

Lindenhurst Elementary School (K-5)

Attendance Policy

August 2011

OVERVIEW

The 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 as "ATEDs"), encourage full attendance by all students, maintain an adequate attendance recordkeeping system, identify patterns of student ATEDs and develop effective intervention strategies to improve school attendance.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

1. ATED: Student absences, tardiness and early departures
2. Student: A child enrolled in a Lindenhurst Elementary School
3. Staff: A teacher, aide, administrator and/or principal's designee employed by the Lindenhurst School District.

NOTICE

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

- The attendance policy will be reviewed with students and/or parents at the start of the school year;
- Parents will receive a summary of this policy at the start of the school year. At the beginning of each school year, this policy will be explained and the parent's responsibility for ensuring their child's attendance will be stressed;
- When a student is absent, tardy or leaves early from class or school without an excuse, a designated staff member(s) will notify the student's parent(s) by phone or mail of the specific ATED. When appropriate, they will remind them of the attendance policy, reviewing ATED intervention procedures with them;
- School newsletters and publications will include periodic reminders of the components of this policy;

- The district will provide a copy of the attendance policy and any amendments to staff members. New staff will receive a copy upon their employment;
- All 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 made available to any community member, upon request.

EXCUSED AND UNEXCUSED ABSENCES

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

- Personal illness;
- Illness or death in the family;
- Impassable roads or weather;
- Religious observance;
- Quarantine;
- Required court appearances;
- Attendance at health facilities;
- Parent on military leave or being deployed (maximum 3 days)
- Other approved reasons (after a written request has been made to the building principal).

All other ATEDs are considered unexcused (this includes family vacations during school days and oversleeping).

All ATED's must be accounted for. It is the responsibility of the parent or guardian to notify the school office within 24 hours of the ATED and to provide a written excuse upon the student's return to school.

GENERAL PROCEDURES/DATA COLLECTION

- The nature of an ATED shall be coded on the student's electronic record, utilizing the current electronic student data system.

Employee Guide:

- Record in e-School when note is received;
- Follow up with district reminder if no note is received the next day;

- If a student is absent, the child's home will be contacted. The child's attendance will be recorded on the computer using one of the following codes:

Present	Other
Absence Excused	Absence Unexcused
Late Excused	Late Unexcused
Early Departure Excused	Early Departure Unexcused
Suspension (marked present with an "s" on card)	

- Lateness and early departure times will be considered at all elementary schools any time before dismissal;
- Where additional information is received that requires corrections to be made to a student's attendance records, such correction will be made immediately. Notice of such a change will be sent to appropriate school personnel subject to applicable confidentiality rules;
- Attendance data will be analyzed at the end of each marking period to identify patterns or trends in student absences.

DISCIPLINARY CONSEQUENCES

Unexcused excessive ATEDs may result in disciplinary action consistent with the district's Code of Conduct. These penalties may include, for example, letters home to parents, home visits, or contacting child protective services.

If a child will be absent, parents should contact the school via a phone call or note; if not, designated staff member(s) will contact the student's parents.

Upon returning to school, the child must present a note for a reason of absence.

If a child is absent or tardy ten (10) times, a letter will go home from the building principal or his/her designee reminding parents of the attendance policy and their responsibility. If the child is absent or tardy for unexcused reasons 20 times, then a second letter will go out with a return receipt request. After a child is absent or tardy for unexcused reasons 30 times, parents will receive a letter and be visited by a member of the school support team (social worker or other professional). Additional action will be considered to help ensure the health and well-being of the student (e.g., contacting child protective services). If a pattern or trend of ATEDs is noted, appropriate action may be taken prior to these benchmarks. To summarize:

<u>Unexcused ATED</u>	<u>Consequence</u>
10	Letter 1 (parent reminder)
20	Letter 2 (sent return receipt requested, possible home visit)
30	Letter 3 (sent return receipt requested, notice of home visit, possible CPS)

ATTENDANCE/GRADE POLICY

The Board of Education recognizes an important relationship between class attendance and student performance. Consequently, each marking period a student's final grade may be based on homework, tests, papers, projects, etc.

Students are expected to attend all scheduled classes. Consistent with the importance of classroom participation, ATEDs may affect a student's class participation grade for the marking period.

In implementing the policy set forth above, students who are unable to attend school or a class on a given day may arrange with their teachers to make up any work missed. This also applies to any student who is absent, tardy or leaves early from school or a class due to illness or any other excused reason. It is the responsibility of the student and parent to consult with his or her teachers regarding missed work.

DUE PROCESS RIGHTS REGARDING DISCIPLINARY CONSEQUENCES

- The principal or his/her designee will hear the appeal by the parent/guardian and the student. Only reasons for absence or recordkeeping can be questioned. The appeals hearing will involve the principal or his/her designee, psychologist, social worker, classroom teacher, student, and parent or guardian. If so desired, the student may have additional representation at the appeals hearing.

- The appeal must be initiated by the parent/guardian and student and submitted in writing to the principal no later than five school days after the student and parent have been notified of the denial of credit.
- The hearing will be convened within five school days of the receipt of the written appeal. The student and parent or guardian should attend this meeting.

INTERVENTION STRATEGIES

Achieving the vision of “healthy children...ready to learn” is widely held to be fundamental to the attainment of high academic standards, resulting in a productive, committed citizenship. The district’s focus on attendance policy and programming, coupled with school climate and increased academic performance, offers a unique opportunity to engage the entire school community – parents, staff, students and community members – in a process which will build upon the strengths of all concerned.

For students with an excessive number of days absent or tardy, district pupil personnel service professionals, i.e., social workers and psychologists, will try to identify the root causes and seek solutions to the problems. They will work with families and will look for ways to foster better family relationships and improve student attendance. Where necessary, they will help parents find ways to set appropriate limits for children. In addition, referrals to outside agencies may be made.

ANNUAL REVIEW

The Board shall annually review building-level student attendance records, and if such records show a decline in student attendance, the Board may revise this Comprehensive Attendance Policy and make any revision to the plan it deems necessary to improve student attendance.

APPENDICES

- Appendix A Parent Letter 1 Exemplar (final is at the discretion of the building principal)
- Appendix B Parent Letter 2 Exemplar (final is at the discretion of the building principal)
- Appendix C Parent Letter 3 Exemplar (final is at the discretion of the building principal)
- Appendix D Early Release Letter Exemplar
- Appendix E Teacher resource example to inform parents about missing ATED notes
- Appendix F Teacher resource example to inform parents about missing ATED notes (Spanish version)

APPENDIX A

(Early Release Letter)

Date

Parent Names

Student Address

Lindenhurst, NY 11757

Dear Parents:

Being on time and in school are two of the most important ways you can help your child succeed in school. In order for your child to learn, your child must be here, supplies in hand, focused, and ready for a new day.

It has come to my attention that your child, _____, has been late a total of ___ times and absent on ___ occasions to date. This pattern not only interrupts your child's performance, it also disrupts the learning of other students in the class.

Beyond the legal responsibility of parents for their child's attendance, there is the genuine concern for the well-being of that young child. Excellent attendance provides students with multiple opportunities for enrichment, and offers them a guide to a fulfilling academic and professional career.

I thank you in advance for helping improve your child's attendance. As I review your child's progress over the coming weeks, I look forward to seeing your child on time and in school.

Please contact me if I may be of any help to you regarding this issue.

Sincerely,

Principal

CC: Teacher

Student file

APPENDIX B

(Sample Parent Letter 2)

Date

Parent Names

Student Address

Lindenhurst, NY 11757

Dear Parents:

As I have written before, being on time and in school are two of the most important ways you can help your child succeed in school. In order for your child to learn, they must be here, supplies in hand, focused and ready for a new day.

It has come to my attention that _____ has been late a total of ___ times and absent on ___ occasions to date. As I have mentioned, this pattern not only interrupts your child's performance, it also disrupts the learning of other students in the class.

Unfortunately, this pattern has not improved since the last time I have written. **Helping your child start the day right is important**, and could have repercussions well beyond just that day or week; it could impact their learning habits for a lifetime. Future absences may result in a home visit by a member of our staff and other actions to help ensure your child's attendance.

I thank you in advance for helping your child's attendance improve. As I review your child's progress over the coming weeks, I look forward to seeing your child on time and in school.

Again, please contact me if I may be of any help to you regarding this issue.

Sincerely,

Principal

CC: Teacher

Student file

Certified Mail

APPENDIX C

(Sample Parent Letter 3)

Date

Parent Names

Student Address

Lindenhurst, NY 11757

Dear Parents:

According to our district's daily attendance records, your child, _____, has missed ___ or more days of school so far this year, and has been late a total of ___ times. I am deeply concerned that your child's school experience is suffering due to poor attendance. Your child's attendance habits must change immediately.

Our records indicate that this is the third time we have contacted you in writing regarding your child's attendance. Beyond the legal responsibility of parents for their child's attendance, it troubles me that it seems you have not yet taken an active part in helping your child learn the importance of being on time and in school, ready to start a new day.

Because you have failed to show reasonable interest in your child's attendance, you have drastically limited our options. I have asked a district representative to stop by your house in the coming days to discuss ways to help your child's attendance improve. Further, child protective services (CPS) may be contacted shortly to help ensure your child's academic well-being.

I believe by working together, we may resolve this issue for the benefit of your child.

Sincerely,

Principal

CC: Teacher

Student file

Certified Mail

APPENDIX D

(Sample Parent Letter)

Date

Parent Names

Student Address

Lindenhurst, NY 11757

Dear Parents:

It has come to my attention that your child, _____, has been released early from school a total of ____ times. At the end of the day, teachers and students are preparing for dismissal, finishing lessons, distributing homework assignments, issuing reminders or notices, and gathering materials needed to take home.

This pattern not only interrupts your child's ability to complete these important tasks, but it disrupts the routine of the classroom for all students. This letter will serve to remind you that dismissal begins at _____. Aside from doctor's appointments or emergencies, students will be dismissed following normal dismissal procedures.

I thank you in advance for helping improve the dismissal process for our students. As I review your child's early release ATEDs over the coming weeks, I look forward to seeing improvement in this area.

Please contact me if I may be of any help to you regarding this issue.

Sincerely,

Principal

CC: Teacher

Student file

Certified Mail

APPENDIX E

Below is an example of a note teachers may use to inform parents about missing ATED notes.

Lindenhurst Public Schools

Date: _____

Dear Parent

*Your child, _____, was absent/tardy
on _____.*

*We have not yet received an excuse note from you.
Please send it in as soon as possible as per New York State
law (a teacher must file a written excuse for each absence
or tardiness). You may use the space below or on the
reverse if you wish.*

Parent's Signature: _____

APPENDIX F

Below is an example of a note teachers may use to inform parents about missing ATED notes. (Spanish Version)

Lindenhurst Public Schools

Date: _____

Sra. Y Sr,

Su hijo/a, _____, estuvo ausente/tarde en

_____.

*Todavía no tenemos una carta de excusa de ustedes.
Por favor mande la carta pronto. Es la ley del estado de Nueva
York que todos los padres manden una carta de excusa para
Sus hijos. Puedes utilizar el espacio de abajo para escribir.*

Firma: _____