

REGULATION

**BOARD OF EDUCATION
HIGH POINT REGIONAL HIGH SCHOOL**

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Regular attendance by all students in the public schools of the state of New Jersey is a well-established long standing policy (N.J.S.A. 18A-38:25,26) that has been repeatedly upheld by the courts of the state as well as by the Supreme Court of the United States.

The rationale for requiring such regular attendance was perhaps best summarized by New Jersey's Commissioner of Education who wrote:

"... student participation in all regularly scheduled classroom learning activities in each area of study is essential in order for each student to receive the maximum benefits of a thorough educational program."

The school cannot teach students who are not present. The entire process of education requires a regular continuity of instruction, classroom participation, learning experiences, and study in order to reach the goal of maximum educational benefits for each individual child. The regular contact of the students with one another in the classroom and their participation in well-planned instructional activity under the tutelage of a competent teacher is vital to this purpose. This is the well-established principle of education which underlies and gives purpose to the requirement of compulsory schooling in this and every other state in the nation.

Frequent absences of students from regular classroom learning experiences disrupt the continuity of the instructional process. The benefit of regular classroom instruction is lost and cannot be entirely regained, even by extra after-school instruction.

Consequently, many students who miss school frequently experience great difficulty in achieving the maximum benefits of schooling. Indeed, many students in these circumstances are able to achieve only mediocre success in their academic programs..."

The High Point Regional High School Board of Education, Administration and Faculty accept their responsibility in requiring all students to be in regular attendance and as a result have adopted the following regulation dealing with attendance.

I. ABSENCES

Absentee Call-In Line - Please call 973-875-3101 and follow verbal prompts to report your child's absence.

A. Definitions

1. For the purposes of school attendance, a "day in session" shall be a day on which the school is open and students are under the guidance and direction of a teacher or teachers engaged in the teaching process. Days on which school is closed for such reasons

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as holidays, teachers' institutes, and inclement weather shall not be considered as days in session.

2. A "school day" shall consist of not less than four hours, except that one continuous session of two and one-half hours may be considered a full day of Kindergarten.
3. "A day of attendance" shall be one in which the student is present for a full day under the guidance and direction of a teacher while school is in session.
 - a. Whenever over-crowded conditions make it necessary to hold two separate sessions with a different group of students in each session, a student attending for all of either session shall be regarded as having attended for the full day. An excused absence for any reason shall not be counted as a day of attendance in the school register.
4. A "half-day class" shall be considered the equivalent of a full day's attendance only if in session for four hours or more, exclusive of recess periods or lunch periods.

B. Attendance Recording

1. A record of the attendance of all students on roll in a school register shall be kept each day that school is in session by a teacher or other authorized person. It shall be the duty of this person to keep the attendance records according to these rules and the specific instructions issued by the Commissioner of Education.
2. A student shall be recorded as either present, absent, or excused for religious observance, every day the school is in session after the student enters until the date the student is transferred to another school, transferred to an individual home instruction record, or officially leaves the school system.
3. The Commissioner shall annually prescribe a list of religious holidays on which it shall be mandatory to excuse students for religious observance upon the written request signed by the parent or person standing in loco parentis.

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4. The mere presence of a student at roll call shall not be regarded as sufficient attendance for compliance with N.J.A.C. 6A:32-8.3. In a school which is in session during both the forenoon and the afternoon, a student shall be present at least one hour during both the forenoon and the afternoon in order to be recorded as present for the full day. In a school which is in session during either the forenoon or the afternoon, a student shall be present at least two hours in the session in order to be recorded as present for the full day.
5. A student not present in school because of his/her participation in an approved school activity, such as a field trip, meeting, cooperative education assignment, or athletic competition will be considered to be in attendance.

C. Unexcused Absences That Count Toward Truancy/Excused Absences

1. “An unexcused absence that counts toward truancy” is a student’s absence from school for a full or a portion of a day for any reason that is not an “excused absence” as defined below:

Take Your Child to Work Day, or an absence considered excused by a New Jersey Department of Education rule.

2. “Truancy” means ten or more cumulative unexcused absences that count toward truancy of a student between the ages of six and sixteen as determined by the Board’s Attendance Policy and Regulation pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:16-7.6(a)4.iii. and the definition of school day pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:32-8.3. Any absence not listed in C.2 above shall be an unexcused absence counted toward truancy.

An “excused absence” is a student’s absence from school for a full day or a portion of a day for the observance of a religious holiday pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:36-14 through 16, or an absence for the reason listed below:

Examples of such absences would be for college visitations, up to three in Grades 11 and 12, Veteran’s Day Observance, work interviews, examinations for drivers license, medical or dental appointments that cannot be scheduled outside of the school day and closing of the student’s busing district. It is strongly recommended that the student provide the school prior notice of such absence. Appropriate verification of the reason for the

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absence is required within five (5) days to be credited as an excused absence.

D. Absence Verification

The parent(s) or legal guardian(s) is requested to call the high school office before 7:30 a.m. of the morning of the student's absence, and provide a written notice upon student return.

The parent(s) or legal guardian(s) who anticipates a future absence or anticipates that an absence will be prolonged should notify the guidance department, who will assist in the arrangement of make-up work.

All absences require written notification by parents or guardians of minors and by an individual who has declared his/her majority. Such notes shall be received in the office designated upon return to school following an absence. All such notes must be received within 5 days and shall list the dates and reason for the absence, be signed and dated by the parent or adult student, and shall become a part of the official student record. All notes have to be received by the Main Office within five days to be credited as an excused absence. Please note that any notes submitted for an excused absence by a student/guardian/parent that are altered, scanned, or forged will result in the student being prohibited from filing an appeal. As a result of such action, a senior may forfeit participation in graduation. A student who has been absent by reason of having or being suspected of having a communicable disease must present written evidence of being free of communicable disease, in accordance with Policy 8451.

Schools are currently required to notify the courts of any student who has 10 cumulative full-day unexcused absences. This may be avoided with written communication from parent or guardian explaining the student's absence to the school.

A student returning from an absence of any length must present to the Main Office a written statement, dated and signed by the parent(s) or legal guardian(s) of the reasons for the absence.

A student who has been absent by reason of having or being suspected of having a communicable disease must present to the School Nurse written evidence of being free of communicable disease, in accordance with Policy 8451.

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E. Consecutive Absences

Students under age of compulsory school attendance (16 years) who do not attend school for ten consecutive days and fail to notify the school as to the reason for the absence shall have served upon their parents or guardians a formal written notice to cause the student to attend school (N.J.S.A. 18:38-29)

F. School District Response To Unexcused Absences During the School Year

1. For up to four cumulative unexcused full-day absences, the Building Principal or designee shall:
 - a. Make a reasonable attempt to notify the student's parent or legal guardian of each unexcused absence prior to the start of the following school day;
 - b. Conduct an investigation of the cause of each unexcused absence, including contact with the student's parent or legal guardian;
 - c. Develop an action plan in consultation with the student's parent or legal guardian designed to address patterns of unexcused absences, if any, and to have the child return to school and maintain regular attendance;
 - d. Proceed in accordance with the provisions of [N.J.S.A. 9:6-1](#) et seq. and N.J.A.C. 6A:16-11, if a potentially missing or abused child abuse situation is detected; and
 - e. Cooperate with law enforcement and other authorities and agencies, as appropriate.
2. For between five and nine cumulative unexcused full-day absences, the Building Principal or designee shall:
 - a. Make a reasonable attempt to notify the student's parent or legal guardian of each unexcused absence prior to the start of the following school day;
 - b. Conduct a follow-up investigation, including contact with the student's parent or legal guardian, to determine the cause of each unexcused absence;

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- c. Evaluate the appropriateness of the action plan developed pursuant to F.1.c. above;
 - d. Revise the action plan, as needed, to identify patterns of unexcused absences and establish outcomes based upon the student's needs and specify the interventions for achieving the outcomes, supporting the student's return to school and regular attendance that may include any or all of the following:
 - (1) Refer or consult with the building's Intervention and Referral Services Team, pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:16-8;
 - (2) Conduct testing, assessments, or evaluations of the student's academic, behavioral, and health needs;
 - (3) Consider an alternate educational placement;
 - (4) Make a referral to a community-based social and health provider agency or other community resource;
 - (5) Refer to the court program designated by the New Jersey Administrative Office of the Courts; and
 - (6) Proceed in accordance with the provisions of N.J.S.A. 9:6 et seq. and N.J.A.C. 6A:16-11, if a potentially missing or child abuse situation is detected.
 - e. Cooperate with law enforcement and other authorities and agencies, as appropriate.
3. For ten or more cumulative unexcused absences that count toward truancy a student between the ages of six and sixteen is truant, pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:38-25 and the Principal or designee shall:
- a. Make a determination regarding the need for a court referral for the truancy, per N.J.A.C. 6A:16-7.6(a)4.iv. and H.4. below.

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- b. Continue to consult with the parent and the involved agencies to support the student's return to school and regular attendance;
 - c. Cooperate with law enforcement and other authorities and agencies, as appropriate; and
 - d. Proceed in accordance with N.J.S.A. 18A:38-28 through 31, Article 3B, Compelling Attendance at School, and other applicable State and Federal statutes, as required.
4. A court referral may be made as follows:
- a. When unexcused absences that count toward truancy are determined by school officials to be violations of the compulsory education law, pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:38-25, and the Board of Education's policies, in accordance with N.J.A.C. 6A:16-7.6(a), the parent may be referred to Municipal Court.
 - (1) A written report of the actions the school has taken regarding the student's attendance shall be forwarded to the Municipal Court; or
 - b. When there is evidence of a juvenile-family crisis, pursuant to N.J.S.A. 2A:4A-22.g, the student may be referred to Superior Court, Chancery Division, Family Part.
 - (1) A written report of the actions the school has taken regarding the student's attendance shall be forwarded to the Juvenile-Family Crisis Intervention Unit.
5. All receiving schools pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:14-7.1(a) shall act in accordance with F.1. above for each student with up to four cumulative unexcused absences.
- a. For each student attending a receiving school with five or more cumulative unexcused absences, the absences shall be reported to the sending district by the receiving school.
 - (1) The sending school district shall proceed in accordance with the district Board of Education policies and procedures pursuant to F. above and

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the provisions of F.2. through F.4. above, as appropriate.

G. Excusal from Physical Education

Excusal from physical education will generally be based on medically confirmed need to restrict physical activity. Those students who are excused from all physical education with a medical excuse are to be assigned to study classes. If only certain activities need to be avoided or physical education is excused only under certain conditions, the physician must include this information in his or her note. Notes for physical education excusal or modification are to be presented to the main office promptly upon reporting to school. Students with medical conditions that require long-term excusal from physical education will be rescheduled for other programs or courses as available and appropriate.

H. School Activities

Approved school activities which necessitate a student being absent from class shall not be reflected in absentee totals. Such activities will typically include but not be limited to activities such as field trips, athletic contests, student council meetings, music lessons with teacher permission, etc.

I. Discipline

1. Students may be denied participation in co-curricular activities if their attendance fails to meet the standards set forth in Policy No. 2430.
2. Students may be denied participation in athletic competition if their attendance fails to meet the standards set forth in Board Policy No. 2431.
3. No student who is absent from school for observance of a religious holiday may be deprived of any award or of eligibility for or opportunity to compete for any award because of the absence.
4. In addition to the requirements as outlined in F.3.a. through d. above, a student deemed truant shall be subject to appropriate student discipline or appropriate restorative practice determination.
5. The absence of a student missing from school for unexplained reasons will be handled in accordance with Regulation No. 8464.

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J. Recording Attendance

1. Teachers must accurately record the students present, tardy, and absent each day in each session or each class. Attendance records must also record students' attendance at out-of-school curricular events such as field trips.
2. Teachers must classify and record each absence as excused, unexcused, or truancy.
3. A report card will record the number of times the student was absent and tardy in each marking period.
4. A student's absence for observance of a religious holiday will not be recorded as such on any transcript or application or employment form.

II. ALTERNATE INSTRUCTION

A. Home Assignments

Home assignments are available to students confined to their homes because of illness. Parents are asked to contact the Guidance Office between 8 and 9 a.m. to request assignments.

Such procedure usually requires two days (phone call received on the morning of Day 1, assignments available at the close of School Day 2).

B. Makeup Work

The teacher will determine the credit to be awarded a student for make-up work. Where class participation is a factor in the learning process, the teacher may consider a student's absences in determining a final grade, except excused absences for absence for a suspension from school will not adversely affect the student's grade. The teacher may record an incomplete grade, for a student who has not had a full opportunity to make up missed work.

Students are provided an opportunity to complete assignments missed because of their absences. However, it would be unwise to believe that one can make up the learning activity of a total class session.

The rule of thumb for the time allowed to make up work missed is equal to the amount of time absent. Responsibility for arrangements to make up

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work lies with the student. Extended time to make up work may be granted by the respective teachers.

Students choosing to cut classes, or otherwise found to be truant, may not make up work missed during these infractions.

Students may complete assignments for time missed because of action initiated by the authorities of the school, i.e., suspension, exclusion, internal suspension, etc.

C. Home Instruction:

For students who are confined to home for extended periods of time (more than 10 school days by a physician who provides a medical diagnosis) a program to provide tutors in the home is available. Parents of students who have diagnosed illnesses are to contact the Guidance Counselor to arrange for transfer of the student from regular attendance rolls to the Home Instruction Register. Students on the Home Instruction Register are not recorded as absent.

III ATTENDANCE AS REQUIREMENT FOR CREDIT:

A. Absenteeism

Students who are excessively absent may be subject to credit forfeiture for courses in which they are enrolled. Excessive absenteeism shall be defined as class absence greater than 14 occasions for full-year courses.

This is not a statement of permissiveness and is not intended to give license as to the number of absences which can be taken. In all classes the grade and credits earned in a course shall reflect daily participation as well as other academic requirements.

B. Class Absence Totals

1. For the purposes of computing excessive absenteeism, all absences shall be counted in the class absence total except that which results from:
 - a. Religious holidays
 - b. Doctor's notes
 - c. Death in the immediate family
 - d. College visits (maximum of 4 with letter from Admissions Office; community college visitations would receive .5 day credit)

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- e. Administrative reasons (field trips, suspensions)
 - f. Court appearances
 - g. Scheduled test for driver's license
 - h. Other (according to administrative discretion)
2. All notes would have to be received by the Main Office within five (5) days to be credited as an excused absence.
 3. For the purposes of computing excessive absenteeism, the following types of absences are included in the totals. Examples include such as:
 - a. Tardiness: Students arriving in school, or for a class, more than 20 minutes after class has started shall be recorded as absent from the class.
 - b. Other: Students who are absent from class for other reasons not dictated by the school program such as early release, class "cuts", emergency, illness or personal reasons shall be recorded as absent from the class.

C. Notification

The school will maintain records of absences for all students. Parents or guardians will be notified of absences as follows:

1. For full year courses, written notification shall be supplied with the fourth and eighth absence. Final notification of possible loss of credit shall be supplied upon the occasion of the fifteenth (15th) absence.
2. For half-year courses, written notification shall be supplied with the fifth (5th) class absence. Final notification of possible loss of credit shall be supplied upon the occasion of the eighth (8th) absence.

D. Loss Or Credit

Students whose absentee record warrants loss of credit shall continue in classes scheduled but shall have indicated N/C (No Credit) in the "credits earned" category of report documents. Students in such status shall complete all course requirements in order to be eligible to file an appeal.

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E. Appeals

It is to be recognized that no policy, no matter how well intended, can anticipate all circumstances. The policy is no way intended to create hardships for serious well-intentioned students or their families.

1. Appeals of loss of credit may be granted if it can be substantiated that the pattern of excessive absence resulted from either of the following causes:
 - a. an unusual, long term medical problem as documented by a physician
 - b. an unusual or personal family problem judged to be beyond the control of the student and parent.

Guidelines as to the specific types of information or documentation required for each type of appeal are furnished with the notification of no-credit status.

2. A permanent Attendance Committee is established to monitor and recommend as to the conduct of this policy, including representation of administration and teaching staff. This committee has the primary responsibility for hearing and ruling on the merits of appeals. Their findings and recommendations are forwarded to the Principal.
3. The first step in the appeals process is for the parent or adult student to file a request for an appeal with the Attendance Committee. Appropriate forms and directions shall be included with the letter of notification of the "no-credit" status and must be returned within 15 days of the receipt.
4. The Attendance Committee shall meet in closed session at a designated time, or at the end of the school year to review all requests for appeals of those students in no credit status. The decision of the Attendance Committee shall be communicated to the parents within five (5) school days of the review meeting.
5. Appeals of the decision of the Attendance Committee at the review meeting may be made to the Attendance Committee within five (5) school days of the receipt of notification. In such cases a Hearing Committee shall be established to hear the appeal in open session. The hearing will be scheduled at the end of the first semester or at the end of the school year; as appropriate. At the hearing, the

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parent or student may present any additional information that they feel to be pertinent to explain the cause of the absence. The decision of the Hearing Committee will be communicated in writing within (5) school days of the date of the hearing.

6. Appeals of the decision of the Hearing Committee may be made to the Board of Education. Such requests must be made in writing to the Superintendent of Schools within ten (10) school days of receipt of notification of the decision.
7. Appeals of the decision of the Board of Education may be made to the Commissioner of Education.

G. Attendance Improvement Plan

1. The Superintendent will collect attendance data from each of the schools in the district and calculate the average daily attendance rate for the district and for each school. The attendance rate shall be calculated by dividing the total number of student days present for all students by the total possible number of student days present for all students and multiplying the result by one hundred.
2. When the average daily attendance rate for the district or for a school does not meet the New Jersey Department of Education requirements, performance objectives to improve student attendance pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:32-12.2(a)3 shall be developed.

H. Attendance Records

Attendance records for the school district and each school will be maintained and attendance rates will be calculated as required by the New Jersey Department of Education. The school district will comply with all attendance requirements and any improvement plans as required by the Department of Education.

Date Adopted: 12/18/95, 12/12/11

Date Revised: 10/18/93, 4/23/01, 9/15/03, 2/26/2007, 7/16/07, 7/21/08, 5/18/09,
11/19/13, 10/14/14, 2/23/16, 10/17/17