shall be implemented:

- The attendance policy will be included in student handbooks and will be reviewed with students at the start of the school year.
- Parents/guardians will receive a plain language summary of this policy by mail at the start of the school year.
- When a student is absent from school, a designated staff member will attempt to notify the students parents/guardians by phone.
- When a student has an unexcused absence from class, which includes leaving school grounds without permission, a designated staff member will attempt to notify the student's parents or guardians.
- Each school will communicate the district's attendance policy through various means, including orientation, open school nights, the school newsletter, etc.
- The district will provide a copy of the attendance policy and any amendments thereto to faculty and staff. New staff will receive a copy upon their employment.
- All faculty and staff will meet at the beginning of each school year to review the attendance policy and to clarify individual roles in its implementation.
- Copies of this policy will also be made available to any community member, upon request.

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Excused and Unexcused Absences

Excused ATEDs are defined as absences, tardiness, and early departures from class or school due to:

- Personal illness
- Illness or death in the family
- Impassable roads or weather
- Religious observance
- Quarantine
- Required court appearances
- Attendance at health clinics
- Other approved reasons (after a written request has been made to the Building Principal.)

All other ATEDs are considered unexcused (this includes family vacations during school days and oversleeping.)

All ATEDs must be accounted for. It is the responsibility of the parent or guardian to notify the school office within 24 hours of the ATED and to provide a written excuse upon the student's return to school..

General Procedures/Data Collection

The nature of an ATED shall be coded on the student's White Attendance Register Card on a daily basis in accordance with the procedures outlined on the reverse of the Lindenhurst Public Schools New York State Attendance Register Card. Each attendance card will contain at least the following for each student:

- Name
- Date of Birth
- Full names of parent(s) or guardian(s)
- Address where student resides
- Phone numbers where the parent(s) or guardian(s) may be contacted
- Date of the student's enrollment
- A record of the student's attendance on each day of scheduled instruction, recorded daily
- A record of each scheduled day of instruction during which the school is closed for all or part of the day (e.g., adverse weather conditions)
- The date the pupil withdraws from enrollment or is dropped from enrollment in accordance with Education Law section 3202 (1-a)

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- If a student is absent, the child's home will be contacted. The child's attendance will be recorded on the computer using one of the following codes:

Present	Other
Absence Excused	Absence Unexcused
Late Excused	Late Unexcused
Early Departure Excused	Early Departure Unexcused
Suspension (marked present with an "s" on card)	

- Lateness and early departure times will be established at all elementary schools.
- Where additional information is received that requires corrections to be made to a student's attendance records, such correction will be made immediately. Notice of such a change will be sent to appropriate school personnel subject to applicable confidentiality rules.
- Attendance data will be analyzed at the end of each marking period to identify patterns or trends in student absences.

Attendance Incentives

The District will design and implement systems to acknowledge a student's efforts to maintain or improve school attendance. For example:

- Students who have demonstrated improved ATEDs will receive rewards that may include certificates, awards, special activities and/or school-wide recognition.

Disciplinary Consequences

Unexcused ATEDs will result in disciplinary action consistent with the District's Code of Conduct. These penalties may include, for example, letters home to parents, home visits, or contacting child protective services.

If a child will be absent, parents should contact the school via a phone call or note; if not, designated staff member(s) will contact the student's parents. Upon returning to school, the child must present a note for a reason of absence (if not already provided).

If a child is absent or tardy for unexcused reasons ten (10) times, a letter will be sent home from the building principal or his/her designee reminding parents of the attendance policy and their responsibility (e.g., Appendix B). If the child is absent or tardy for unexcused reasons 20 times, a second letter will be

sent with a return receipt request (e.g., Appendix C). After a child is absent or tardy for unexcused reasons 30 times, parents will receive a letter and be visited by a member of the school support team (social worker or other professional). Additional action will be considered to help ensure the health and well-being of the student (e.g., contacting child protective services). If a pattern or trend of ATEDs is noted, appropriate action will be taken. To summarize:

<u>Unexcused ATED</u>	<u>Consequence</u>
10	Letter 1 (parent reminder)
20	Letter 2 (sent return receipt requested, possible home visit)
30	Letter 3 (sent return receipt request, notice of home visit, possible CPS)

Attendance/Grade Policy

The Board of Education recognizes an important relationship between class attendance and student performance. Consequently, each marking period a student's final grade may be based on homework, tests, papers, projects, etc.

Students are expected to attend all scheduled classes. Consistent with the importance of classroom participation, unexcused ATEDs may affect a student's class participation grade for the marking period.

In implementing the policy set forth above, students who are unable to attend school or a class on a given day may arrange with their teachers to make up any work missed. This also applies to any student who is absent, tardy or leaves early from school or a class due to illness or any other excused reason. It is the responsibility of the student and parent to consult with their teachers regarding missed work.

Due Process Rights Regarding Disciplinary Consequences

- The principal or his/her designee will hear the appeal by the parent/guardian and the student. Only reasons for absence or record keeping can be questioned. The appeals hearing will involve the principal or his/her designee, psychologist, social worker, classroom teacher, student, and parent or guardian. If so desired, the student may have additional representation at the hearing.
- The appeal must be initiated by the parent/guardian and student and submitted in writing to the principal no later than five (5) school days after the student and parent have been notified of the denial of credit.

- The hearing will be convened within five (5) school days of the receipt of the written appeal. The student and parent or guardian should attend this meeting.

Intervention Strategies

For students with an excessive number of days absent or tardy, district pupil personnel service professionals, i.e., social workers, psychologists, will try to identify the root causes and seek solutions to the problems. They will work with families and will look for ways to foster better family relationships and improve student attendance. Where necessary, they will help parents find ways to set appropriate limits for children. In addition, referrals to outside agencies may be made.

Annual Review

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

Adoption date: February 4, 2009