

## COMPREHENSIVE STUDENT ATTENDANCE

### **A. Statement of Overall Objectives:**

The Horseheads Central School District sets high standards for all students. It is our philosophy that the Horseheads Central School District is responsible to allow for the maximum development of each student's intellect, character, personality, and aesthetic, physical and social potential. In conjunction with the responsibilities of our school district, it is the responsibility of each student to be in school and in class at all times. There is a known correlation between attendance and academic performance and, with this in mind, the School District has developed this Comprehensive Student Attendance Policy.

The objectives of the Comprehensive Attendance Policy are:

1. To accurately track the attendance, absence, tardiness, and early departure of students to and from school;
2. To ensure student attendance in classes so that students may achieve State mandated education standards;
3. To track students' location for safety reasons and to account to parents regarding the location of their student(s) during school hours;
4. To identify and address attendance patterns;
5. To verify that individual students are complying with education laws relating to compulsory attendance;
6. To accurately record daily attendance for State aid purposes.

### **B. Description of Strategies to Meet Objectives:**

The School District will:

1. Maintain an accurate register of attendance for each student to record attendance, absence, tardiness, and/or early departure.
2. Utilize a data analysis system to track individual student attendance and to identify attendance patterns.
3. Develop early intervention strategies to improve school attendance.

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4. Review on an annual basis the Comprehensive Attendance Policy and the building-level student attendance records.

### **C. Definitions**

Whenever used within the Comprehensive Attendance Policy, the following terms shall mean:

1. **Scheduled instruction:** Every period that a student is scheduled to attend an instructional class during the course of a school day during the school year. At the elementary and middle school level, this is every class excluding lunch. At the high school level, this is every class excluding lunch and activity period.
2. **Absent:** The student misses more than fifteen percent (15%) of the period of the student's scheduled instruction (e.g., more than 12 minutes of an 80-minute class or more than 6 minutes of a 40-minute class).
3. **Tardy:** The student arrives later than the starting time of the student's scheduled instruction.
4. **Early departure:** The student leaves prior to the end of the student's scheduled instruction with approval.
5. **Excused:** Any absence, tardiness, or early departure for which the student has a valid school-approved excuse. Such excused absences shall include, but are not limited to, personal illness, illness or death in the family, impassable roads due to inclement weather, religious observance, quarantine, required court appearances, approved college visits, or other such reasons as may be approved by the building administrator.
6. **Unexcused:** Any absence, tardiness, or early departure for which the student has no valid school-approved excuse. Such unexcused non-appearance shall include, but are not limited to, family vacation, skipping class, oversleeping, or any other absence that is not excused.

### **D. Coding System**

A record of each student's attendance including absence, tardiness, and early departure shall be kept in a register of attendance, which includes the components mentioned in the Commissioner's Regulations. An absence, tardiness, or early departure will be entered as "excused" or "unexcused" along with the District code for the reason. Administration will establish procedures and a coding system for use throughout the district in accordance with the Commissioner's Regulations.

### **E. Intervention Strategy Process – Incentives/Disciplinary Sanctions**

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### 1. Minimum Attendance for Course Credit

- a. A student must be noted as present for 85% of a course's scheduled classes in order to earn course credit.
  - i. For purposes of minimum attendance requirements, a student shall not be counted as present for a class if the student misses more than fifteen percent (15%) of the class, whether through tardiness or early departure.
  - ii. Students suspended from school will not be marked absent.
  - iii. Students who are not in class due to a school related activity such as sporting events, field trips, AP exams, music lessons, or any other such reasons approved by the building administrator will not be marked absent.
- b. In order to prevent loss of credit for failure to attend, the district will take the following steps:
  - i. The parent(s) and/or person in parental relationship will be notified by an automated phone message when the student is marked absent.
  - ii. After a student has been marked absent for the third time in a class, the instructor shall attempt to notify the student and his/her parent(s) or person in parental relation, informing them of the attendance policy in regards to course credit as well as the importance of class attendance. The teacher will document the notification.
  - iii. A student and his/her parent(s) or persons in parental relation will be advised each marking period as to the status of their student's attendance. This notification will be included on the student's progress report. [The school's attendance policy regarding course credit and the actual number of classes the student may miss before forfeiting the right to earn credit is published in the student handbook and on the progress report.]
- c. A student who would otherwise receive credit for a course if not for the student's failure to attend may appeal the loss of credit to the building administrator in accordance with established procedures.

### 2. Notice of Absences

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Building administration will work with staff to implement parental notification procedures and when appropriate, will contact parents/persons in parental relation directly to discuss a child's absences, tardiness, and/or early departures, as well as the importance of class attendance and appropriate interventions.

### **3. Disciplinary Procedures**

The pupil may be subject to disciplinary procedures for unexcused absence, tardiness, or early departure, including verbal and written warnings, detentions, in-school suspensions, and loss of extra-curricular privileges.

### **4. Intervention Strategy Development**

The Building Principal shall meet with other administrators, teachers, and support staff as the Principal determines necessary to review student attendance records, address identified patterns of unexcused pupil absence, tardiness and early departure, and review current building intervention strategies. When determined that existing intervention policies or practices are insufficient, the Principal shall share these findings with the Site-Based Team. The Principal will also notify the Superintendent (or designee) prior to the annual review of the Comprehensive Student Attendance Policy.

### **F. Attendance Supervision**

The Attendance Clerk, as directed by the Building Principal, is responsible for reviewing pupil attendance records and initiating appropriate action to address unexcused pupil absence, tardiness, and early departure consistent with the Comprehensive Attendance Policy.

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Cross-ref: 1741 Home Instruction

4321 Programs for Students with Disabilities Under IDEA and Article 89

4327 Homebound Instruction

4710 Grading Systems

5160 Student Absences and Excuses

5161 Truancy and Tardiness

Ref: Education Law §§3202(1-a); 3205-3213; 3225 and 8 NYCRR §§104.1,175.6

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