

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. Students between the ages of 7 and 16 are required by law to regularly attend. 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.

A student should not be absent from school without the parents' knowledge and consent. Verification of absence will be written by parent or guardian. 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; if requested, a doctor's note; at high school, doctor's note is required
- 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;

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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).

Policy adopted: April, 1985
First Revision: June 14, 1993

2nd Revision proposed: March 10, 1998
Revision adopted: June 9, 1998

MILFORD PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Milford, Connecticut

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Procedure Regarding Absence

1. Within two days of absence from class, the student will submit to the assistant principal proper documentation for that absence.
2. If it meets the criteria of excused absences as defined in the Board policy, the documentation may be signed/stamped by the assistant principal and returned to the student.
3. The teacher will note the excused absence in his/her records.
4. 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. During the 1997-98 school year a warning note will be sent by the classroom teacher to the student, parents, guidance counselor and administration after:

- A. 6 unexcused absences from a one-half year course.
- B. 12 unexcused absences from a full year course.

During the 1998-99 school year, the warning note will be sent after:

- A. 5 unexcused absences from a one-half year course
- B. 11 unexcused absences from a full year course

During the 1999-2000 school year, 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:

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

In the 1997-98 school year, a student will lose credit for a course after:

- A. 10 unexcused absences from a one-half year course.
- B. 20 unexcused absences from a full year course.

In the 1998-99 school year, a student will lose credit for a course after:

- A. 9 unexcused absences from a one-half year course
- B. 18 unexcused absences from a full year course.

In the 1999-2000 school year, 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.

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

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.
- B. The student may have to take additional courses to 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.

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Appeals Process for Unexcused Absence (continued)

Example: A student loses credit for Algebra 1 because of attendance. If he/she receives a passing grade, he/she may then advance to Algebra 2

Unexcused absences which 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.

The Appeals Board consisting of three teachers, the student's guidance counselor and assistant principal will:

- A. Meet at the end of each marking period or as needed to review all potential credit losses.
- B. Review proper documentation from parents and/or students who are appealing loss of credit.
- C. Notify administration, teachers, guidance counselor, parents and students of those excused absences which will not be included in the 10/20 limit for 1997-98, 9/18 limit in 1998-99 and 8/16 limit in 1999-2000 of those unexcused absences which will be included in the limit toward resulting credit loss.

Unusual and extraordinary circumstances may be considered by the Appeals Board, with the final decision to be made by the principal and the Superintendent of Schools.

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 10 unexcused absences in a full year course for 1997-98, 9 in 1998-99 and 8 in 1999-2000.

Tardiness

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

Cuts

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

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Failures

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. Limit vacations to regularly scheduled school vacations.
5. When appropriate, provide documentation for excused absences no later than the second day of the student's return from absence. Include name of student, date(s) and reasons for absence, date and signature of parent/guardian.

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 absences (example: doctor's note).
3. Follow attendance procedures.
4. Initiate appeals process when notified of loss of credit.
5. Complete make-up work.

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.

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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.

Incentive Plan

A system of rewards for students who maintain perfect attendance for each month will be implemented at the high schools to motivate students to increase their attendance and thereby enhance their potential for greater learning.

(cf. 5113.2 - Truancy)

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Middle School:

Students must be present for at least three and one-half hours to be counted as attending. Students who arrive after 11 a.m. or who arrive on time and leave prior to 11:30 a.m. will be counted as absent for that day. After ten (10) absences, whether excused or unexcused, a team meeting may be called at the principal's discretion to review the circumstances and decide whether intervention is required. Future absences will need to be verified by a doctor's note. Absences beyond 10 days will require detention to make up work. Failure to make up work within five school days of returning to school will result in a drop in grade.

Students arriving after 8 a.m. are considered tardy. Three tardy arrivals equal one absence. After six tardy arrivals, students will be subject to discipline at the school level in keeping with the regulations in each school's handbook.

Elementary:

At the elementary level, a total of ten (10) absences, whether excused or unexcused, will require a review by the principal. At the discretion of the principal, each future absence beyond ten (10) may require a doctor's note or verification by the school nurse. After twenty (20) absences, the principal may refer the family to counseling or refer the situation to the school's Child Study Team. At the principal's discretion, students will be required to make up absences beyond twenty (20) by staying for 45 minutes after school as soon after the absence occurrence as practicable for the purpose of completing school work. After thirty (30) absences, the student shall be referred for mandatory summer school.

A student who arrives after the official starting time is considered to be tardy. Three (3) tardy arrivals are the equivalent of one absence. Three (3) early dismissal requests are counted as one absence.

Regulation approved: June 14, 1993

MILFORD PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Milford, Connecticut

Revision proposed: March 10, 1998

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Truancy

The Milford Board of Education recognizes that good attendance has a positive impact on the student's adult life. Students who developed the habit of good attendance will more likely be employed, have a wholesome respect for social institutions, and make positive contributions to the community.

The Board is aware that students who are truant (habitually miss school or class time) develop a pattern which has a long term negative impact on their lives. These students deprive themselves of learning the skills necessary for success in school and in life. They are a lot less likely to be gainfully employed. When students are habitually absent from school, they divert school personnel resources from other more worthy behavior which causes problems for the individual and the community.

Board policy with respect to unexcused absences stresses early prevention and inquiry leading to remediation of absences rather than imposition of punitive measures for students exhibiting truancy behavior. Only when all local resources are exhausted is referral to legal authorities recommended. School personnel, wherever possible and as much as possible, will seek cooperation from parents and assist parents in remedying and preventing truancy.

Definitions

"Truant" in accordance with Connecticut General Statutes, Public Act 91-303, a student enrolled in grades K-8 is truant when he/she has from (4) unexcused absences in one month or ten (10) unexcused absences in any school year. A student will be considered truant when he/she is absent from school and there has been no attempt to communicate a reason for the absence or when absences are recurrent and patterned.

"Habitual Truant" is any child who has twenty (20) unexcused absences within a school year.

"Excused Absence" for the purpose of determining truancy, an unexcused absence shall be one in which there has been no communication from the parent or guardian as to the reason for the absence, or there has been no reasonable explanation provided by the parent or guardian for the absence as excused absence is defined in Board policy 5113.

The following will be considered a reasonable explanation for an absence:

- Illness (confirmed by parent's note or, if requested, doctor's note);
- Death in the family;
- Visit to nurse with administrative/nurse discretion;

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- Religious observation;
- School-sponsored activities;
- Court appearance;
- School suspension;
- Family emergency.

Legal Reference: Connecticut General Statutes

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

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

Policy revised: June 14, 1993

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In an effort to monitor attendance and reduce truancy, the procedures will outline the process to be followed when a student begins to exhibit behavior which could lead to truancy. For this regulation a "truant" means a child enrolled in a grade from kindergarten to eight who has four unexcused absences in one month, or ten unexcused absences in one year. A "habitual truant" means any such child who has 20 unexcused absences within a school year.

The school administration will make a concentrated effort to prevent and remedy truancy in its early stages for students who are found to be truant.

Procedures for Kindergarten to Grade 8

1. All K-8 parents must be notified annually at the beginning of the school year (or upon registration) of their obligation to assure the child's attendance at school.
2. Parents will be required to complete emergency cards which contain the telephone numbers for the parents/guardian.
3. A system has been developed to monitor individual, unexcused absences of children in grades kindergarten through eight. If a child fails to report on a regularly scheduled school day and no indication has been received by school personnel that the child's parent/guardian is aware of the student's absence, school personnel will make a reasonable effort to notify by telephone the parent/guardian of such child.
4. A documented meeting will be held not later than ten (10) days after the child's fourth unexcused absence in a month or tenth unexcused absence in a school year. At such a meeting the parent and appropriate school personnel will review and evaluate the reason for the child's absence. If it is determined that the child is truant, a plan will be developed which could include referrals to community services.
5. When a student has twenty (20) unexcused absences within a school year, he/she will be considered a habitual truant. A PPT will be held to determine whether or not an education evaluation is appropriate. A Family with Service Needs (FWSN) referral must be made pursuant to section 46B-149 by the Superintendent of Schools.
6. The schools must report annually to the State Education Department on a school by school basis the number of children enrolled in grades K-8 who are habitual truants.

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Teacher Responsibilities

1. Keep an accurate record of student absences.
2. Notify principal of all student absences.

Principal Responsibilities

1. Principal or his/her designee will determine when a child has four (4) unexcused absences in a month and/or ten (10) unexcused absences in a year OR of a habitual truant, i.e., twenty (20) unexcused absences within a school year.

Counselor/Support Personnel Responsibilities

1. To arrange meetings with parents and appropriate school personnel after four (4) unexcused absences in a month or ten (10) unexcused absences in a year.
2. To document the meetings and plans developed during the meeting.
3. The minutes of the meetings should be filed with the principal.
4. A REFERRAL TO THE PLANNING AND PLACEMENT TEAM will be made after ten (10) unexcused absences in a year. A meeting will be scheduled to help determine the reason for the unexcused absences and whether or not an educational evaluation is appropriate.
5. To complete a FAMILY WITH SERVICE NEEDS (FWSN) referral after twenty (20) unexcused absences in a year and send to the Director of Pupil Personnel Services.
 - A. Documentation of initial parent conference after four (4) unexcused absences in a month and prior to ten (10) unexcused absences in a year.
 - B. Documentation of service coordination with referral of child to community agency providing child with family services.
 - C. Documentation of Planning and Placement Team meeting after ten (10) unexcused absences in a year.

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Counselor/Support Personnel Responsibilities (continued)

- D. Attendance Report.
- E. The Superintendent will file a written complaint with the Superior Court, Juvenile Matters, for a Family With Service Needs (FWSN) whenever a student is TRUANT.

Director of Pupil Personnel Responsibilities

1. To review Family With Service Needs (FWSN) referral.
2. To forward Family With Service Needs (FWSN) referral to Superintendent for signature.
3. After the Family With Service Needs (FWSN) referral is signed by the Superintendent, the form is submitted to juvenile court at a regular scheduled meeting.

Legal Reference: Connecticut General Statutes

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

