

Lindenhurst Elementary School (K-5)

Attendance Policy

INTRODUCTION

Regular school attendance is a critical factor for academic success. Consistent school attendance, academic success, and school completion have a positive correlation. Since school is a partnership, parents are expected to make sure their children attend school on a regular basis.

Although accurate record keeping and analyses of data are critical, we believe the ultimate success of the school attendance program is determined by the quality of the school culture. Creating a positive school culture is a prerequisite for good attendance. By school culture, we mean the overall physical and psychological atmosphere in a school: the behaviors, attitudes, and beliefs exhibited by all school staff, students, parents, and community workers. This culture is accepting and inclusive with opportunities for all to learn.

Lindenhurst strives to build:

- A positive physical and psychological environment;
- Positive, strong, adult role models for students;
- Respectful and nurturing interactions between adults and students;
- A high degree of student-to-student positive relationships;
- A challenging academic program.

OVERALL OBJECTIVES

This attendance policy takes into account the importance of creating a positive learning atmosphere while:

1. Maintaining a register of attendance in accordance with Section 104.1(d) of the Regulations of the Commissioner of Education;
2. Establishing a practical mechanism to account to the parents of all students enrolled in our schools for the whereabouts of their children throughout each day. This information is also necessary for safety and school management reasons;
3. Establishing a system to determine the District's average daily attendance for state aid computations;
4. Confirming that individual students are complying with Education Law in relation to compulsory attendance;
5. Identifying individual and group attendance patterns to design improvement efforts;
6. Providing data to develop interventions to help close the gap in student performance, given the high correlation between attendance and achievement.

Since different grade levels have varying needs, the attendance policy is organized into three sections:

- Elementary
- Middle School
- High School

Each of these three components completes the requirements for section 104.1 of the Regulations of the Commissioner of Education. The organization of the Comprehensive Attendance Policy as distinct components aids in day-to-day operations and implementation.

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 record keeping 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 at the start of the school year;
- Parents will receive a summary of this policy at the start of the 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, 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;
- At the beginning of each school year, this policy will be explained and the parents' responsibility for ensuring their child's attendance will be emphasized;
- 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 departure 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;
- 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 white Attendance Register Card on a daily basis in accordance with the procedures outlined on the reverse of the Lindenhurst Public Schools New York State Attendance Register Card. Each attendance card will contain at least the following for each student:

- Name;
- Date of birth;
- Full names of parent(s) or guardian(s);
- Address where student resides;

- Phone numbers where the parent(s) or guardian(s) may be contacted;
- Date of the student’s enrollment;
- A record of the student’s attendance on each day of scheduled instruction, recorded daily;
- A record of each scheduled day of instruction during which the school is closed for all or part of the day (e.g., adverse weather conditions);
- The date the pupil withdraws from enrollment or is dropped from enrollment in accordance with Education Law section 3202 (1-a);
- 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 established at all elementary schools.
- 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.

ATTENDANCE INCENTIVES

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

- Students who have demonstrated improved ATEDs will receive rewards that may include certificates, awards, special activities and/or school-wide recognition.

DISCIPLINARY CONSEQUENCES

Unexcused ATEDs will 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 for unexcused reasons ten (10) times, a letter will be sent 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, a second letter will be sent 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 will be taken. 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 request, 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, unexcused 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 their 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 record keeping 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 (5) school days after the student and parent have been notified of the denial of credit.
- The hearing will be convened within five (5) 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 an 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, 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.