

ATTENDANCE

The Fishers Island Union Free School District Board of Education recognizes that regular school attendance is a major component of academic success. Through implementation of this policy, the Board expects to reduce the current level of unexcused **absences, tardiness, and early departures** (referred to in this policy by the acronym “ATED’s”), encourage full attendance by all students, maintain an adequate attendance record keeping system, identify patterns of student ATED’s and develop effective intervention strategies to improve school attendance.

Public Notification of Policy:

To be successful in this endeavor, it is imperative that all members of the school community are aware of this policy, its purposes, procedures and the consequences of non-compliance. To ensure that all students, parents/guardians, teachers, staff and administrators are notified of and understand this policy, the following procedures shall be implemented.

- The attendance policy will be included in the Student / Parent Handbook and will be reviewed with students at the start of each school year.
- Parents will receive a plain language summary of the attendance policy by mail at the start of each school year. Parents will be asked to sign and return a statement indicating that they have read and understand the policy.
- When a student is absent, tardy, or leaves early from class or school without an excuse, designated staff member(s) will notify the student’s parent(s) by phone and mail of the specific ATED, remind them of the attendance policy, and review ATED intervention procedures with them.
- The back-to-school event held in the beginning of each school year will be a public meeting in which the administration will explain this policy and stress the parents/guardians responsibility for ensuring their children’s attendance.
- School newsletters, publications and the district website will include components of this policy.
- The district will provide a copy of the attendance policy and any amendments thereto to faculty and staff. New staff will receive a copy upon their employment.
- All faculty and staff will meet at the beginning of each school year to review the attendance policy to clarify individual roles in its implementation.
- Copies of this policy will also be available to any community member upon request.

General Procedures/Data Collection:

- Attendance will be taken each morning by the core teacher in Grades PreK-K-6. Attendance will be taken during each class period in Grades 7-12 because the students change classes.
- At the conclusion of each class period or school day, all attendance information shall be compiled and provided to the designated staff member(s) responsible for attendance in the main office.
- The nature of the ATED shall be coded on a student's record.
- Student ATED data shall be available to and should be reviewed by the designated school personnel in an expeditious manner.
- Where additional information is received that requires corrections to be made to a student's attendance record, such correction will be made immediately. Notice of such change will be sent to the appropriate school personnel subject to applicable confidentiality rules.
- Attendance data will be analyzed monthly by the administration to identify patterns or trends in student absences.
- Teachers and staff shall refer students who are absent from a class period without excuse to the school administrator.
- Continuous monitoring by the administration will be conducted to identify students who are absent, tardy, or leave class or school early.

Denial of Credit for Not Meeting Minimum Attendance Standard

Courses taken for high school credit at the high school and middle school in which a student fails to achieve the Minimum Attendance Standard shall be subject to the Denial of Credit for that course. The total number of unexcused ATED's for whatever reason shall result in the denial of credit are as follows:

Any student with more than 9 unexcused ATEDs for one-half year or 18 unexcused ATEDs for the full year will not receive credit for the course. However, students with properly excused ATEDs may make up the work for each ATED, and those ATEDs will not count towards the minimum attendance standard.

Tardiness

Arrival to class after 8 AM is considered tardy.

Absenses: All absences require a written note from parents/guardians within 24 hours of the return to school.

Other Regulations:

- For each course when a student reaches the maximum ATED's, the report card will show a DCA to indicate "Denied Credit Attendance" for all subsequent reporting periods and exams, including mid-term and final exams.
- If student is eligible to take an RCT or Regents examination, pursuant to the Commissioner's Regulations, the score will be noted on the student's permanent record in addition to the DCA record. In other words, the student will participate in the testing program regardless of the DCA classification.
- Students entering the school after the first day shall have their attendance requirement pro-rated using the 85 percent minimum requirement.
- The attendance records of a student making a schedule change in the same subject area will be forwarded to the new teacher.
- Students will be issued a "warning" statement from the administration upon reaching 75% of "Denied Credit Attendance" absences.
- When a student receives a "denial of credit" notification, the students parents / guardians shall receive a statement via mail that documents the credits that have been denied.

Right to Appeal:

Students and parents/guardians will have a right to appeal any course that has been denied credit due to attendance. The appeal process is an effort to achieve fairness and to ensure that all circumstances are taken into account.

- A student, who, due to a chronic or recurring medical problem or a family crisis, for whom home instruction is not available or practical, reaches the maximum days of course absence, has the right to file a written appeal for a hearing with the Appeals Committee Chairperson (Superintendent / Principal) within 10 days of the date of the loss of credit notice. The student and parent(s) or guardians(s) would appear at this meeting with appropriate, verifiable documentation to present to the committee. The committee then would rule on whether the student will continue as a regular student or be placed on a DCA audit.
- Appeals will be considered **ONLY** if the student has continued to attend class and to do the required work.
- The excused/unexcused absences will be relevant only in the event of the appeal process.

Appeals Committee:

The committee will be made of up of two faculty members, one guidance counselor, one staff member responsible for attendance recordkeeping, and the school administrator.

Excused Absences and Early Departures:

- college interviews/ college visitations (*seniors only-limit of three*)
- court appearances
- school-sponsored activities (*including school athletic events*)
- military obligations
- school-to-work program
- school authorized programs (*i.e., field trips, testing sessions, counseling sessions, school-sponsored athletic events, physical therapy sessions, occupational therapy sessions, speech sessions*)
- death in the family / funeral
- illness (*doctor's note required for extended illness days*)
- impassible weather conditions
- religious observance
- medical/dental appointments (*requires written note from provider*)
- special education evaluations (*authorized by the school district*)
- in-school suspension / out-of-school suspension

Unexcused Absences and Early Departures:

- family vacation / traveling
- haircuts, nail appointments, spa visits, etc.
- hunting / fishing trips
- oversleeping / tired
- participating in a fieldtrip the day before
- working a job
- babysitting
- being needed at home
- missing the ferry (*i.e., due to personal reasons*)
- participating in play rehearsal that "ran late"
- working on a school project
- needed to do homework
- or any reason that is not on the ATED excused list posted above

Policy Review:

Each building level administrator will provide the Superintendent and the Board of Education with annual evaluation data and statistics on the implementation of this policy. The Board will review this data to determine the effectiveness and value of the policy for improving student attendance.

Good Attendance Incentives:

The district will design and implement systems to acknowledge a student's efforts to maintain or improve school attendance. For example:

- A good attendance honor roll shall be maintained. Students, Pre-K-Grade 12, with an attendance rate of 98% or higher will be recognized with a special certificate and/or a reward at the end of the school year, e.g., Annual Awards Assembly.

Disciplinary Consequences:

Unexcused ATED's will result in disciplinary actions consistent with the district's code of conduct. When the administration deems appropriate, it may use the following list of sanctions to discourage poor attendance:

Potential Disciplinary Consequences:

- Loss of the right to play sports.
- Loss of the right to participate in extra-curricular activities
- Loss of the right to attend school-related activities
- Attendance at meeting with parents/guardians, administration, and counselor to discuss impact of excessive absences
- Repetition of course or grade level due to excessive absences

Consequences of Excessive Absences at the Elementary Level:

- Referral to the Student Support Services Team to review the student profile and develop specific interventions
- When appropriate, referrals will be made to outside agencies for additional support towards the attendance problem