

Students

Attendance

Regular attendance is an integral part of the overall learning experience, involving all members of the home, school and community. The Milford Board of Education recognizes that daily classroom participation is an essential component of the learning process; classroom time directly influences student achievement. Absence tends to disrupt the continuity of the educational process, and the time lost from class is essentially irretrievable in terms of opportunity for intellectual pursuits and opportunity for activities within the classroom, which ultimately lead to learning. Regular attendance is essential to promote a sense of commitment and seriousness of purpose on the part of each student. Regular attendance also reinforces habits which students may carry beyond school to their vocation and avocations.

Regular attendance is both the moral and legal responsibility of the parents. It is expected that parents will see to it that their children attend school and receive the advantage of the educational opportunities that are provided. Parents, students and school personnel must work together cooperatively in the education of our children.

Connecticut State law requires that each parent or other person having control of a child at least five (5) years of age and under eighteen (18) years of age shall cause such child to attend school regularly during the hours and terms that school is in session, except as follows:

1. The student has graduated from high school;
2. The student is five (5) or six (6) years old and a parent or person having control of the child has personally appeared at the Board of Education offices and signed an option form setting out his/her election to enroll the student in a given year;
3. The student is age sixteen (16) or seventeen (17) and a parent or person having control of the child has personally appeared at the Board of Education offices and signed a withdrawal form consenting to such child's withdrawal from school;
4. The parent or other person having control of a child shows that the student is elsewhere receiving equivalent education and/or has completed the necessary home-schooling paperwork with the Superintendent's office.

A student should not be absent from school without the parents' knowledge and consent. Verification of absence will be written by parent or other person having control of the student.. The Board of Education directs the Superintendent to develop regulations and an incentive plan to promote better student attendance at the high school level.

Excused Absence

The Milford Board of Education defines the following situations to be excused absences:

- A. Illness - at elementary and middle school level parent's note for the first five absences. After five absences, a doctor's note is required for an absence due to illness to be excused. At the high school level, a doctor's note is required in order for an absence due to illness to be excused.
- B. Death in the family;
- C. Visit to nurse with administrative/nurse discretion;
- D. Religious observance
- E. School-sponsored activities;
- F. Court appearance;
- G. School suspension;
- H. College visits or orientations: up to three days during the student's high school years with documentation from the college(s) visited.

Request for Early Dismissal

Request for release of a student during the school day originating outside the schools must be handled by the administration to ensure maximum provisions for the safety and welfare of the student.

Parents requesting dismissal before the normal end of the school day must make a written request, come into the school office to pick the student up and sign the student out.

Early dismissal should be requested only in emergency or unusual situations.

Legal Reference: Connecticut General Statutes

10-184 Duties of parents.

10-199 through 10-202 Attendance, truancy in general.

10-202e-f Policy on dropout prevention and grant program.

10-221(b) Board of education to prescribe rules.

Campbell v New Milford, 193 Conn. 93 (1984).

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Procedure Regarding Excused Absence

1. If the absence meets the criteria for excused absences as defined in the Board policy, the documentation will be signed/stamped by the administrator and returned to the student if received within two school days from the date the student returns to school.
2. The teacher will note the excused absence in his/her records.
3. The student will return the documentation to the office to be copied for his/her record.

Warning Notes and Loss of Credit for Unexcused Absences

Unexcused absences are those absences that are not defined as excused absences. The warning note will be sent after:

- A. 4 unexcused absences from a one-half year course
- B. 10 unexcused absences from a full year course

When the unexcused absence limit in any year is exceeded, the teacher will notify the administration. Students will lose credit for a course as follows:

A student will lose credit for a course after

- A. 8 unexcused absences from a one-half year course.
- B. 16 unexcused absences from a full year course

A certified letter with an appeal form will be sent home informing the student and parent of loss of credit. Copies of this letter will also be given to the teacher, guidance counselor and administration.

A loss of credit will have the following results:

- A. The student may have to repeat the course or take its equivalent if needed for graduation.

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Warning Notes and Loss of Credit for Unexcused Absences (continued)

- B. The student may have to take additional courses to fulfill the needed credits for graduation.
- C. To qualify for summer school after credit has been lost in a course, a student must attend 75% of the remaining classes in that course and earn a grade of 50 or better
- D. Students who lose credit based upon this policy will earn a quality point grade when the course is a QPA course. If the course is passed, it will serve as a prerequisite as needed.

Appeals Process for Unexcused Absences

Unexcused absences that exceed the limits listed below may be appealed on reasonable grounds. The appeal must be made within two weeks of receipt of notification of loss of credit.

When a student has reached eight (8) unexcused absences in a half-year course or sixteen (16) absences in a full year course, the student may file an attendance appeal with their administrator.

Students wishing to appeal loss of credit due to excessive absences in a class must file the appeal within (10) school days of notification of loss of credit for the current semester.

The process will include:

1. The completion of a Request for Attendance Appeal Form and the submission of that form to their Assistant Principal.
2. A written statement from the student.
3. Documented evidence of improved performance.
4. Attendance record from the date of loss of credit.
5. Subject teacher's recommendation.

Students can only appeal for credit for a full year course if they have not done so in the previous semester.

If credit is denied after administrative review, the student and his/her parent/guardian may appeal for reinstatement of credit to the Appeals Board, which will be made up of three teachers, the student's guidance counselor, and Assistant Principal.

Transfers

When a student enters from another school, the number of days allowed for absences will be pro-rated. For example, a transfer at mid-year will be given a limit of 8 unexcused absences in a full year course.

Tardiness

A student 15 minutes or more late to class will be considered absent. Normal detention policies will apply to students tardy to school.

Truancy

Any student age five to eighteen, inclusive who accumulates four (4) unexcused absences in one month or ten (10) unexcused absences in one school year will be considered truant. Please see Board Policy 5113.2(a) Truancy.

Cuts

The present system of detention and notification will be maintained. Make-up work, including but not limited to tests and quizzes, is not provided for students who are in school but have cut a class.

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Failure in a course for academic reasons will not be subject to attendance policy appeal.

Parental Responsibilities

1. Stress the importance of regular school attendance with students.
2. Notify the school when there is an absence.
3. Schedule appointments after school hours.
4. When appropriate, provide documentation for excused absences no later than the second consecutive day of the student's return from absence. Notes received after that period for any of the specified excused absences will not be considered for appeal.
5. It is strongly recommended that no vacations, other than regularly scheduled school vacations, be taken as these are unexcused absences.

Teacher Responsibilities

1. Keep accurate attendance records.
2. Provide a schedule of assignments and make-up work for all absences that are not cuts.
3. Follow attendance procedures.

Student Responsibilities

1. Attend all classes.
2. Obtain and retain proper documentation for all excused absences (example: doctor's note) within the policy's stated time limits (2 consecutive days) upon returning from the absence.
3. Follow attendance procedures.
4. Initiate appeals process when notified of loss of credit.
5. Complete make-up work.
6. Senior Skip Day is not sanctioned by the school and unapproved absences shall be considered trancies.

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Counselor Responsibilities

Arrange a conference with the student to provide counseling and make program adjustments as required when informed of attendance problems by school personnel.

Administration Responsibilities

1. Follow attendance procedures.
2. Maintain a file of all excuses for possible presentation to the Appeals Board.
3. Confer with the student, parent, guidance counselor and teacher as needed.
4. Enforce disciplinary measures or arrange for referral services as deemed appropriate.

(cf. 5113.2 - Truancy)

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Middle School:

Students who arrive after the conclusion of the first instructional period of the school day will be considered absent for that day.

Students arriving after the start of the school day, but prior to the end of the first period will be considered tardy. After six (6) tardy arrivals, students will be subject to discipline at the school level in keeping with the regulations in each school's handbook.

Tardy Procedure

If student arrives to school after the official starting time, the student is to report directly to the office for check-in. All tardy arrivals will be considered unexcused. Tardy arrivals must have a doctor's note for illness upon arrival and be signed by a parent to be converted to an excused tardy. Failure to have the note at the time of arrival will result in an unexcused tardy. All unexcused tardy arrivals are subjected to disciplinary consequences as determined by the school.

Procedures for Monitoring Truancy

1. After five (5) absences, whether excused or unexcused, appropriate legal documentation (i.e. – doctor's notes for illness) will be needed to excuse further absences.
2. A documented team meeting will be held not later than ten (10) school days after a student's fourth (4th) unexcused absence in a month or tenth (10th) unexcused absence in a school year. At such a meeting, the parent or other person having control of the child and appropriate school personnel will review and evaluate the reason for the child's absences. If it is determined that the child is truant, strategies will be developed which will include a referral to Child Study Team or Student Assistance Team and review of community services available to the family.

Absences beyond 10 days will require detention time to make up work. Failure to make up work within five school days from the student's return date to school will result in a drop in grade.

3. A Family with Service Needs (FWSN) referral must be made pursuant to section 46B-149 by the Superintendent of Schools if the parent or other person having control of the child identified as truant fails to attend the required meeting with appropriate school personnel to evaluate why the child is truant or fails to cooperate with the school in trying to solve the child's truancy problem.
4. At the time that a student has accumulated thirty (30) unexcused absences within a school year, retention in grade must be considered as well as required participation in summer school to proceed to the next grade.

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Elementary School:

Students who arrive after one and a half hours of the school day will be considered absent for that day. Students who request an early dismissal prior to the last one and a half hours will be considered absent for the day.

Students arriving after the start of the school day, but prior to one and a half hours of the school day will be considered tardy. After six (6) tardy arrivals, students will be subject to discipline at the school level in keeping with the regulations in each school's handbook.

Tardy Procedure

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