

POLICY

Board of Education Bernards Township

File Code: M 5200
ACADEMIC ATTENDANCE

Purpose:

The Board of Education requires that the pupils enrolled in the schools of this District attend school regularly in accordance with the laws of this state.

Authority:

Attendance shall be required of all students enrolled in the schools during the days and hours that school is in session unless it is shown to the satisfaction of the Board that the mental condition of the student is such that he/she cannot benefit from instruction or that the physical condition of the student is such as to prevent attendance at school.

No student whose absence or excuse has been approved by the principal or designated staff member shall be deprived of an award or eligibility to compete for an award or the opportunity to make up work and tests given during his/her absence.

The Board shall require from the parent or guardian of each child, or from an adult-emancipated student who has been absent from school or from class for any reason, a written statement of cause for such absence or tardiness. The Board, through the school administration, reserves the right to verify such statements and to investigate the cause of each absence of more than three days duration or repeated unexplained absences or tardiness. The Board may report to appropriate authorities infractions of the law regarding the attendance of students below the age of 16. Pupils shall be subjected to the school district response for unexcused absences during the school year as outlined in N.J.A.C. 6A:16-7.8(a)4 and Procedure 5200.

For mutual guidance of parents, pupils, and school officials, the Board lists the following reasons as acceptable for excused absence or tardiness:

1. Exclusion from school of all persons with uncovered weeping lesions-whether or not the person has been screened for HIV;
2. The pupil's illness;
3. A death or critical illness in the pupil's immediate family;
4. Quarantine;
5. Observation of the pupil's religion on a day approved for that purpose by the State Board of Education;
6. The pupil's required attendance in court;
7. Interviews with a prospective employer or with an admissions officer or an institution of higher education required and restricted by it to a specific date;
8. Examination for a driver's license;
9. Necessary and unavoidable medical or dental appointments that cannot be scheduled at a time other than the school day; and
10. Written parental permission.

No pupil, staff member, or visitor may attend or visit school if he or she has an uncoverable and/or uncovered weeping skin lesion, whether or not the person has been screened for HIV. Any weeping lesion covering must be maintained in a sanitary condition while in school.

The Board of Education recognizes the importance of visitation to post-secondary institutions of learning and employment interviews. The Board regards these as excused absences when advance written notice is provided to the principal or designated staff member at least one week prior to the absence. The Board, through the school administration, reserves the right to reject requests where a pattern of excessive previous requests or unexcused absences exists. The Board, through the administration, also reserves the right to reject requests for student absences during examination periods, which occur during the last week of each quarter.

No other reasons for student absences are deemed to be appropriate by the Board of Education. Where extreme extenuating circumstances create the necessity for a student absence due to any other reason, a written request must be submitted at least one week in advance to the school's principal. This request must delineate the special circumstances which support the need for an excused absence other than the aforementioned Board-recognized reasons.

Absences unaccompanied by an acceptable written statement from a parent, or a student who is at least 18 years of age and is financially independent of parental or other guardianship, will be considered unexcused, will be so recorded and will subject the student to disciplinary action at the discretion of school officials.

Unexcused absences are not condoned by the Board of Education. It is the student's responsibility to contact the teaching staff and administration to make up all work or tests missed.

A student may not be granted credit in a course after his/her total unexcused absences become excessive.

The Superintendent is directed to establish procedures for implementation and appeal of this policy.

N.J.S.A. 18A:36-14 et seq.;
18a:38-25 et seq.
N.J.S.A. 34:2-21.1 et seq.
N.J.A.C. 6A:16-7.8 (a) 4

ADOPTED: December 15, 2008