

# REGULATION

VERNON TOWNSHIP  
BOARD OF EDUCATION

STUDENTS  
R 5200 – Attendance  
Oct 17

## R 5200 ATTENDANCE

### I. Definitions

- a. For the purposes of school attendance, a “day in session” shall be a day on which the school is open and students are under the guidance and direction of a teacher or teachers engaged in the teaching progress. Days on which school is closed for such reasons as holidays, teachers’ institutes, and inclement weather shall not be considered as days in session.
- b. A “school day” shall consist of not less than four hours.
- c. “A day of attendance” shall be one in which the student is present for a full day under the guidance and direction of a teacher while school is in session.
- d. Whenever over-crowded conditions make it necessary to hold two separate sessions with a different group of students in each session, a student attending for all of either session shall be regarded as having attended for the full day. An excused absence for any reason shall not be counted as a day of attendance in the school register.
- e. A “half-day class” shall be considered the equivalent of a full day’s attendance only if in session for four hours or more, exclusive of recess periods or lunch periods.

### II. Attendance Recording

- a. A record of attendance of all students on roll in a school register shall be kept each day that school is in session by a teacher or other authorized person. It shall be the duty of this person to keep the attendance records according to these rules and the specific instructions issued by the Commissioner of Education.
- b. No students shall be recorded as present unless the school is in session and the student so recorded is under the guidance and direction of a teacher in the teaching process.
- c. A student shall be recorded as absent in the school register when not in attendance at a session of the school while a member of the school, except for reasons delineated in IIIB.

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- d. A student shall be recorded as either present, absent, or excused ~~for religious~~ observance every day the school is in session after the student enters until the date the student is transferred to another school, transferred to an individual home instruction record, or officially leaves the school system.
- e. The Commissioner shall annually prescribe a list of religious holidays on which it shall be mandatory to excuse students for religious observance upon the written request signed by the parent or person standing in loco parentis.
- f. The mere presence of a student at roll call shall not be regarded as sufficient attendance for compliance with N.J.A.C. 6A:32-8.3. In a school which is in session during both the forenoon and the afternoon, a student shall be present at least one hour during both the forenoon and the afternoon in order to be recorded as present for the full day. In a school which is in session during either the forenoon or the afternoon, a student shall be present at least two hours in the session in order to be recorded as present for the full day.
- g. A student will be considered to have attended school if he/she has been present at least 4 hours during the school day.

### III. Excused/Unexcused Absences

- a. Absences that count toward “truancy” or can lead to loss of credit, is a student’s absence from school for a full or a portion of a day for any reason that is not excused as below.
- b. Excused absence does not get counted toward chronic absenteeism count reported to the Department of Education:
  - Religious observance (N.J.A.C. 6A:32-8.3(h));
  - A college visit (up to 3 days per school year, only for students in grades 11 and 12);
  - “Take Our Children to Work Day” (pursuant to the memo issued by the Commissioner to all districts on April 25, 2017 or other rule issued by the Commissioner);
  - Participation in observance of Veterans Day (N.J.S.A. 18A:36-13.2) or district board of election membership activities (N.J.S.A. 18A:36-33);
  - The closure of a busing district that prevents a student from having transportation to the receiving school

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- School sponsored education programs such as field trips, SLE, community based instruction;
  - Students required attendance in court;
  - Administrative excuse for school related activity; or
  - Student's suspension
- c. Unexcused tardiness may constitute an unexcused absence that counts toward truancy.
- d. A student attending a funeral of a close relative will be excused in district, but the day continues to count as an absence toward chronic absenteeism.

#### IV. Notice of School of a Student's Absence

- a. The parent or adult student is requested to call the school office before the start of the student's school day.
- b. The parent of the student or an adult student who will attend the morning session, but will not attend the afternoon session should call or provide notice to school office before the student of the afternoon session.
- c. The parent or adult student who anticipates a future absence or anticipates that an absence will be prolonged should notify the school office to arrange make-up work.

#### V. Readmission to School After an Absence

- a. A student returning from an absence of any length of time must provide a written statement that is dated and signed by the parent or adult student listing the reasons for absence.
- b. A note explaining a student's absence for a noncommunicable illness for a period of more than 3 school days must be accompanied by a physician's statement of the student's illness with medical clearance to return to school.
- c. A student who has been absent by reason of having or being suspected of having a communicable disease must present to the school nurse written evidence of being free of communicable disease, in accordance with Policy 8451.

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## VI. Instruction

- a. Teachers shall cooperate in the preparation of home assignments for students who anticipate an excused absence of 3 or more school days duration. The parent or student must request such home assignments.
- b. A student who anticipates an absence due to a temporary or chronic health condition may be eligible for home instruction in accordance with Policy 2412. The parent must request home instruction.
- c. Students absent for any reason are expected to make up the work missed. The parent or student is responsible for requesting missed assignments and any assistance required. Teachers will provide make-up assignments as necessary.
- d. In general, students will be allowed a reasonable amount of time as determined by the teacher to make up missed work.
- e. A student who missed a test or an exam shall be offered an opportunity to take the test, exam, or an appropriate alternate test.

## VII. Denial of Course Credit

- a. The teacher will determine the credit to be awarded a student for make-up work. Where class participation is a factor in the learning process, the teacher may consider a student's absence in determining a final grade, except excused absences for the observance of a pupil's religious holiday or absence for a suspension from school will not adversely affect the student's grade. The teacher may record an incomplete grade for a student who has not had a full opportunity to make up missed work.

## VIII. Vernon Primary, Middle and High School Attendance Procedures

Please refer to each school's student/parent handbook for the particular attendance procedures that pertain to each level: primary, middle, and high school.

## IX. School District Response to Unexcused Absences During the School Year That County Toward Truancy

- a. For up to four cumulative unexcused absences that count toward truancy, the Principal or designee shall:
  1. Make a reasonable attempt to notify the student's parent of each unexcused absence prior to the start of the following school day;

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2. Make a reasonable attempt to determine the cause of the unexcused absence, including through contact with the student's parent;
  3. Identify, in consultation with the student's parents, needed action designed to address patterns of unexcused absences, if any, and to have the child return to school and maintain regular attendance;
  4. Proceed in accordance with the provisions of N.J.S.A. 9:6-1 et seq. and N.J.A.C. 6A:16-10, if a potentially missing or abused child situation is detected;
  5. Cooperate with law enforcement and other authorities and agencies, as appropriate;
- b. For between five and nine cumulative unexcused absences that count toward truancy, the Principal or designee shall:
1. Make a reasonable attempt to notify the student's parent of each unexcused absence prior to the start of the following school day;
  2. Make a reasonable attempt to determine the cause of the unexcused absence, including through contact with the student's parent;
  3. Evaluate the appropriateness of action taken pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:16-7.6(a)4.i(3) and H.1.c. above;
  4. Develop an action plan to establish outcomes based upon the student's patterns of unexcused absences and to specify the interventions for supporting the student's return to school and regular attendance, which may include any of all of the following:
  5. Refer to consult with the building's Intervention and Referral Services Team, pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:16-8;
  6. Conduct testing, assessments, or evaluations of the student's academic, behavioral, and health needs;
  7. Consider an alternate educational placement;
  8. Make a referral to or coordinate with a community-based social and health provider agency or other community resource;

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9. Refer to a court or court program pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:16-7.6(a)4.iv. and H.4. below;
  10. Proceed in accordance with N.J.S.A. 9:6-1 et seq. and N.J.A.C. 6A:16-10, if a potential missing or abused child situation is detected;
  11. Engage the student’s family;
  12. Cooperate with law enforcement and other authorities and agencies, as appropriate.
- c. For ten or more cumulative unexcused absences that count toward truancy, a student between the ages of six and sixteen is truant, pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:38-25, and the Principal or designee shall:
1. Make a determination regarding the need for a court referral for the truancy, per N.J.A.C. 6A:16-7.6(a)4.iv. and H.4. below;
  2. Continue to consult with the parent and the involved agencies to support the student’s return to school and regular attendance;
  3. Cooperate with law enforcement and other authorities and agencies, as appropriate;
  4. Proceed in accordance with N.J.S.A. 18A:38-28 through 31, Article 3B, Compelling Attendance at School, and other applicable State and Federal statutes, as required;
  5. A court referral may be made as follows:  
  
When unexcused absences that count toward truancy are determined by school officials to be violations of the compulsory education law, pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:38-25, and the Board of Education’s policies, in accordance with N.J.A.C. 6A:16-7.6(a), the parent may be referred to Municipal Court.
  6. A written report of the actions the school has taken regarding the student’s attendance shall be forwarded to the Municipal Court.
  7. When there is evidence of a juvenile-family crisis, pursuant to N.J.S.A. 2A:4A-22g, the student may be referred to Superior Court, Chancery Division, Family Part.

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8. A written report of the actions the school has taken regarding the student's attendance shall be forwarded to the Juvenile-Family Crisis Intervention Unit.
- X. For a student with a disability, the attendance plan and its punitive and remedial procedures shall be applied, where applicable, in accordance with the student's IEP, pursuant to 20 U.S.C. §§ 1400 et seq., the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act; the procedural protections set forth in N.J.A.C. 6A:14; accommodation plans under 29 U.S.C. §§ 794 and 705(20); and individualized health care plan and individualized emergency healthcare plan pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:16-2.3(b)5.xiii. Manifestation determination must be formally conducted.
- XI. Receiving School
  - a. All receiving schools pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:14-7.1(a), shall act in accordance with N.J.A.C. 6A:16-7.6(a)4.i and H.1. above for each student with up to four cumulative unexcused absences that count toward truancy.
  - b. For each student attending a receiving school with five or more cumulative unexcused absences that count toward truancy, the absences shall be reported to the sending school district by the receiving school.
  - c. The sending school district shall proceed in accordance with the Board of Education's policies and procedures pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:16-7.6(a) and H.5 above and the provisions of N.J.A.C. 6A:16-7.6(a)4.ii through iv. And H.2 through H.5 above as appropriate.
- XII. Discipline
  - a. Students may be denied participation in co-curricular activities if the Board establishes attendance standards for participation.
  - b. Students may be denied participation in athletic competition if the Board establishes attendance standards for participation.
  - c. No student who is absent from school for observance of a religious holiday may be deprived of any award or of eligibility for or opportunity to compete for any award because of the absence.
- XIII. Recording Attendance By Staff
  - a. Teachers must accurately record the students present, tardy, or absent each day in each session of each class. Attendance records must also record students' attendance at out-of-school curricular events such as field trips.

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- b. A record shall be maintained of each excused absence and each unexcused absence that counts toward truancy as defined in Policy Regulation 5200.
  - c. A report card will record the number of times the student was absent and tardy in each marking period.
  - d. A student's absence for observance of a religious holiday will not be recorded as such on any transcript or application or employment form.
- XIV. Appeal
- a. Students may be subject to appropriate discipline for their school attendance record.
  - b. A student who has been retained at grade level for excessive absences may appeal that action in accordance with Policy 5410.
  - c. A student who has been dropped from a course and/or denied course credit for excessive absences may appeal that action in accordance with the following procedures.
  - d. The student shall file a written appeal to the Principal or designee within five school days of receiving notice of the action. The appeal should state the reasons for each absences, any documentation that may support reducing the number of absences for the purposes of course credit, and reasons why the student should either continue to be enrolled in the course or receive course credit for a class the student completed.
  - e. The Principal or designee will respond in writing no later than seven school days after receiving the student's appeal.
  - f. If the student is not satisfied, he/she may submit a written request to the Principal for consideration by an Attendance Review Committee.
  - g. Attendance Review Committee – After thirty days of unexcused absence per year the student may be retained. The student's attendance record will be reviewed by the Attendance Review Committee. The Attendance Review Committee is comprised of a maximum of three people including the Principal and two or more staff members such as the Assistant Principal, teacher, school nurse, guidance counselor, substance awareness counselor, or member of the child study team. Careful evaluation of extenuating or mitigating circumstances shall be made by the attendance review committee, adhering to the following criteria which shall include but not be limited to:

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1. The student's record or attendance to date.
2. The academic performance demonstrated to date.

Also, on a student's request for consideration by an Attendance Review Committee, the Principal shall convene an Attendance Review Committee. The Attendance Review Committee shall meet informally to hear the student's appeal. The student's parent and teacher(s) may attend the meeting.

- h. The Attendance Review Committee shall decide the appeal and inform the student in writing within seven school days of the meeting.
- i. The student may appeal an adverse decision of the Attendance Review Committee to the Superintendent, the Board of Education, and the Commissioner of Education in accordance with Policy 5710, Pupil Grievance and N.J.S.A. 18A. An appeal to the Attendance Review Committee shall be considered to have exhausted the first two steps of the grievance procedure outlined in Policy 5710.

Adopted: October 2017