



**PINE HILL BOARD OF EDUCATION**  
**School Board Policy**  
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## **5200- ATTENDANCE (M)**

### **M**

The Board of Education requires the pupils enrolled in the schools of this district attend school regularly in accordance with the laws of the State. The educational program offered by this district is predicated on the presence of the pupil and requires continuity of instruction and classroom participation. The regular contact of pupils 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.

Attendance at school may be excused for certain absences as defined by the Board. All absences for reasons other than excused, shall be unexcused.

Pupils absent from school for any reason are responsible for the completion of assignments missed because of their absence. No pupil excused for a religious holiday shall be deprived of an award or eligibility to compete for an award or the opportunity to make up a test given on the religious holiday.

Prolonged or repeated absences, excused or unexcused, from school or from class, deprive the pupil of the classroom experience deemed essential to learning and may result in retention at grade level or loss of credit toward the high school diploma in accordance with policies of this Board.

Pupils shall be subjected to the school district response for unexcused absences during the school year as outlined in N.J.A.C. 6A:16-7.8(a)4 and Regulation 5200. In addition, unexcused absences from school or from classes within the school day shall subject a pupil to the disciplinary rules of the Board, which may include the denial of a pupil's participation in co-curricular activities and/or athletic competition. 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 pupil from the course of study during which absences have occurred or the suspension or expulsion in accordance with Policy Nos. 5610 and 5620.

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 for the district or for a school in the district does not meet the New Jersey Department of Education requirements the Superintendent or designee shall develop performance objectives to improve pupil attendance pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:32-12.2(a)3.

### **Elementary and Middle School**

Every pupil shall attend school regularly. The Principal has the authority to excuse children for absence due to illness, avoidance of exposure to severe weather, and compliance with the

established ordinances for religious instruction or observance. A pupil who is excused must, however, still fulfill the school's requirements for advancement.

Physicians, psychiatrists, psychologists, dentists, and similar professional persons may request permission to have pupils excused during the school day for professional work.

Pupils who are absent from school for sixteen days or more shall be considered for retention. Cases of extreme and excused illness, as well as IEP exemptions, may be excluded from the retention process at the school level. However, when it is believed by the school staff that there has been abusive absence from school, the case should be processed to the level of the Superintendent of Schools to impress upon parent(s) and/or legal guardian(s) the need for children to attend school regularly. Upon review of the case, the Superintendent of Schools may also agree with the school staff and, therefore, sustain retention. Parent(s) and/or legal guardian(s) as well as staff will be required to conform to all guidelines established for retention through Board of Education policy on promotion and retention of pupils.

This consideration of retention due to excessive absence is not meant as a punitive action to be taken against a child and should be utilized only when the academic, social and emotional performance of a pupil is in jeopardy. This district staff is encouraged to pursue alternate avenues through courts and other social agencies to address parent(s) and/or legal guardian(s) neglect.

Parent(s) and/or legal guardian(s) are responsible for notifying the school by the second day of a pupil's absence. In the event this procedure is not followed by the parent(s) and/or legal guardian(s), on the third consecutive day, assigned school personnel shall contact the parent(s) and/or legal guardian(s) by telephone. . If the absence continues unexplained for five consecutive days, the Principal shall notify the Superintendent and other designated agencies.

If a pupil is present in the morning and absent at a later period in the day without an official excuse, parent(s) and/or legal guardian(s) and other designated outside agencies shall be contacted immediately.

Absences will be excused in accordance with regulation 5200. Doctor's notes must be submitted to the main office within a week of the pupil's return to school. Up to five days of family vacation with prior notification will not be considered truancy, but will not be excused absences in terms of the attendance policy.

Written verification of absences shall accompany a pupil on the day of return to school.

No pupil shall be permitted to leave the school before the end of the school day unless met in the school office and signed out by a parent(s) and/or legal guardian(s) or a person so authorized by a parent(s) and/or legal guardian(s).

Each school should validate requests for early dismissal to assure that children are released only for proper reasons and into proper hands. No pupil may be released on the basis of an invalidated telephone call. No school personnel shall send any pupil on a private errand.

Children of estranged parents may be released only upon request of the parent whom the court holds directly responsible for the child and who is the parent(s) and/or legal guardian(s) registered on the school record. The schools shall not be a party to other arrangements with estranged

parents. When attempts are made to remove children from school by persons without custody or proper authorization, the person(s) with legal custody are to be notified as soon as possible.

## Matters of Law

### Pupils Below Age Sixteen

Initially, a four day notice will be issued via mail. If the first notice is unsuccessful in achieving a pupil's attendance, the parent(s) and/or legal guardian(s) of a pupil who is below age sixteen shall be sent an eight-day certified (restricted delivery) notice to cause their child to attend school. Additionally, a phone call and email (if available) will be used to alert the parent/guardian. Per N.J.S.A. 18A:38-27, at 10 or more cumulative unexcused absence, the school district will make a mandatory referral to the court program required by the New Jersey Administrative Office of the Courts

### Pupils Age Sixteen or Older

Initially, a four day notice will be issued via mail. If the first notice is unsuccessful in achieving pupil attendance, parent(s) and/or legal guardian(s) of pupils who are age sixteen or older and adult pupils, shall be presented with a second notice on the eighth absence requiring the pupil to attend school within five days or be dropped from the attendance roll. If the second notice is unsuccessful, the pupil shall be dropped from the roll.

- a. Parent(s) and/or legal guardian(s), or adult pupils may appeal to the Principal for readmission.
- b. Attendance at a summer school shall not be an option for such pupils.
- c. A withdrawal/failure shall be entered on the permanent record for each course taken at the time the pupil was dropped.

### Lateness and Early Dismissal

Lateness to class and lateness to school should be treated according to the following provisions:

- a. Late to school (arriving after the start of homeroom).
  1. Elementary School: Age appropriate consequences will be assigned for lateness. After five lateness's, students will be assessed one unexcused absence for every 3<sup>rd</sup> lateness. (ie: On the 8<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup>, 14<sup>th</sup>...Etc. lateness will be equivalent to one unexcused absence in terms truancy.
  2. At the Middle School, a pupil will receive a warning for the first and second lateness, on the third through the ninth lateness, one administrative detention is assigned. For the tenth lateness or more, a one-day alternative instruction room will be assigned.

- a. Lateness to School resets each marking period
  - b. Lateness 1 & 2 are issued a warning (therefore, students are afforded 8 lates to school per year, 2 per marking period).
  - c. Lateness 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 are issued an afterschool detention
  - d. Lateness 10 & more are issued a day of the Alternative Instruction Room
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- b. Early Dismissal from school: A student must be in school for 4 hours for it to count as a school day. Therefore, a student who begins a day at the regular 8:10AM start cannot be dismissed early prior to 12:10PM if it is to count as a day of school.
  - c. The administration shall communicate this policy and practice to parent(s) and/or legal guardian(s), and pupils at the start of each year.

### Make-Up Work

Pupils returning to school shall be afforded a reasonable opportunity to make-up missed work equal to the number of days missed. Additional time may be requested by the pupil. The pupil is responsible to see their teacher immediately upon return regarding work missed during an absence to make arrangements for completion of that work.

### Appeal Process

To preserve doctrines of fairness and due process, pupils and/or parent(s) and/or legal guardian(s) shall have the following appeal rights:

1. Request to meet with the Principal and others to explain mitigating circumstances. The Principal may grant or deny the appeal, but if granted, the Principal shall establish the number of days which have been considered "mitigating". Additional absence exceeding that number will result in reassignment to the "no credit" status.
2. Write a request to meet with the Superintendent, if not satisfied with the action of the Principal.
3. Write a request to meet with the Board of Education, if not satisfied with the action of the Superintendent.

### High School

#### Introduction

Pupils who are absent from school cannot benefit from important teacher directed instructional activities. The loss of such valuable instruction can prevent a pupil from realizing maximum

competence or skill. Excessive absence almost certainly will reduce competency below tolerable minimum levels.

The Pine Hill Board of Education cannot condone or permit excessive and unnecessary absence from school and hereby establishes the following policy to establish attendance requirements and to deny credits to pupils who do not meet those attendance requirements.

This is not a permissive policy, which licenses a given number of absences. It does spell out consequences for absences due to truancy, class cutting, lateness to class or school and other violations of statutes and/or school rules. Absences due to such violations shall be considered unexcused and shall lead to a "no credit" status.

#### A. Definitions

##### 1. Excessive Absence

Pupils shall not receive credit in any course from which they are absent:

- a. More than twenty times "unexcused/excused" absent in a full-year course; and
- b. More than ten times in a semester course.
- c. Pupils falling into any of the above categories will not earn credit for the course(s) affected regardless of grade earned.

##### 2. Mitigating Circumstances

The following circumstances are those, which will be considered as excused absences as per Board policy and State law:

- a. Illness which is documented by a physician's written certificate, received within three school days after returning from that absence;
- b. Illness or disability, which requires assignment of home instruction by the Child Study Team;
- c. Absence, which is excused in advance to meet religious obligations permitted by statute;
- d. IEP exemption; and
- e. Death in the immediate family
- f. Attendance at the service for the death of a classmate or faculty member.

##### 3. Family Vacations

- a. Up to five days of family vacations with prior notification will not be considered truancy, but will not be excused absences in terms of the attendance policy.

- b. Appropriate documentation must be provided when family vacations coincide with the senior class trip.

4. Physician's Certification

- a. Any pupil who is absent for five or more consecutive school days due to illness shall be required to furnish a physician's certification that he/she is free of contagion as a condition for returning to class.
- b. Any unusual chronic illness should be documented with a physician's note in the nurse's office.

5. Parent(s) and/or Legal Guardian(s) Notes

Notes from parent(s) and/or legal guardian(s) are required to explain pupil absence:

- a. Pupils are to submit such notes to their homeroom teachers, who in turn will send them to the Assistant Principal's office with the daily attendance form.
- b. Such notes shall be on file in the attendance office.
- c. Legitimate, verified notes from parent(s) and/or legal guardian(s), which explain pupil illness (including inability to afford medical care), may be considered in determining if a "no credit" status shall be assigned. Unless very unusual circumstances exist, no more than sixteen days per year shall be affected by "mitigating circumstances".
- d. Absences not explained by parental, adult pupil, doctor, etc. within three school days after the pupil returns to school, may not be considered in the absence "no credit" appeal process.
- e. Telephone calls from parent(s) and/or legal guardian(s) advising school officials of pupil absence shall be encouraged; however, such telephone calls may not be considered in lieu of required written notes to be entered into the pupil's record.

6. Lateness and Early Dismissal

Unexcused Lateness to class and unexcused lateness to school should be treated according to the following provisions:

- a. Late to school (arriving after the start of homeroom). Pupil will receive a warning for the first and second lateness, on the third through the fifteenth lateness, one administrative detention is assessed. . For the sixteenth lateness or more, a one-day out-of-school suspension is required.

- e. For the purpose of the Excessive Absence Policy, three early dismissals will equal one absence. No early dismissals will be granted to pupils in attendance jeopardy.
- f. The administration shall communicate this policy and practice to parent(s) and/or legal guardian(s), and pupils at the start of each year through pupil orientation, pupil handbook, morning news announcements, "Back to School Night" and all other informational parent(s) and/or legal guardian(s) meetings.

## B. Make-Up Work

Pupils returning to school shall be afforded a reasonable opportunity to make-up missed work equal to the number of days missed. Additional time may be requested by the pupil. The pupil is responsible to see their teacher immediately upon return regarding work missed during an absence to make arrangements for completion of that work

## C. Matters of Law

In instances where a pupil is absent from school for ten or more consecutive school days and is not determined to be medically disabled, the pupil's parent(s) and/or legal guardian(s) shall be issued a notice via certified mail to return the pupil to school.

### 1. Pupils Below Age Sixteen

Initially, a four day notice will be issued via mail. If the first notice is unsuccessful in achieving a pupil's attendance, the parent(s) and/or legal guardian(s) of a pupil who is below age sixteen shall be sent an eight-day certified (restricted delivery) notice to cause their child to attend school. Additionally, a phone call and email (if available) will be used to alert the parent/guardian. Per N.J.S.A. 18A:38-27, at 10 or more cumulative unexcused absence, the school district will make a mandatory referral to the court program required by the New Jersey Administrative Office of the Courts

### 2. Pupils Age Sixteen or Older

Initially, a four day notice will be issued via mail. If the first notice is unsuccessful in achieving pupil attendance, parent(s) and/or legal guardian(s) of pupils who are age sixteen or older and adult pupils, shall be presented with a second notice on the eighth absence requiring the pupil to attend school within five days or be dropped from the attendance roll. If the second notice is unsuccessful, the pupil shall be dropped from the roll.

- a. Parent(s) and/or legal guardian(s), or adult pupils may appeal to the Principal for readmission.
- b. Attendance at a summer school shall not be an option for such pupils.
- c. A withdrawal/failure shall be entered on the permanent record for each course taken at the time the pupil was dropped.

## D. Excessive Absence Appearance

Any pupil who is absent more than twenty days from a full-year course, (or more than ten days from a semester course), whether excused or unexcused shall be required to appear before the Principal with his/her parent(s) and/or legal guardian(s).

1. Pupils shall remain in class and continue to participate.
2. On the twentieth day of absence from school or a class, the school shall notify the parent(s) and/or legal guardian(s) of the final violation of the attendance policy, which will require a formal conference with the Principal.
3. Any exemption to this rule must be approved by the school administrator.

#### E. Procedure

Teachers are responsible for classroom attendance records and the determination of when a pupil has reached levels of excessive absence.

##### 1. Warning Notices

After the pupil has missed four days of school in a full-year course, the pupil will be required to meet with his/her guidance counselor. Written notification will be sent to the pupil's home. On the eighth absence, the pupil's parent(s) and/or legal guardian(s) must accompany the pupil to a meeting with the pupil's counselor.

The twelfth absence will require a meeting with the school administration. After twenty absences a meeting is required between the pupil, parent(s) and/or legal guardian(s) and school Principal. At this meeting, the Principal may review all circumstances.

##### 2. No Credit Assignment

Within five school days after a pupil has exceeded the maximum absence level permitted by section A - 1 of this policy, the school shall mail a "No Credit" status notice to the parent(s) and/or legal guardian(s) and pupil's guidance counselor. Prior to sending the notice:

- a. The administration shall examine the pupil record to determine if the level of absences warrants consideration of a "no credit" status.
- b. If the record reveals no mitigating circumstances, the administration shall require the pupil and parent(s) and/or legal guardian(s) to come to a conference where the consequences and implications of a "no credit" status shall be explained and the pupil's attendance records will be reviewed to determine if a "no credit" status is appropriate.

#### F. Appeal Process

To preserve doctrines of fairness and due process, pupils and/or parent(s) and/or legal guardian(s) shall have the following appeal rights:



1. Request to meet with the Principal and others to explain mitigating circumstances. The Principal may grant or deny the appeal, but if granted, the Principal shall establish the number of days which have been considered "mitigating". Additional absence exceeding that number will result in reassignment to the "no credit" status.
2. Write a request to meet with the Superintendent, if not satisfied with the action of the Principal.
3. Write a request to meet with the Board of Education, if not satisfied with the action of the Superintendent.

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. 6A:16-7.8

Adopted: 28 August 2007

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The Pine Hill Board of Education is an Equal Opportunity Employer

