

SECTION J: Students

JE Attendance

ATTENDANCE POLICY AND PROCEDURES

The faculty and administration of Region 8 together with the Board believe that regular classroom attendance is an essential and necessary component of a successful learning experience. While state law mandates that schools be in session for at least 175 days per school year and provides that responsibility for student attendance rests with the student and the family, we believe that except under unusual circumstances, a student must attend the classes offered in a given course in order to receive credit for the course.

Maine Statute requires Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs to provide a minimum of 350 hours of instruction. Many CTE programs also require clinical or hours of required practice and certification cannot be given to students who do not participate in these requirements which require regular attendance in the programs.

Students may be removed from the program or may not receive credit if they are absent more than:

5 class periods per semester for every other day classes.

The decision to deny credit is at the discretion of the administration. Compulsory education is essential to the preservation of the rights and liberties of the people and the continued prosperity of our nation. Maintaining regular student attendance is necessary to achieve the goal of an educated citizenry. Public schools should ensure the rights of access for all school-age persons to an appropriate educational opportunity and, when necessary, should develop alternatives to regular school curricula for those children and youth at risk of becoming dropouts and those who may have left school.

GENERAL PROCEDURES

Students with planned absences of more than three days must meet with an administrator in advance of the proposed dates. Students with excused absences must obtain and complete work as described in the excused absences section.

Administrative Discretion: The administration has the authority to grant additional days in excess of the above if prior approval is given, or to interpret situations that might not allow advance notification of a student's absence.

Appeal Process: Any student wishing to appeal the removal from the program and/or denial of credit pursuant to this policy must indicate their desire to do so in writing to the administration, within five school days of the notification of the denial of credit or program removal. If the student is not satisfied with the administration's resolution, they may appeal the decision. The appeals board will consist of a teacher(s), the student's counselor and an administrator. The student may choose an additional teacher to serve on the board. The decision of the appeals board is final.

Definition of Excused/Unexcused Absences: Absences are categorized as either "excused" or "unexcused".

Excused: The following are reasons for an excused absence:

- Personal health, including the student's physical, mental and behavioral health that has been verified by a parent/guardian, (after 3 consecutive days must have a doctor's verification).
- Appointments with health professionals.
- Appointments for driving license exams.
- Observance of a recognized religious holiday when the observance is required during a regular school day.
- Family emergency.
- College/military visits and appointments.
- Bereavement.
- An absence that has been approved by administration.
- Suspension by school officials.

Students shall notify their teacher of an anticipated absence in a timely manner.

Lack of notification from a parent/guardian upon re-admittance is cause for an unexcused absence. Contact must be made within a week to be excused, if warranted.

NOTE: Parental permission does not constitute an excused absence unless it conforms to the reasons listed above.

Students who have an excused absence will be afforded the equivalent number of days for make-up work as they were absent from school, unless they were absent because of suspension. Students are responsible for contacting their teacher(s) regarding all work, tests, and class time missed and to arrange for all make-up work. Students suspended for five days will be granted three additional days for make-up work to be completed and for a ten-day suspension, students will be granted five additional days.

Unexcused: A student's absence from school is unexcused if the student is absent from school or from a class without the permission of a parent/guardian, teacher or administrator.

Examples of unexcused absences include but are not limited to the following:

- Students suspended from riding the school bus and not reporting to school.
- Students absent from class as a result of extracurricular activities not approved by school administration.

- Student's absent from school or class without the prior knowledge of an administrator.
- Truancy.
- Missed bus.
- Oversleeping.
- Employment.

A student may be denied the opportunity to make up work missed during an unexcused absence, tardy or dismissal. If the administrative office is contacted ***immediately upon the student's return***, either by phone or by a written note from the parent/guardian, the administration may choose to excuse the absence.

Unexcused Tardiness: Students must check in at the main office and obtain a pass if they are late arriving to school.

Hardship or special circumstances will be taken into consideration on a case-by-case basis. Students may be expected to bring in a doctor's note if they have ongoing regularly scheduled medical appointments.

Dismissals: Students may be dismissed from school for the same reasons as for excused absences. Dismissals must be arranged in advance by a parent/guardian either by a note or with a phone call and students must check out at the administrative office prior to leaving campus or they will be considered truant. Students may not dismiss themselves from school under any circumstances unless they are fully emancipated.

Legal Reference: 20-A MRS § 5001-A

First Reading: 3/22/95, 6/23/10, 6/24/15, 12/16/20, 1/24/24

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