

## STUDENT ATTENDANCE

Regular and consistent attendance is essential to learning, to improving the achievement of all students, to maintaining a respectful school climate and to a student's successful school performance. The goal of the student attendance policy is to promote consistent, daily school and class attendance. The expectation is that all students will have, at a minimum, at least ninety-five percent (95%) attendance in school and in each class during each school day. A student who is truant, frequently absent or frequently tardy to school without adequate reason is in violation of this policy.

- a. Parents/Guardians must call the school to give notification of an absence by no later than the morning of the absence.
- b. If a call is not made, a note from the parent/guardian or the student's medical provider is due on the day that the student returns to school explaining the absence. No student, however, shall be sent home to obtain a written explanation from his/her parent/guardian during a school session.
- c. In instances of chronic or irregular absence reportedly due to illness, the school principal may request a physician's statement certifying such absences to be justifiable.
- d. If an extended absence of a student is foreseen, the parent/guardian should contact the principal to make arrangements for the completion of academic requirements.
- e. A student who is truant, chronically absent or tardy will be referred to the Office of the Safety and Security. The Director of Security and Safety, after consultation with the appropriate Principal, will review each matter and initiate corrective action which may include referral to the Middlesex County Court if the student is deemed to require additional services under the direction of the Court.

Excused absences include:

- a. absences attributable to personal trauma; grieving, death in the family;
- b. observance of a religious holiday;
- c. medical appointments that absolutely cannot be made outside of school hours or counseling visits;
- d. legal matters requiring a personal appearance;
- e. suspensions in or out of school;
- f. school-related trips, assemblies or meetings;

- g. college visits (two days in junior year of high school and three days in senior year of high school); or
- h. one trip or educational experience of no more than five days during a student's years at high school.

Unexcused absences include:

- a. Truancy from school or from individual classes or study halls;
- b. Trips not approved in advance by the principal;
- c. Looking for employment without prior approval from the principal;
- d. Staying home to avoid an examination in a given subject or to study for an examination;
- e. Leaving the school building during the school day without signing out in the principal's office;
- f. Oversleeping or otherwise being tardy to school (Three unexcused tardies will be counted as one unexcused absence);
- g. Remaining on or near school grounds, but not attending assigned classes; or
- h. Any other absence that is not excused or any excusable absence that is not reported by a parent/guardian by a telephone call or written note from a parent/guardian or the student's medical provider upon the student's return to school

When a student is at school, the student is under the supervision of all teachers and school authorities and must get permission from the principal's office to leave early. Any student who does not sign out of school in the principal's office before leaving will be unexcused and receive no credit for all class activities or assignments missed. Each teacher shall keep a record of the absence or tardiness of students. A student who enters the classroom after the time appointed for the beginning of the session shall be recorded as tardy. Parents/guardians will be notified of any absence and/or tardiness by a student. When a child has been tardy five (5) times or has been absent five (5) days or ten (10) half-days in the previous six (6) months for which no lawful excuse for said tardies or absences, it shall be the duty of the principal of the school in which such child is enrolled to report such attendance record to the Superintendent of School.

Any student with an excused absence from school or classes has the privilege of making up the class assignments according to school policy.

The parent/guardian of a student who is legally absent for more than five (5) school days must notify the school so that arrangements for home assignments can be offered. The parent/guardian of any student who will have a prolonged absence (2 weeks or longer) due to illness or injury must notify the school to make the necessary arrangements for homebound instruction.

Absences or tardiness without satisfactory explanation shall be grounds for disciplinary action. School officials are encouraged to take all other appropriate disciplinary action before resorting to suspension in an effort to help a student with problems of truancy, tardiness and class cutting, including referral of the student to the Juvenile Court as an habitually truant child in need o services and/or referral for evaluation as a child in need of special education. No credit will be given to students who miss school work due to truancy, tardiness or class-cutting, unless the student makes up the missed work as directed by his teacher and teachers should afford students a reasonable amount of time upon their return to class to make up missed homework assignments. No adverse, prejudicial or discriminatory effect shall result to any student because she/he is absent to observe a religious holiday. Teachers should, to the extent feasible, refrain from scheduling any important tests, culminating activities, major papers/reports during religious holidays.

Cambridge Rindge and Latin School and the High School Extension Program will treat four (4) absences in any class as an Attendance Violation Failure (AVF) for the quarter. After a fourth absence such absence that the school will notify the parent/guardian. Parents/guardians may seek a medical waiver for any chronic condition, reoccurring illness or for any illnesses that exceed four (4) days. Parents/guardians will have the right to appeal any AVF to the Appeals Review Committee at Cambridge Rindge and Latin School or the High School Extension Program within ten (10) days of the issuance of the AVF and, if the appeal is denied, the parents/guardians may within ten (10) days of the denial, submit a written appeal to the Superintendent of Schools for his/her review. The decision of the Superintendent of Schools shall be final.

Legal Refs.: M.G.L.c. 76, §§1, 16 & 20  
*Adopted by School Committee October 21, 2008*