

Attendance Policy

Regular and punctual attendance is essential for success in school. The School Committee recognizes that parents/guardians of children attending our schools have rights as well as responsibilities, one of which is to ensure that their children attend school regularly, in accordance with Chapter 76, Section 1 of the Massachusetts General Laws.

An **Excused Absence/Tardy** includes:

- Illness or injury covered by a physician's note or other medical professional
- Bereavement/family funeral
- Major religious observances
- Extraordinary family circumstances (excused at the discretion of the principal)

An **Unexcused Absence/Tardy** is not covered by the aforementioned definition. Please note: a parent phone call does not excuse your child's absence. In order for medical absences to be excused, please provide documentation in the form of a written physician note within five school days of the absence. Examples of **unexcused absences** include:

- Repetitive or chronic absence or tardiness due to illness or injury not documented by a doctor or other medical professional
- Family vacations
- Non-emergency family situations
- Undocumented absences

A **Tardy** to school will be defined as occurring anytime a student arrives late to school. If a student is tardy, a parent must accompany the student to the main office. Please note that when a student has been absent for **three (3) or more consecutive days**, parents must obtain a doctor's note and submit it to the school.

The following procedure will be used in situations of **unexcused absences and tardies**:

1. When a student has a total of five (5) unexcused days of non-attendance and/or 10 half day sessions within any six month period a school administrator will contact the parent/guardian to develop an action plan to improve attendance.
2. If a student continues to be absent without an appropriate excuse and the total of non-attendance days or tardies is seven (7) unexcused days of non-attendance and/or 10 half day sessions in any period of six months, a letter will be sent requesting the parent or guardian contact the school and schedule a meeting with the appropriate administrator. Such meeting would focus on the concerns associated with absences and provide clear warning that further non-attendance or tardiness could necessitate the filing of a **Failure to Cause School Attendance** with the Lowell District Court.

<i>First Reading</i>	<i>September 26th, 2019</i>
<i>Second Reading</i>	<i>October 10, 2019</i>
<i>Adopted</i>	<i>October 10, 2019</i>
<i>Legal Reference</i>	MGL 76:1, 76:5; 76:6; 76:15.
Policy Cross Reference	9-17.3 Nonresident Special Education Students 9-29 Non-Resident Enrollment 9-30, Homeless Students: Enrollment Rights And Services Student Handbooks <u>Nonresident Special Education Students</u>