

## 5200.01 HIGH SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

The Barnegat Township School District has an obligation to require that students be present in school in order that they may be taught the academic and social skills needed to function in a productive society. This policy is for the benefit of the students, their parents, and the community at large.

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 entire process of education requires a regular continuity of instruction, classroom participation, learning experiences, and study. The regular contact of students with one another in the classroom and their participation in a well-planned instructional activity under the tutelage of a competent teacher are vital to this purpose.

Therefore, the Barnegat Township School District cannot condone or encourage absenteeism by students. Students who miss class for any reason must complete assignments missed because of their absence. The Barnegat Township School District, however, recognizes that the schools are run for the benefit of the students, and every effort shall be made, therefore, to identify the habitual truant, and investigate the cause(s) of his/her behavior.

The Barnegat Township School District recognizes that parent contact by school personnel with respect to student attendance is highly desirable as a method to both inform and assist parents in assuring their children's regular attendance in school. The Barnegat Board of Education encourages that, as appropriate, such parent contact is made and maintained.

The Superintendent shall promulgate regulations to ensure that the intent of this policy is carried out.

Unexcused absences from school or from classes within the school day constitute trancies and shall be subject to the disciplinary rules of the Board. Repeated trancies that interfere with efforts of this Board and its staff in the maintenance of good order and the continuity of classroom instruction may result in the suspension or expulsion of any student from the course of study during which absences have occurred or the suspension or expulsion from school of a student over sixteen years of age, in accordance with Policy Nos. 5610 and 5620. Before any such action is taken, every effort shall be made to identify the habitual truant, investigate the cause or causes of the student's behavior, and consider the modification of the student's educational program.



The Superintendent shall calculate and monitor the average daily attendance rate for the district and for each school in the district. Whenever the average daily attendance rate is below ninety percent for the district or below eighty-five percent in any one school, the Superintendent shall develop and implement an attendance improvement plan. The attendance rate shall be calculated by dividing total student days present for all students by the total possible student days for all students and multiplying the result by one hundred.

In accordance with administrative policy of the Barnegat Township School District, the following regulations are promulgated:

1. The Principal or designee of each school shall require from the parent of each student a written statement of the reason for the absence. The Principal or designee shall take whatever means are necessary to assure the validity of all written reasons for absences.
2. If no valid written statement as to the reason for the absence is submitted, on return to school the student may be considered truant and the parent(s) so notified. It is the responsibility of the Principal or designee to assure him/herself that notification has been made. Any student who fails to bring in a note, by the second day after the student returns to school, may be assigned detention until a note is provided.
3. All students absent, regardless of the reason, must complete assignments which, in the professional opinion of the teacher, are necessary to assure the continuity of the instructional program.
4. Each Building Principal or designee is responsible for making the student and the student's parent(s) aware of the home bound instruction and supplemental instruction program available when the absence is beyond the student's or parent(s) control.
5. A student shall not be deprived of an award or eligibility to compete for an award because of an absence occasioned by the observance of religious holidays pursuant to State approved list.
6. Any child absent from school due to a communicable disease (regardless of the number of days) must present a doctor's certificate before he/she may return to school.



7. All students with pediculosis, ringworm, scabies, and conjunctivitis shall be excluded from school and may return after examination by the school nurse or upon receipt of a doctor's certificate.
8. The parent(s) will have an opportunity to submit documentation for all absences. In the event of a long term or recurring illness, the parent(s) must present written substantiation of such an illness from a medical doctor, psychologist or psychiatrist indicating that the student was medically or physically unable to attend school on the specific dates indicated.
9. If a student is absent from school in excess of eighteen days, his/her parent(s) will be notified that attendance will be used as one of the criteria for promotion/retention.
10. Any student who is absent during their scheduled Midterm or Final Exam due to illness must provide a doctor's note in order to make up the exam. Students who are absent due to illness will not be permitted to make up their Midterm or Final Exam without a medical note excusing that absence.

## Attendance Intervention

Parent(s) must call the school regarding student absence. Based on daily attendance school officials will attempt to notify parent(s) if a child is absent without explanation from parent(s).

When a student reaches the following number of days absent, these actions will take place:

1. Five Days: Parents receive a letter explaining attendance policy guidelines and return a signed acknowledgement. Parent conferences may be held. If parents do not respond to the first letter, a second letter will be sent via Certified Mail.
2. Ten Days: Parent in-school conference. Create Attendance Action Plan for improved attendance. If no improvement demonstrated, Principal may, at any time, make a referral to the Court Program Administrator of the NJ Administrative Office of the Courts.
3. Eighteen Days: Mandatory referral by Principal to the Court program and parents are informed that attendance will be a factor. Awarding of credits for the affected course(s).



At the Principals' discretion, based on excessive absences, a legal notice (State Department of Education Form A59), can be sent to the parent(s), and/or changes may be filed in Municipal Court for a violation of N.J.S.A. 18A:38-25, 18A:31.

A student must attend at least two hours in the morning and at least two hours (totaling four hours) in the afternoon to be marked present for a full day. A student must attend at least one hour in the morning or at least one hour in the afternoon to be marked present for a half day. Any absenteeism will require a written not of notification from the parent(s) doctor. On early dismissal days, a student must be present for four hours to be marked present for a full day and must be present for two hours in order to be present for a half day.

At the Principal's discretion, based on excessive absences, a legal notice (State Department of Education Form A 59), can be sent to the parent(s), and/or changes may be filed in Municipal Court for a violation of N.J.S.A. 18A:38-25, 18A:31.

A student must attend four hours to be marked present. Attendance of less than four hours will be counted as an absence and requires a written excuse from a parent and physician. On early dismissal days, students must attend two hours to be marked present.

#### Acceptable Reasons for Absence

1. Personal illness or injury;
2. Medical appointments;
3. Family emergencies;
4. Court appearances;
5. Serious illness or death in the immediate family;
6. Religious holiday as presented by the New Jersey State Department of Education;
7. A Principal's meeting may determine other acceptable causes for absence.

#### Unexcused Reasons for Absence

Any reason not listed above, truancy, class cutting, shopping, hunting, vacations, working, sleeping, faulty private transportation, hair dresser appointment, personal prom preparation, obtaining driver's permit, driving lessons/school.



The Attendance Officer will begin intervention if a student is tardy more than two times in a month or seven times in a five month period.

Conditions may be waived by the Principal or designee for special circumstances.

The Superintendent shall develop procedures for the attendance of students which:

1. Ensure a school session which is in conformity with the requirements of the rules of the State Board;
2. Identify potentially missing and/or abused students;
3. Govern the keeping of attendance records in accordance with rules of the State Board, including students serving in- or out-of-school suspensions, or excluded for health and cleanliness reasons;
4. Impose on truant students such disciplinary measures as may be appropriate for infractions of school regulations, but no such penalty may have an irredeemable negative effect on the student's record of achievement beyond that which naturally follows his/her absence from school activities;
5. Identify the habitual truant, investigate the causes of his/her behavior, and consider modification of his/her educational program to meet his/her particular needs and interests;
6. Address tardiness and class cutting in terms of the intent of his policy;
7. Ensure that students absent for any reason have an opportunity to make up work they missed; and
8. Recognize exemplary attendance.

When a student exceeds the limit, simply submit the appropriate form (available in the attendance office) to the Vice Principal, via the attendance office. Please notify the student that the report has been submitted.

If a student receives an extension, the form will be returned to the teacher. The teacher will hold the form until the student accumulates enough absences to exceed the number indicated. The new dates will be added and the form will be resubmitted to the attendance officer.



If, after an appeal, a student is placed on probation, the form will be returned to the teacher with the conditions of the probation specified. The teacher must notify the student of the disposition of the appeal. If the teacher becomes aware that the conditions of the probation have been violated they must notify the Principal at once.

If a student loses credit, an official notification will be processed. The student, teacher, counselor, and parent will receive a copy of this notification. Teachers will keep this form in their grade book. The teacher must record a CW (credit withdrawal) on the student's grade report. The scan form (on the left side) should show CW and the actual grade of the student. The Principal will notify the student of the disposition of the appeal.

When a student appeals to the Attendance Review Board, a copy of the disposition will be sent to all parties.

1. If credit is restored during the school year after appeal, it is the teacher's responsibility to notify Guidance of the grade change (from CW to the earned grade) using a Grade Explanation Form. Note: The CW's must be changed back to earned grades in every marking period.
2. This responsibility also extends to students who were on the teacher's roster in a first semester course or previous Health class. Guidance must be notified of the grade change.
3. If the appeal is denied, the teacher should continue to record CW on the grade report. The form (on the left side) should show CW and the actual grade.
4. During the summer, the administration will notify Guidance of changes involving CW.

An I (incomplete grade) takes precedent over CW. The I/CW/Grade should be recorded. Once the I is made up, the teacher must notify Guidance, using a grade change form, that the new grade is CW.

When a student transfers out of a class, that teacher must notify the receiving teacher of the grade in progress, the number of absences to date, and any disposition relative to loss of credit. A copy of the Notification of Excessive Absences, Loss of Credit due to Invalid Absence Form, or Review Board Appeal Form should be forwarded to the receiving teacher.

An Attendance Review Board has been established by the Principal. The members of this committee serve at his discretion. The committee will be composed of the following:



1. Vice Principal.
2. Attendance Officer.
3. Teachers.

The purpose of the Review Board is to process student appeals for restoring credit that has been lost due to excessive absences or cuts. If you are interested in serving on this Board, notify the Principal in writing.

Excessive absences from class will result in credit withdrawal for the class. Excessive is defined according to the length of the class and includes all general absences (not sick, field trip, or religious holiday days).

1. Full year course = 10 days absent
2. Physical Education = 7 days absent
3. Half year course = 5 days absent
4. Health = 3 days absent

Class cutting (this includes invalid absences from school which constitutes cutting all classes) will result in credit withdrawal as follows:

1. Full year course and Physical Education = 3 cuts
2. Half year course and Health = 2 cuts

In addition to the CW (Credit Withdrawal), there will be disciplinary action taken against the student.

Participation in co-curricular activities/events is not permitted if a student is absent from school for the entire day. If a student is tardy after 8:00 am or leaves school early, he/she may not participate in after school activities/events without the prior written approval of the administration.

## Appeal Procedures

1. Upon notification of credit withdrawal, a student's first avenue of appeal is to the Attendance Review Board. It is within the prerogative of the Board to determine what educational requirements or conditions the



student may fulfill to cause credit restoration. Credit Appeal Applications are available in the attendance office.

2. If the results of this appeal are unacceptable, the student may appeal the withdrawal of credit to the Principal. A parent conference must be scheduled.
3. If the results of this appeal are unacceptable, appeals may be successively filed as followed.
  - a. Superintendent.
  - b. Board of Education.

#### Notification Procedures for Excessive Absences

Warn students when they are close to the Loss of Credit Limit.

All warnings prior to a student exceeding the limit will be given verbally to the student by the teacher.

In addition, teachers are to utilize the interim progress reports for the reporting of excessive absences.

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. 6:20-1.1 et seq.

Adopted: 21 January 2003

Revised/Approved: 25 June 2003

Revised/Approved: 20 August 2003

Revised/Approved: 25 August 2004

Revised/Approved: August 2013

Reapproved: 13 September 2013

Reapproved: 18 August 2015

Revised/Approved: 23 November 2021

