

Policy Information

Series 6000 - Students

Attendance, Punctuality and Excuses

Policy # 6110, 1.1

POLICY

2000 6110

Students

SUBJECT: COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL ATTENDANCE POLICY

Statement of Objectives:

The Genesee Valley BOCES recognizes that regular school attendance is a major component of academic success. Therefore, the Genesee Valley BOCES hereby adopts a Comprehensive Attendance Policy in compliance with section 104.1 of the Commissioner's Regulations. Through implementation of this policy, the BOCES expects:

- To raise student achievement and close gaps in student performance
- To ensure sufficient pupil attendance at all scheduled periods of instruction/supervised study activities to permit such pupils to succeed at meeting the state learning standards
- To reduce the current level of unexcused absences, tardiness and early departures
- To identify attendance patterns of student absences, tardiness and early departures
- To know the whereabouts of every student throughout the school day for safety and other reasons
- To confirm that students are complying with compulsory attendance requirements
- To develop effective intervention strategies to improve school attendance and performance
- To maintain an adequate attendance record keeping system
- To improve overall student attendance

The Board recognizes that a successful attendance policy requires the cooperation and support of all the members of the education community, including parents/guardians, students, teachers, administrators and support staff.

The Board directs the District Superintendent to develop regulations to effectuate this policy which are consistent with and conform to section 104.1 of the Commissioner's Regulations.

Board Approved

3/26/96

8/20/02

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Administrative Regulations
Students

SUBJECT: COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL ATTENDANCE POLICY

Description of Strategies to Meet Objectives:

In order to accomplish these objectives and to ensure a comprehensive and effective attendance policy, the Genesee Valley BOCES will implement the following strategies:

- Maintain a Comprehensive Student Attendance Policy based upon the recommendations and input of the education community
- Create and maintain a positive school building culture by fostering a positive physical and psychological environment that encourages respectful and nurturing interactions between adults and students.
- Maintain accurate recordkeeping via a Register of Attendance to record attendance, absence, tardiness or early departure of each student.
- Utilize data analysis systems for tracking individual student attendance and individual and group trends in student attendance.
- Develop and implement early intervention strategies to improve school attendance for all students.

Student Attendance Record Keeping/Data Collection – Register of Attendance.

A record of each student's presence, absence, tardiness and early departure shall be kept in a Register(s) of Attendance, in a manner consistent with the Commissioner's Regulations. The Register(s) of Attendance shall be a written or electronic record in which each pupil's absence, tardiness or early departure will be entered and recorded as "excused" or "unexcused" along with the BOCES code for the reason for said absence.

The Register(s) of Attendance shall contain the following information regarding each pupil enrolled in the BOCES:

1. Name;
2. Date of birth;
3. Full name(s) of parent(s) or person(s) in parental relation;
4. Address where the pupil resides;
5. Phone number where the parent(s) or person(s) in parental relation can be contacted;
6. Date of the student's enrollment;
7. A record of the pupil's attendance on each day of scheduled instruction.
8. A record of each day scheduled for instruction on which the school is closed for all or part of the day because of extraordinary circumstances;
9. The date the pupil withdraws from enrollment or is dropped from enrollment.

Commencing on July 1, 2003, attendance shall be taken and recorded in said Register(s) of Attendance in accordance with the following:

1. Each student's presence, absence, tardiness or early departure shall be recorded after the taking of attendance in each period of scheduled instruction.
2. Any absence for a school day or portion thereof shall be recorded as excused or unexcused in accordance with the standards articulated in this policy.
3. In the event that a student at any instructional level arrives late for or departs early from scheduled instruction, such tardiness or early departure shall be recorded as excused or unexcused in accordance with the standards articulated in this policy.
4. A record shall be kept of each scheduled day of instruction during which the BOCES school is closed for all or part of a day because of extraordinary circumstances including adverse weather conditions, impairment to heating facilities, insufficiency of water supply, shortage of fuel, destruction of or damage to a school building, or such other cause as may be found satisfactory to the Commissioner of Education.
5. A record shall be kept of the date when a pupil withdraws from enrollment or is dropped from enrollment in accordance with Education Law section 3202 (1-a).

6. All entries in the Register(s) of Attendance shall be made by a teacher or by an employee designated by the BOCES.
7. All entries in the Register(s) of Attendance shall be verified by the oath or affirmation of the authorized person making said entries.
8. Teacher(s) or other designated BOCES' employees shall supervise the keeping of the Register(s) of Attendance.
9. Beginning in the 2003-2004 school year, all pupil attendance records shall be reviewed by the respective principal of the BOCES school building as well as the individual(s) designated pursuant to paragraph (8) to supervise the keeping of the Register(s) of Attendance in said building. This review shall be conducted for the purpose of initiating appropriate action to address unexcused pupil absence, tardiness and early departure consistent with the Comprehensive Attendance Policy.

Determination of Excused and Unexcused Absences, Tardiness and Early Departures:

Excused absences, tardiness and early departures are defined as absences, tardiness and early departures from class or school due to:

- Personal illness
- Illness or death in the family requiring one (1) or two (2) days
- Religious observance
- Quarantine
- Required court appearance
- Attendance at health clinics
- Approved college visits
- Military obligations
- Impassable roads or weather
- Other such reasons as are approved by the building principal

In addition, the BOCES recognizes the following excused absences:

- Impassable roads or weather when the component school district is closed or delayed
- Any activity approved and scheduled by a student's component school district

All other absences, tardiness and early departures are considered unexcused. Examples of unexcused absences, tardiness and early departures are absences, tardiness and early departures from class or school due to family vacation, hunting or fishing, babysitting, oversleeping, etc.

It is the parent/guardian's responsibility to notify the BOCES when his or her child is absent, tardy or departs early from BOCES. The parent/guardian must provide BOCES with a written excuse within five (5) school days after the pupil's absence, tardiness or early departure has occurred. If a satisfactory written excuse is not presented to BOCES within five (5) school days, the absence, tardiness or early departure will be recorded as unexcused.

Coding system for absences:

The BOCES has adopted the following coding system for absences:

| | | |
|---------|---|------------------------------------|
| TE | = | Tardy Excused |
| EXC | = | Excused Absence |
| EXC/HSC | = | Excused Absence-Home School Closed |
| DE | = | Early Departure Excused |
| DU | = | Early Departure Unexcused |
| TU | = | Tardy Unexcused |
| UNEXC | = | Unexcused Absence |

School Attendance and Classroom Participation Grading Policy:

The BOCES believes that attendance and classroom participation is related to and affects a student's academic performance and grasp of the subject matter and, as such, is properly reflected in the student's final grade. Therefore, students are expected to attend all scheduled classes and are encouraged to strive toward perfect attendance. For purposes of this policy, classroom participation means that a student is in class and prepared to work.

Consequently, for each marking period, a certain percentage of a student's final grade will be based on classroom participation as well as the student's performance on homework, tests, papers, projects, etc. as determined by the building administrator and/or classroom teacher.

Students are expected to attend all scheduled classes. Consistent with the importance of classroom participation, unexcused student absences, tardiness and/or early departures will affect a student's grade, including credit for classroom participation, for the marking period. However, as a service provider, Genesee Valley BOCES recognizes and that decisions regarding course credit are ultimately made by the student's home district.

A student will be considered in attendance if the student is:

- a. Physically present in the classroom or working under the direction of a classroom teacher during the class scheduled meeting time; or
- b. Working pursuant to an approved independent study program; or
- c. Receiving approved alternative instruction.

Students who are absent from class due to their participation in a school sponsored activity are to arrange with their teachers to make up any work missed in a timely manner as determined by the student's teacher. Attendance at school sponsored events where instruction is substantially equivalent to the instruction which was missed shall be counted as the equivalent of regular attendance in class.

Upon returning to school following a properly excused absence, tardiness or early departure, it shall be the responsibility of the student to consult with his/her teacher(s) regarding arrangements to make up the missed work, assignments or tests in accordance with the time specified by the teacher.

Notice of Minimum Attendance Standard/Intervention Strategies

In order to ensure that parents/persons in parental relation and students are informed of the BOCES' policy regarding minimum attendance, the following guidelines shall be followed:

- a. A plain language summary of the BOCES' Comprehensive Student Attendance Policy will be included in the Student Handbook and will be provided to students at the beginning of each school year or at the time of the student's enrollment in the BOCES.
- b. A plain language summary of the BOCES' Comprehensive Student Attendance Policy will be provided to parents or the person in parental relation to students at the beginning of each school year or at the time of enrollment in the BOCES.
- c. A designated staff member will review the BOCES' Attendance Policy with students who have excessive and/or unexcused absences, tardiness or early departures. In addition, in these circumstances, the BOCES may implement appropriate student support services/personnel within the BOCES as well as the possible collaboration/referral to community support services and agencies.
- d. At periodic intervals, a designated staff member will notify by telephone the parent or person in parental relation to a student who has excessive absences, tardiness or early departures and explain the BOCES Attendance Policy. If the parent or person in parental relation cannot be reached by telephone, then a letter shall be sent detailing this information.

Notice to Parents/Person in Parental Relation of Students who are Absent, Tardy or Depart Early Without a Proper Excuse

A designated staff member shall attempt, as is reasonably practicable, to notify by telephone the parent of or person in parental relation to a student who is absent, tardy or departs early without a proper excuse. The staff member shall notify the parent/person in parental relation of the student's absence, tardiness or early departure and, if appropriate, shall explain the BOCES' Comprehensive Student Attendance Policy, the BOCES' building level intervention procedures and the relationship between student attendance and course credit. If the parent or person in parental relationship cannot be reached by telephone, the staff member will provide such notification by mail. The notice shall contain the date(s) and time(s) of the student's absence, tardiness or early departure and shall provide the name and telephone number of the building administrator or the individual(s) designated to supervise the keeping of the Register(s) of Attendance.

If deemed necessary by appropriate school officials, or if requested by the parent/person in parental relation, a school conference shall be scheduled between the parent/person in parental relation and appropriate staff members in order to address the student's attendance. School officials may require the student to attend this conference.

Attendance Incentives:

In order to encourage student attendance, the BOCES will develop and implement grade-appropriate building level strategies and programs including, but not limited to:

- a. Attendance honor rolls, identifying those students with perfect attendance as well as those students whose attendance has improved significantly, to be posted in prominent places in BOCES buildings and included in BOCES newsletters, subject to parental consent and confidentiality rules;
- b. Special events (e.g. assemblies, guest speakers, and field days) scheduled on days that historically have high absenteeism.
- c. Classroom acknowledgment of the importance of good attendance (e.g., individual certificates, recognition chart, bulletin boards);
- d. Assemblies collaboratively developed and promoted by student council, administration PTA/PTO and other community groups to promote good attendance.
- e. At the classroom level, teachers are encouraged to assign special responsibilities to students who may need extra motivation to come to school (e.g., distribute and collect materials, lead groups, assist the teacher, etc.).

Disciplinary Consequences:

Unexcused absences, tardiness and early departures will result in disciplinary sanctions as described in the BOCES' Code of Conduct. Consequences may include, but are not limited to, in- school suspension, detention and denial of participation in extracurricular activities. Parents/ persons in parental relation will be contacted by designated BOCES' personnel at periodic intervals to discuss their child's absences, tardiness or early departures and the importance of class attendance and appropriate interventions.

Intervention Strategy Process:

In order to effectively intervene when an identified pattern of unexcused absences, tardiness or early departures occur, designated BOCES' personnel will pursue the following:

- a. Identify specific elements of the pattern (e.g., grade level, building, time frame, type of unexcused absences, tardiness or early departures);
- b. Contact the BOCES staff most closely associated with the element. In specific cases where the pattern involves an individual student, the student and the parent/person in parental relation will be contacted;
- c. Discuss strategies to directly intervene with specific element;

- d. Recommend intervention to the Superintendent or his/her designee if it related to a change in District policy or procedure;
- e. Implement changes, as approved by appropriate administration;
- f. Utilize appropriate BOCES and/or community resources to address and help remediate student unexcused absences, tardiness or early departures;
- g. Monitor and report short and long term effects of intervention.

Building Review of Attendance Records:

Commencing with the 2003-2004 school year, the building administrator will work in conjunction with the building attendance clerk (designated by the BOCES) and other designated staff in reviewing attendance records at the end of each semester in order to identify individual and group attendance patterns and to initiate appropriate action to address the problem of absences, tardiness and early departures.

Annual Review by Board of Education:

The BOCES shall annually review the building level student attendance records and if such records show a decline in student attendance, the Board shall make any revisions to the comprehensive attendance policy and plan as are deemed necessary to improve student attendance.

Community Awareness:

The BOCES shall promote community awareness of the BOCES' Comprehensive Attendance Policy by:

- a. Providing a plain language summary of the policy to parents or persons in parental relation to students at the beginning of the school year and promoting the understanding of said policy to students and their parents/persons in parental relation;
- b. Providing each teacher, at the beginning of the school year or upon employment, with a copy of the policy. In addition, existing faculty and staff shall be provided with any amendment to the policy as soon as practicable after its adoption.
- c. Providing copies of the policy to any member of the community upon request.

Board Approved
8/20/02