

ATTENDANCE

Elementary/Middle/High Schools

All students have a right to educational opportunities that will enable them to develop to their fullest potential. Attendance policies are based on the principle that regular school attendance maximizes the students' interaction with their teachers and peers, and is a major component of academic success. Improved school attendance generally increases student achievement and reduces the drop-out rate. Therefore, attendance policies that provide the early identification of attendance problems, and effective methods to address them, are most likely to succeed. Successful implementation of any attendance policy requires cooperation among all members of the education community including parents/guardians, students, teachers, administrators and support staff. Our goal is to achieve 100% rate of attendance in all schools.

Student Responsibilities

1. Attend all classes each day and work to meet the academic, behavioral and attendance expectations of the Yonkers Public Schools
2. In the event an absence from school or a particular class occurs, the student must provide the attendance office with a note, signed by a parent/guardian or administrator, explaining the absence. Absences, for which there is no note on file in the attendance office, will be considered illegal.
3. Make up any class-work, homework or tests missed due to a class absence.

Parent Responsibilities

1. Discuss this Attendance Policy with your child and reinforce our expectations for good attendance.
2. If you give your child permission to be absent from school, call the school's main office on the day of the absence. Send your child to school with a note explaining the reason for the absence on the day he/she returns.
3. If your child is going to be absent from school for more than one day (for an illness as an example), inform the school attendance office by phone on the first day of the absence.
4. Call the guidance counselor or administrator if your child is having attendance problems. A conference will be arranged to assist you and your child.
5. Respond to any and all communications that the school sends to you regarding attendance.
6. Provide your child with the opportunity and support to make-up any work missed due to an absence from school.

Notice

Effective implementation of any Attendance Policy requires all participants to be informed and to fully understand its purpose, procedures, and the consequences of noncompliance. To ensure that students, parents/guardians, teachers and administrators are notified of, and understand, this policy, the following procedures will be implemented:

1. The district will provide each student with a copy of the Attendance Policy. All students will be required to sign and return a statement indicating that they have read, and understand, the policy.
2. An orientation session will be held for students at the beginning of each school year. Each time students cut class or are absent from school, the teacher will review the Attendance Policy with students, and inform them of impending consequences. Students enrolling after the first day of school are to be given a copy of the District Attendance Policy by their Guidance Counselor along with a brief orientation regarding the policy.

Parent/Guardian Notice

1. Principals will present the policy to parents/guardians at a “Back-to-School” event held during the first weeks of each school year. The presentation will stress the importance of student attendance, as well as parental responsibility for their children’s attendance. This presentation will also explain the distinctions between legal and illegal absence.
2. The District will provide each student’s parent(s)/guardian(s) with a copy of the District Attendance Policy. Each student and his/her parent(s)/guardian(s) will be asked to sign and return a statement indicating that they have read the policy and understand it. This signed statement will be filed in the student’s guidance folder.
3. Student(s), parent(s)/guardian(s) who are unable to attend the “Back-to-School” event will be afforded other opportunities to discuss the Attendance Policy, such as daytime orientation or telephone conferences.
4. Each school will provide parent(s)/guardian(s) with the phone numbers of the school’s attendance office or attendance person, guidance counselor and administrator(s).
5. When students cut class, or are absent from school, the school will inform parent(s)/guardian(s) by mail or phone. The specific parent/guardian notification requirements for High School, Middle School and Elementary students are outlined in the respective sections of this Attendance Policy for each level. The automated telephone messaging system will be used to inform parents when their children are absent or tardy.
6. School newsletters and publications will include periodic reminders of the components of the Attendance Policy.

High School Attendance Policy

1. General Policy

The following minimum attendance requirements are hereby established by the Yonkers Public Schools for all High School students. This policy does not differentiate between legal and illegal absences. Students on home instruction are not considered absent. Validated extended absences, where there are extenuating circumstances, may be excused by administrative action.

A student absent for more than 24 classes for a full year course, or 12 classes for a semester course, or 9 lab classes for a full year Regents science lab course will not receive credit for the course. Both legal and illegal absences will be counted in this number. The only exceptions not counted toward the 24, 12, 9 limitation are: (a) administrative altered schedule; (b) school operated music lessons; (c) school testing; (d) curriculum based field trips; and (e) approved participation in school athletic events. These are considered legal absences from class.

This policy takes effect 10 days after the first official day of class. This allows schools two weeks to refine and finalize student schedules. Decisions under this policy may be appealed to the building principals and, in succession, to the Superintendent of Schools and the Board of Education. See below: Appeals Process.

2. General Procedures/Data Collection and Sharing

a. Rules Regarding Make Up Work Missed Due to Absences:

Students must be given the opportunity to make up classwork, projects, and tests which were missed due because of LEGAL absences only. Work missed due because of ILLEGAL absences cannot be made up. Even though a student is given the opportunity to make up work missed for legal absences, the absence itself is still counted toward the total 24, 12, 9 absence limitation, and the student will still be denied course credit when this total is reached.

b. Parent/Guardian/Teacher Notification

Letters will be sent to parents/guardian, with copies to the student's counselor and grade level administrator by the school's attendance office, according to the Schedule of Absences Letters below:

SCHEDULE OF ABSENCE LETTERS

Schedule of Absences Letters	1st	2nd	3rd*	4th*	5th*
Number of Absences					
Full Year Course	8	14	20	25	36
Half-Year Course	4	7	10	13	
Science Lab	3	6	8	10	

* Registered letter will be sent

c. Appeals Process

In some cases, students will have demonstrated a dramatic change in behavior, performance and attitude toward school attendance or will have had an extended absence period due to illness or some other serious extenuating circumstance. In such cases, students or parent(s)/guardian(s) may exercise their right to appeal the 24 absence practice of no credit.

Appeal forms will be accepted by the building principal during the first ten school days of the month prior to the end of the course.

In order to begin an appeal, parent(s)/guardian(s) or student should:

- Step 1 Obtain a copy of the Request for Appeal of No Credit form from the main office or guidance office. Fill out Section 1 of the form. Submit the form to the teacher of the course in question, as soon as possible after the 12th (6th or 5th) absence.
- Step 2 The teacher fills out Section 2 of the Appeals form with all requested information.
- Step 3 The teacher submits the form to the grade level administrator.
- Step 4 The grade level administrator holds an appeals conference with the student, teacher, guidance counselor and parent/guardian.
- Step 5 The grade level administrator fills in Section 3 of the form and routes copies of the form to the teacher, guidance counselor, parent, student and attendance office.

Middle School Attendance Policy

The middle school is an extension of the elementary school and a natural bridge to the high school. The importance of responsibility for attending all classes must be instilled, and developed, within every middle school.

Also on the middle school level, attendance is critical to promotion. Promotion will be based on passing three core subjects (English, Math, Social Studies and Science) during the year or in summer school, and two non-core subjects.

1. To Improve Attendance the Following Steps Have Been Developed:

- a. Attendance will be taken each period by every teacher and appropriately recorded

- in the District's student management system.
- c. It is the responsibility of the student to bring an absence note, signed by the parent/guardian, to school on the day after he/she returns to school. The note is to be brought to the school's attendance office by the student. There will be a two day grace period for notes to be brought to school. After this grace period, the absence will be coded as illegal.
 - d. On a daily basis, attendance office personnel are responsible for updating reasons for student absences from class into the attendance computer.

2. Incremental Interventions for Middle School Absences:

The following system of incremental interventions will be carried out by each school as a minimum effort. Each school may add interventions as the nature of their attendance problems indicates, and time of staffing allows.

Step 1: Teacher Intervention

- a. Tell students to clear any absences with a note from a parent/guardian.
- b. Tell students to make up any work missed as a result of an excused/legal absence. Work missed due to an illegal absence may not be made up.
- c. Notify the student's Guidance Counselor when a student has been absent from a class three times in any two week period.

Step 2: Counselor Intervention

- a. Counselor will meet with each student referred for absence by teachers.
- b. The following are suggested interventions to be used by the Counselor:
 1. Weekly Attendance Sheet
 2. Parent contact or conference
 3. Home visits by Outreach Worker, if available
 4. PINS Petition - triggered if a student is absent 20 or more days in a marking period
 5. Refer to CPS

The Counselor and/or Outreach Worker should refer a student to his/her grade level administrator if cutting or school absence continues in spite of their interventions.

Step 3: Administrative Intervention

Administrators who receive referrals from Counselors and/or Outreach Workers are responsible to meet with students, and their parents/guardians, in a further attempt to encourage students to improve their attendance.

The following are suggested interventions to be used by administrators:

- a. Daily Attendance Sheet
- b. Daily Message on Homework Hot-Line
- c. Phone calls to parents on a daily or weekly basis through the use of the automated telephone messaging system.
- d. Assignment of another student to act as a peer counselor
- e. Schedule a building Screening Committee meeting to be attended by the counselor, psychologist, social worker, teachers, parents/guardians and student. When students continue to absent themselves from school or class, in spite of the above interventions.
- f. Removal of privilege to continue participation in school activities
- g. Development of a Pilot Detention Program with a strong parental

involvement component, for students who continue to be tardy and absent from school.

Step 4: Pupil Support Team (PST)

The Pupil Support Team consists of the Psychologist, Social Worker, Guidance Counselor, Nurse, Teacher(s), Administrator, Parent(s) et. al. The purpose of the team is to support students in reaching their potential. The team meets in order to help analyze problems and make recommendations to resolve issues.

If students continue to absent themselves from school, the grade level administrator will refer the student to the Pupil Support Team. The Pupil Support Team will meet to review the student's records; examining the student's academic, social, emotional and personal development. All staff members who interact with this student will be asked to provide feedback, develop alternative strategies to improve attendance, and then implement them.

The goal is to verify what works with this student and what has not been effective.

Elementary School Attendance Policy

In order for elementary attendance to improve, a focused and closely monitored system must be implemented.

Attendance Policy - In order to implement the Attendance Policy, an Attendance Person in each elementary school must be identified.

1. Attendance will be taken by every teacher and appropriately recorded in the District's student management system.
2. The designated attendance person monitors the student management system for children who are absent for five days within an attendance period. These do not need to be consecutive absences.
3. Attendance personnel call homes to ascertain why students are absent and fill out a form that is shared with building administrator and classroom teacher. (Schools may design their own form, or a district form will be generated.) The schools may use the automated telephone messaging system to notify parents.
4. In addition to the phone call, a letter is sent home by the Attendance Person. (The form will either be school-based or district generated.)
5. In the event that a student is absent for an additional five days, either within the same attendance period, or a different attendance period, the classroom teacher sends the name(s) to the office and the Attendance Person calls the home and sends a letter to the parent/guardian inviting he/she to a meeting with school staff.
6. Disposition will be shared with all concerned parties.
7. Once a child reaches 15 days of absence, the Pupil Support Team (PST) meets and decides upon a plan of action.

If a child reaches 20 days of absences, and the parent/guardian has not shown a commitment to work with the school/agencies, the family will be referred to CPS and/or a PINS petition will be filed. In addition, parents/guardians will be apprized that their child is in danger of being retained.

Attendance as a Criterion for Promotion

Attendance will be considered in making a judgment about promotion to the next grade level. A very poor record of attendance can severely deter a child from achieving the level of skills and knowledge requirements for success at the next grade level.

Cross-Ref: 5300: Code of Conduct

Ref: Education Law 8 NYCRR §104.1(i)

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