

JED

STUDENT ABSENCES AND EXCUSES

Regular and punctual patterns of attendance will be required of each student enrolled in the district. An adequate and comprehensive system of attendance records will be maintained for each student. Each teacher is responsible for accurate reporting of daily attendance in his/her classroom. The building principal is responsible for submitting attendance information to the Superintendent's office.

It is recognized that absences from school may be necessary under certain conditions. However, every effort should be made by students, parents, teachers, and administrators to keep absences and tardiness to a minimum. Excused absence is absence illness, death in the student's immediate family, participation in school activities, or other approved reason that has been verified with a written note from a physician or other qualified health professional who is treating the student, or from a school official.

Students are not excused from any academic requirements for grading, regardless of the reason for the absence, except for reasonable modifications as required in an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) pursuant to the *Individuals with Disabilities Education Act* and/or *Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973*. Failure to complete work for days when internet instruction has been directed (Blizzard Bag days) will result in an unexcused absence.

The Board recognizes three kinds of absence: excused absence, unexcused absence, and truancy. A student who skips or leaves a class without permission after reporting to school is truant. Truancy is an intentional, unjustified, unauthorized, or unexcused absence from compulsory education and usually does not refer those absences related to medical conditions. Any student who is absent from school without the knowledge and permission of his/her parents and/or school authorities is truant. Absences, even with the approval of the parents/guardians, which are excessive, more than five days, and/or which interfere with the student's educational program will be interpreted as truancy and follow-up legal procedures will be instituted. See RSA 193:1, 7 and 16.

Student attendance is the responsibility of the parents/guardians and the student. In order for the parents to fulfill their responsibility the school must keep them informed of student absences:

- If a student accumulates more than five (5) unexcused absences, a notification letter and an automated voice message will be sent to the parents/guardians.
- At ten (10) unexcused absences a letter and an automated voice message will be sent to parents/guardians requiring them to schedule a meeting at the school level to discuss the student's attendance and to develop a plan for improvement.
- At fifteen (15) unexcused absences a letter and an automated voice message will be sent to parents by the school. The District office will be notified and a mandatory attendance may be scheduled by the Assistant Superintendent's office.
 - Failure to attend this meeting will result in referral to the Rochester Police Department for prosecution under N.H. RSA 193:1-7.
 - The School District will inform parents/guardians if a referral to the Rochester Police Department for prosecution under N.H. RSA 193:1-7 is made.

Appeal Process

The parents/guardians shall have two days from the date of service in hand of said decision, or four days (not including Saturdays and Sundays) from the postmark of any mailed decision, in which to appeal the Assistant Superintendent's decision to the School Board. The request for an appeal must be in writing and submitted to the Assistant Superintendent's office.

Any appeal by the parents/guardians of the Assistant Superintendent's determination, shall in the first instance go to the Discipline Committee of the School Board. The Discipline Committee will determine whether good cause exists to vacate the Assistant Superintendent's decision to refer the matter to the Rochester Police Department. The Assistant Superintendent's findings as to the number of unexcused absences shall not be appealable. The Discipline Committee shall make its determination and inform the parents/guardians of that determination following the hearing with the parents/guardians. If the Discipline Committee does not find good cause to vacate the decision to refer to the Rochester Police Department, then the parents/guardians may appeal such decision to the Rochester School Board at its next regularly scheduled meeting. The parents/guardians shall have two days from the date of service in hand of the Discipline Committee's decision, or four days (not including Saturdays and Sundays) from the postmark of any mailed decision, in which to appeal the Discipline Committee's decision to the School Board. If no appeal is timely taken, then the Assistant Superintendent shall refer the matter to the Rochester Police Department. Decisions made by the Rochester School Board are final and cannot be appealed.

Excused Absences:

1. Illness or injury requiring a doctor's visit or consultation. (Official documentation from a doctor is needed upon return to school.)
2. Legal matters, death of relative or friend, religious holidays, and college visitations must be verified by official documentation.
3. School sponsored field trips/athletic events must be verified by the staff member in charge of the event.
4. Family vacations at the elementary school, middle school and high school must be submitted to the Principal one month in advance of the trip and students must be in good academic standing. The Principal may recommend that the student not miss school. A student may not have more than five days excused for a family vacation.
5. All suspension days will be considered as excused absences at Spaulding High School, Rochester Middle School and Rochester Elementary Schools

Dismissals:

1. The only grounds for dismissal are medical, funeral, approved work coop or senior privilege at Spaulding High School, legal, and/or extenuating family circumstances.
2. Parents/guardians are strongly urged to schedule medical/therapeutic appointments outside of the school day.
3. If a student is dismissed for more than one hour of class time at the Middle School and Elementary School level he/she is considered absent for one half of a day.
4. If the school nurse at the high School and middle school, and the school nurse or building principal at the elementary school dismisses a student for illness, it is considered an excused absence. If, in the opinion of the school nurse or building principal, the cause of the student's dismissal and subsequent absence justifies multiple days of absence, no additional note from a physician, parent or other professional will be required.

Adopted: April 8, 1993

Reviewed/Amended: August 12, 1999; August 14, 2008; October 14, 2010; February 14, 2013
November 8, 2018; February 14, 2019; Pending July 2020; August 13, 2020