

**SUBJECT: COMPREHENSIVE STUDENT ATTENDANCE POLICY****Statement of Overall Objectives**

School attendance is both a right and a responsibility. The task of ensuring that all students meet or exceed the New York State Learning Standards requires an active partnership among students, parents and Falconer Central School. Because the District recognizes that consistent school attendance, academic success and school completion have a positive correlation, the District has a Comprehensive Student Attendance Policy to meet the following objectives:

To increase school attendance and completion for all students;

To raise student achievement and close gaps in student performance;

To identify attendance patterns in order to design attendance improvement efforts;

To know the whereabouts of every student for safety and other reasons;

To verify that individual students are complying with education laws relating to compulsory attendance;

To determine the District's average daily attendance for State aid purposes.

Falconer Central School will:

Create and maintain a positive school building culture by fostering a positive physical and psychological environment where the presence of strong adult role models encourages respectful and supportive interactions between adults and students. This positive school culture is aimed at encouraging a high level of student commitment to the school, which in turn should lead to increased attendance.

Develop a Comprehensive Student Attendance Policy based upon the recommendations of a multifaceted District Policy Development Team that includes representation from the Board of Education, administrators, teachers, students, and parents. The District will hold at least one public hearing prior to the adoption of this collaboratively developed Comprehensive Student Attendance Policy.

Maintain accurate recordkeeping 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 problems.

Develop early intervention strategies to improve school attendance for all students.

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Students

**SUBJECT: COMPREHENSIVE STUDENT ATTENDANCE POLICY (Cont'd.)**

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

Based upon our District's education and community needs, values and priorities, the District has determined that absences, tardiness and early departures will be considered excused or unexcused according to the following standards.

**Excused:** An excused absence, tardiness or early departure may be one but not limited to:

personal illness;  
 illness or death in the family;  
 extreme weather conditions including impassable roads due to inclement weather;  
 religious observance;  
 quarantine;  
 required court appearances;  
 attendance at health clinics, medical or dental appointments;  
 approved college visits;  
 approved school-sponsored educational/extracurricular/interscholastic trips;  
 approved cooperative work programs;  
 military obligations;  
 late bus arrival;  
 approved in-school music lessons;  
 required medical attention for other family member who relies on student for medical treatment;  
 in/out of school suspension;  
 approved medical appointments that cannot be scheduled outside the school day; and  
 any absence approved in advance by the building principal.

Excused absence, tardiness or early departure requires a phone call or written notification from the parent/person in parental relationship. A designated staff member shall notify the parent/person in parental relation to a student who is absent, tardy or departs early without proper excuse, by telephone or in writing, when written or verbal notification is not received in reasonable length of time following the absence, tardiness or early departure. The staff member shall explain the District's Comprehensive Student Attendance Policy, the District's/building level intervention procedures, and, if appropriate, the relationship between student attendance and course credit. If the parent/person in parental relation cannot be reached by telephone, the staff member will provide such notification by mail.

**Unexcused:** An absence, tardiness or early departure is considered unexcused if: the reason for the lack of attendance does not fall into the above categories (e.g., obtaining learner's permit, road test, recreational activities not related to school-sponsored events, oversleeping, car trouble, missed bus ride or ride, etc.).

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Students

**SUBJECT: COMPREHENSIVE STUDENT ATTENDANCE POLICY (Cont'd.)**

**Disciplinary Consequences**

Unexcused absences, tardiness and early departures will result in disciplinary sanctions as described in the District's Code of Conduct. Parents/persons in parental relation will be notified by designated District personnel at periodic intervals to discuss their child's absences, tardiness or early departures and the importance of class attendance and appropriate interventions.

**Student Attendance Recordkeeping/Data Collection**

The record of each student's presence, absence, tardiness and early departure shall be kept in a register of attendance in a manner consistent with Commissioner's Regulations. An absence, tardiness or early departure will be entered as "excused" or "unexcused" along with the District code for the reason.

For students in self-contained classrooms and classes in which supervised group movement to other scheduled school activities such as physical education in the gym, assembly, etc. takes place) such student's presence or absence shall be recorded after the taking of attendance once per school day.

For students in grades nine through twelve, each student's presence or absence shall be recorded after the taking of attendance in each period of scheduled instruction except that where students do not change classrooms for each period of scheduled instruction, attendance shall be taken in accordance with paragraph "a" above.

Any absence for a school day or portion thereof shall be recorded as excused or unexcused in accordance with this policy.

In the event that a student at any instructional program arrives late for or departs early from scheduled instruction, such tardiness or early departure shall be recorded as excused or unexcused in accordance with this policy and accompanied by a written note from the parent/guardian.

A record shall be kept of each scheduled day of instruction during which the school is closed for all or part of the day because of extraordinary circumstances including adverse weather conditions, impairment of 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.

Attendance records shall also indicate the date when a student withdraws from enrollment.

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Students

**SUBJECT: COMPREHENSIVE STUDENT ATTENDANCE POLICY (Cont'd.)**

At the conclusion of each school day, all attendance information shall be compiled and provided to the designated school personnel who are responsible for attendance. The nature of the absence, tardiness or early departure shall be coded on a student's record in accordance with the established District procedures.

**Student Attendance and Course Credit**

The District believes that classroom participation is related to and affects a student's performance and grasp of the subject matter and, as such, is properly reflected in a student's final grade. For purposes of this policy, classroom participation means that a student is in class and prepared to work.

Consequently, in courses for which credit is earned or recommended, 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 in conjunction with the classroom teacher.

Students are expected to attend all scheduled classes. Consistent with the importance of classroom participation, unexcused student absences, tardiness, and early departures will affect a student's grade, including credit for classroom participation, for the marking period.

At the high school (9 - 12) level, any student with more than eighteen (18) absences in a course may not receive credit for the course. However, it is District policy that students with properly excused absences, tardiness and early departures for which the student has performed any assigned make-up work, assignments and/or tests shall not be counted as an absence for the purpose of determining the student's eligibility for course credit.

However, where a student earns a passing grade for the course(s), credit will not be denied for the course(s).

For summer school and courses meeting 1/2 year or 1/4 year, the same policy will apply and a calculation of the absences will be prorated accordingly.

Students will be considered in attendance if the student is:

Physically present in the classroom or working under the direction of the classroom teacher during the class scheduled meeting time; or

Working pursuant to an approved independent study program; or

Receiving approved alternative instruction.

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Students

**SUBJECT: COMPREHENSIVE STUDENT ATTENDANCE POLICY (Cont'd.)**

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 missed work, assignments and/or tests in accordance with the time schedule specified by the teacher.

**Notice of Minimum Attendance Standard/Intervention Strategies Prior to the Denial of Course Credit**

The District's policy regarding minimum attendance and course credit, and the implementation of specific intervention strategies to be employed prior to the denial of course credit to the student for insufficient attendance:

A building attendance committee will meet to review cases of excessive absences, tardiness or early departures.

Parents/person in parental relation will be notified by letter or telephone of the excessive absences, tardiness or early departures.

Parents/persons in parental relation may be requested to attend a meeting to review their child's attendance.

The committee may recommend parental support, medical intervention, or notification to proper outside agencies.

**Intervention Strategy Process**

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

Identify specific element(s) of the pattern (e.g., program, building, time frame, type of unexcused absences, tardiness or early departures);

The parent/person in parental relation will be contacted;

Discuss strategies to directly intervene with specific situation such as student contracts, filing of PINS petition;

Implement changes, as approved by appropriate administrator;

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Students

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Utilize appropriate District and/or community resources to address and help remediate student unexcused absences, tardiness or early departures;

Monitor and report short and long term effects of intervention.

The District's Comprehensive Student Attendance Policy will be made available to parents/persons in parental relation, and students at the beginning of each school year or at the time of enrollment in the District.

School newsletters and publications will include periodic reminders of the components of the District's Comprehensive Student Attendance Policy. Copies of the Attendance Policy will also be included in parent/student handbooks.

**Appeal Process**

A parent/person in parental relation may request a review of their child's attendance record.

**Incentives to Improve Student Performance**

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

Attendance honor rolls to be posted in prominent places in District buildings and included in District newsletters and, with parent/person in parental relation consent, in community publications;

Monthly drawings for prizes at each grade level to reward perfect attendance;

Special events (e.g., assemblies, guest speakers, field days) scheduled on days that historically have high absenteeism (e.g., Mondays, Fridays, day before vacation);

Classroom acknowledgment of the importance of good attendance (e.g., individual certificates, recognition chart, bulletin boards);

Annual poster/essay contest on importance of good attendance;

Modeling of excellent attendance by administration, faculty and staff; and

Parental involvement (contracts, conferences, support, rewards).

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**Review of Attendance Records**

Commencing with the 2003-04 school year, the Building Principal will work in conjunction with the appropriate attendance staff in reviewing attendance records at the end of each term. This review is conducted to identify individual and group attendance patterns and to initiate appropriate action to address the problem of unexcused absences, tardiness and early departures.

**Annual Review by the Board of Education**

The Board of Education shall annually review student attendance records and if such records show a decline in student attendance, the Board shall make any revisions to the Policy and plan deemed necessary to improve student attendance.

**Community Awareness**

The Board of Education shall promote necessary community awareness of the District's Comprehensive Student Attendance Policy by:

Providing a plain language summary of the policy to parents or persons in parental relation to students at the beginning of each school year and promoting the understanding of such a policy to students and their parents/persons in parental relation;

Providing each student, at the beginning of the school year or upon entrance into the school district, with a copy of the policy;

Providing each teacher, at the beginning of the school year or upon employment, with a copy of the policy; and

Providing copies of the policy to any other member of the community upon request.

Education Law Sections 3024, 3025, 3202, 3205, 3206,  
3210, 3211 and 3213  
8 New York Code of Rules and Regulations (NYCRR)  
Sections 104.1, 109.2 and 175.6

Adopted: 12/5/06