

### *Overview*

It is the goal of the Valley Central School District to ensure that each student attend school the maximum number of days possible and to afford each student the opportunity to meet his/her potential. We, therefore, institute this policy.

### *Purpose*

Good attendance and class participation are essential ingredients for academic success. Any absence from class is detrimental to the learning process. Classroom lessons foster and require social interaction, development of effective communication skills, and critical thinking in addition to subject mastery. Textbook or make-up assignments are not an adequate substitute for classroom attendance and participation.

In order to achieve educational goals and to maintain a true academic environment, students must attend their classes at least the required number of times. Students who fail to meet the minimum attendance and course work requirements will receive no credit for that course.

### *Attendance Requirements*

#### *I. Applicability*

All students of compulsory education age who reside legally within the District must attend school. Legal school age and legal residence are determined by the Board of Education in accordance with state requirements as set forth in New York State Education Law §§ 3202, 3205 to 3208, 3209 to 3210, and 8 NYCRR § 100.2.

#### *II. Notification Regarding Attendance Policy*

##### *A. Student Notification*

1. School Handbooks shall include a summary of the District's attendance policy. The policy itself shall be distributed to all current students.
2. If a student misses a class period or school day without an excuse, a designated staff person may review attendance requirements with the student upon his/her return to school.
3. School newsletters, publications, and the district website may include periodic reminders of attendance requirements.
4. During September orientation meetings, the attendance policy will be explained to all students by administrators.

##### *B. Parental/Guardian Notification*

1. All parents/guardians will be provided with the Plain Language Summary (see Appendix A) of this policy at the beginning of each school year by including this in the Viking Press newsletter, which is mailed to each resident in late August. The entire attendance policy will be posted on the district website.
2. At registration, the district will provide each new student's parent/guardian with a copy of the attendance policy.
3. At any "open house" or "back to school" event, parents/guardians will have the opportunity to obtain/discuss the attendance policy.
4. At the elementary, middle school and high school level, if a student is absent from school without an excuse, a designated staff person will contact the parent/guardian regarding the absence.
5. At the high school level, if a disciplinary referral is made for excessive class cuts or school absences without an excuse, parents/guardians will receive a copy of the

written referral.

C. *Faculty/Staff Notification*

Each member of the faculty/staff will be given a copy of this policy, including any subsequent amendments. This policy will be distributed to new teachers upon commencement of employment. In addition, the building administrators will meet with faculty at the beginning of the school year to review policy and individual roles in its implementation.

D. *Community Notification*

Copies of this policy will also be available to any other member of the community upon request.

E. *Child Protective Services (CPS) Notification*

The District will share this policy with local Child Protective Services (CPS) to ensure a common understanding of excused and unexcused absences, tardiness and early departures and to work toward identifying and addressing cases of educational neglect.

III. *Guidelines*

The District recognizes an important relationship between class participation and class performance. Consequently, each teacher will consider classroom participation as well as the student's performance on homework, tests, papers, and projects, etc. When a student is absent, with or without an excuse, he/she misses the opportunity for class participation. Any absence from class, that is not made up, shall result in a loss of points from the student's class participation grade.

A. *Minimum Attendance Rule – High School*

1. *Regular Day School*

All registered students are expected to attend all classes as scheduled. Specifically, each student must attend 90 percent of all classes per course. Students must not exceed 18 absences in a full-year course or 9 absences in a half-year course. Absences for any class meeting for one semester every other day (e.g., Physical Education) are limited to 5 per course. Any student who exceeds the maximum number of absences AND does not make up assigned class work, pursuant to section III (C), will not be eligible to receive credit for that course.

2. *Evening High School*

- One night of Evening High School = 5 days of Regular Day School
- Four absences from Evening High School = 20 absences in Regular Day School

Therefore, no credit will be given unless work is made up and accepted by the classroom teacher. Any absence from class that is not made up, will result in a loss of points from the student's class participation grade. Additionally, classroom work missed due to absences will be factored into the attendance/participation grade.

3. *Summer School*

During a given summer school session, a student may not miss more than 3 days of class. Indeed, when a student accrues more than 3 absences, he/she will be dropped from enrollment.

B. *Absences*

1. Absences counted under the attendance/grading policy include:
  - a. All absences (whether excused or unexcused) not excluded below;

- b. Lateness to class more than 20 minutes; and
  - c. Any period of Out-of-School Suspension (“OSS”) where a student does not accept alternative instruction.
2. The following should NOT be counted as absences under the attendance policy:
    - a. In-School Suspension (“ISS”);
    - b. Any period of OSS where student accepts alternative instruction;
    - c. Attendance at a special education program or service, including home tutoring, offered by a public school or an approved private school or facility when a student is homeless, disabled or incarcerated. (See §175.6 of the Regulations of the NYS Commissioner of Education.)
  3. Based upon our District’s education and community needs, values and priorities, the District has determined that absences, tardiness and early departures will be considered excused or unexcused according to the following standards:
    - a. Excused: An absence, tardiness or early department may be excused if due to:
      - personal illness;
      - illness or death in the family;
      - impassable roads or weather;
      - religious observance;
      - quarantine;
      - required court appearances;
      - attendance at health clinics;
      - approved college visits;
      - approved cooperative work programs;
      - military obligations;
      - absences due to homelessness, as determined by the building principal; or
      - such other reasons as may be approved by the Commissioner of Education.
    - b. Unexcused: An absence, tardiness or early departure is considered unexcused

if the reason for the lack of attendance does not fall into the above categories (e.g. family vacation, hunting, babysitting, shopping, obtaining learner’s permit, road test, oversleeping, car trouble).

### *C. Make-Up Policy*

1. When a student misses a class or school day, he/she is expected upon his/her return to provide a written explanation from his/her parent/guardian. For homeless students, the homeless liaison will assist the student in providing or obtaining an explanation if needed. Moreover, the student must consult with his/her teachers regarding missed work. Within 5 days of returning to school, the student must make arrangements to make up any work missed by arranging for assignments with the teacher.
2. Make-up assignments must be completed by the date specified by the student’s teacher for the particular class. Upon satisfactory and timely completion of the make-up assignment, any earned points will be included when calculating the student’s final grade.
3. Reasonable make-up opportunities will be given to students with excused absences.
4. Students who are unable to attend class period/day due to their participation in a school-sponsored activity (e.g., field trip, music lessons, etc.) and who arrange with their teachers to make up missed work, shall be given credit for class participation

on the class period/day missed.

D. *Consequences for Exceeding Absences Without Making Up Class Work-High School*

1. Any student who does not meet the course requirements of 90 percent attendance AND does not make up assigned class work pursuant to section III (C) will:
  - a. receive an F (failing) grade for the course; and
  - b. receive no credit for the course.
2. If a student loses credit in a course, he/she will be requested to meet with his/her guidance counselor to discuss all remaining options.
3. The parent/guardian will also be notified of denial of credit in writing, by report cards and failure notices (High School) or failure warning letters (Middle School).

IV. *Attendance Taking Procedures*

A. *Kindergarten – Grade 5*

Attendance shall be recorded after being taken once per school day.

B. *Grades 6 – 12*

Attendance shall be recorded during each class period of scheduled instruction [including instructional or supervised study activities].

C. *Distance/Remote Learning*

Students learning remotely will need to show daily school participation, which is to be recorded by teachers and reported under the provisions of this policy. Such participation will vary depending on the type of remote learning taking place. This can include: documented participation in online or virtual classes, completion of assignments, or correspondence via Google Classroom and /or email.

V. *Maintenance of the Attendance Register*

A. For each student, the Register of Attendance must include:

1. Name;
2. Date of Birth;
3. Date of Enrollment;
4. Parent/Guardian's Full Name;
5. Address where student resides;
6. Phone number(s) where Parent/Guardian may be contacted;
7. ALL absences, tardiness, or early departures during any school day, in whole or in part, excused or unexcused;
8. Appropriate coding to identify the nature of the absence (full day, class cut);
9. Dates of school closings for all or part of the day of scheduled instruction due to extraordinary circumstances, including, but not limited to, adverse weather conditions, heating problems, lack of water or fuel, or destruction or damage to a school building; and
10. Date a student withdraws from or is dropped from enrollment.

B. The Board of Education shall designate a teacher or an employee other than a teacher as Attendance Teacher. The entries in the Register of Attendance shall be verified by oath or affirmation by the Attendance Teacher (or designee).

C. When additional information is received from a student during a student/staff conference that requires corrections to be made to a student's attendance records, such corrections will be made immediately. Notice of the change will be sent to appropriate school personnel (e.g., homeroom teachers, attendance teacher, etc.)

#### VI. *Attendance Incentives*

The District along with each school building will design and implement incentives to acknowledge students' efforts to maintain or improve school attendance.

#### VII. *Incremental Interventions*

The District will maintain a system of specific incremental intervention strategies to identify and alleviate attendance problems in their early stages. For example, when a class cut or unexcused day-long absence results in a written disciplinary referral, an administrator will meet with the student to review the attendance policy, explain the ramifications of unexcused absences, and stress the importance of class attendance. This meeting should also ascertain the reason for the absence. Subsequently, the parent/guardian shall receive a copy of the written disciplinary referral informing the parent/guardian of the cut or absence and any disciplinary action taken. Upon subsequent referrals, any discipline imposed as a result of excessive unexcused absences shall reflect incremental intervention strategies consistent with the District's Code of Conduct.

Additionally, warnings of inadequate attendance are included on all five week and report card notices. Further, each quarter, the school shall notify the parent/guardian if a student has not met the 90% minimum attendance requirement for that quarter.

Absences related to homelessness shall not result in negative consequences where the district determines that it would be in the best interests of the student in retaining the student in school.

#### VIII. *Appeals*

A. All appeals will be made directly to the principal or other designated administrator who will make the final decision regarding the withholding of credit.

B. Appeals may be made to:

1. challenge the number of absences on record; or
2. consider "extenuating circumstances."

C. Parent/Guardian will have up to 20 calendar days from the issue of the written Notification of Denial of Credit to appeal. (If parent/guardian is successful on appeal, the Register of Attendance will be changed to reflect outcome of appeal's process.)

#### IX. *Returns to District*

Students who leave the district and subsequently return must still honor the attendance policy. All previous class absences will still count for that academic year.

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