

## Policy Information

### Series 5000 - Students

#### **Elementary & Secondary Attendance Comprehensive Student Attendance Policy Policy # 5119**

#### Philosophy and Purpose

A positive academic culture is best achieved by the regular and continued exchange of ideas among peers, guided by teachers and educational leaders. Because excellence in all aspects of a student's school experience is the hallmark of The Lakeland Central School District, the following policy regarding student attendance has been established. This policy recognizes that school attendance is the responsibility of the student and parent/guardian, supported by the teachers and administration. The intention of this policy is encourage regular student attendance through positive rather than punitive means.

#### Shared Responsibility

The Board of Education recognizes that class attendance is a shared responsibility involving commitment on the part of the student, parent/guardian, and the school. This policy is intended to involve all parties in promoting regular school attendance.

A. Student's Responsibility: It is the student's responsibility to:

1. Attend all assigned classes and other instructional activities on time every day that school is in session;
2. Be aware of and follow the correct procedures when absent from an assigned class or other instructional activity;
3. Request any missed assignments due to an absence; and
4. Complete assigned work, including make-up work, in a timely manner.

B. Parent/Guardian's Responsibility: It is the responsibility of the student's parent/guardian to:

1. Ensure the student is attending school regularly and on time;
2. Inform the school in the event of a student absence, in advance if possible;
3. Be aware of and follow the correct procedures for reporting student absence and send in a note or documentation on the day the student returns to school and in any event within 48 hours of the student's return to school;
4. Provide medical documentation from the child's medical care provider in the event that an absence reaches 10 consecutive school days or absences accrue to 15 school days or more within a four week period;
5. Work cooperatively with the school and the student to resolve any attendance issues that may arise;
6. Be available to attend an administrative meeting related to attendance issues;
7. Arrange family vacations and trips when school is not in session so that the student does not miss school;
8. Arrange doctor and dentist appointments before or after school, or on weekends, when possible.

C. Teacher's Responsibility: It is the teacher's responsibility to:

1. Take daily attendance and maintain accurate attendance records in each assigned class and other instructional activities;
2. Be familiar with all procedures governing attendance and to apply these procedures uniformly for all assigned students;
3. Provide any student who has been absent with any missed assignments upon request and a date by which the assignment must be made up;

4. Work cooperatively with the student's parent/guardian as well as the student to resolve any attendance issues that may arise;
5. Notify administration when you become aware of an issue regarding a student that is affecting or may affect the student's attendance.

D. Administrator's Responsibility It is the administrator's responsibility to:

1. Require students to attend all assigned classes and other instructional activities;
2. Be familiar with statutes, policies and procedures governing attendance and apply them uniformly to all students;
3. Ensure that all teachers properly account for student attendance in a timely manner;
4. Inform the student's parent/guardian of the student's attendance and work cooperatively with them and the student to resolve attendance problems; and
5. Work collaboratively with the teaching staff to develop and implement uniform attendance procedures.

**Record Keeping**

Attendance record keeping shall conform to the following:

1. Elementary schools shall ensure that attendance is taken once each day, except where students are dismissed from campus for lunch a second attendance shall be taken upon the return from lunch;
2. In departmentalized grades including grades 9-12, attendance shall be taken in each period of scheduled instruction, with an exception for consecutive periods where classes are in the same room;
3. In Grades K-12, any absence for a school day or part of a school day shall be recorded as excused or unexcused as provided for in this policy;
4. In Grades 7-12, events of tardiness shall be recorded as excused or unexcused as provided for in this policy;
5. In Grades K-12, events of late arrival or early departure shall be recorded as excused or unexcused as provided for in this policy;
6. A record shall be maintained of each scheduled day of instruction during which school is closed for all or part of the day because of extraordinary circumstances including adverse weather, failure of the heating system or water supply, fuel supply shortage or structural damage to the building, etc.;
7. A record shall be made of the date when a student withdraws from enrollment or is dropped from enrollment in accordance with §3202(3-a) of the Education Law.

B. All entries in the register of attendance shall be made by a teacher or another employee designated by the Board of Education. Any individual authorized to make entries in the register of attendance shall, by oath or affirmation, verify the contents of the entries.

C. Student attendance records shall be reviewed by the Principal of each school building in the District and/or his/her administrative designee for the purpose of initiating appropriate actions to address unexcused student absences, tardiness and early departures.

D. The register of attendance shall consist of any written or electronic record to record attendance, absence, tardiness or early departure of a student. The register shall be maintained for every period that a student is scheduled to attend actual instruction or supervised study during the course of the school day during the school year, from July 1<sup>st</sup> through June 30th. The register at every school building shall include

separate notations regarding student presence, absence, tardiness and early departure. The contents of the register for each student shall contain the information prescribed in Part 104 of the Regulations of the Commissioner of Education.

### Excused and Unexcused Absences

The Board recognizes the following as excused absences, each of which must be verified by the student's parent/guardian, in writing, or school personnel, where applicable:

1. Personal illness
2. Death in the [immediate] family
3. Religious observance
4. Required attendance in court
5. Approved school-sponsored activities, including field trips, interscholastic athletics, musical and other competitions
6. Directed or authorized presence at the Administrative Offices, Guidance or Nurse's Office.
7. Quarantine
8. Emergency dental and medical appointments (only with physician's/dentist's note)
9. Military obligations
10. Approved cooperative/work study program
11. College visitations [only for juniors and seniors], with the prior knowledge and approval of parent/guardian and counselors, so long as it does not exceed 4 days in a school year.

The written excuse must be presented by the student on the day when returning to school following such absence. If the written excuse is not submitted within 48 hours following such absence, it will be considered an unexcused absence.

Absences that reach 10 consecutive school days or an aggregate of 15 non-consecutive school days within a four week period that are not medically documented by a physician or therapist will be recorded as unexcused absences.

Any absence not provided for on the excused list shall be deemed an unexcused absence. However, the Building Principal, in his/her discretion, may determine that an absence due to unusual and extraordinary circumstances should be deemed an excused absence.

A student who is offered home instruction for documented medical or disciplinary reasons by the School District, and who receives such home instruction, shall be counted as present for school attendance purposes.

### Attendance Expectations

It is the expectation of the School District that each student will attend school on time, for the maximum number of days and instructional periods possible.

All students who are absent from school or class, whether excused or unexcused, must make up all class assignments to remain current with their coursework. Students are expected upon their return after an absence to consult with their teachers regarding missed work and complete all work by the date specified by the student's teacher for the class in question (generally within one week).

Students who are unable to attend school or a class due to an excused absence may arrange with their teachers to make up any work missed and receive assignments in advance if requested two or more days prior to the absence.

Only students who are absent from school due to an excused absence may make up quizzes and examinations.

With the approval of the Principal, make-up assignments may be waived or additional time granted in exceptional circumstances or where a Section 504 accommodation is warranted.

Notwithstanding the above, the Principal shall have discretion to recommend to the Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum that a student be allowed to make up work for absences that are created due to circumstances beyond the control of the student. The Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum shall have the authority to make the decision consistent with established regulations.

### Grades K-8 Attendance

Class attendance is a critical component of the K-6 learning process. Students must be in the classroom to learn. Students must maintain a minimum 90% attendance rate. The Principal may convene a meeting with the Response to Intervention Team if any student has three or more absences in a quarter to evaluate the need to develop intervention strategies. The Principal shall also make contact with the student and his/her parent(s)/guardian and may require a meeting with the student, his/her parent(s)/guardian and other appropriate personnel to address attendance issues.

### Grades 9-12 Attendance

#### Course Credit

To earn course credit, students must be in attendance for at least 90% of classes based on a 180 school day calendar. Both excused and unexcused absences will be counted in determining the minimum 90% attendance requirement, except that approved school-sponsored activities (e.g., field trips, interscholastic athletics, and competitions) will not be counted if the student makes up all missed assignments in a timely manner.

This provision shall also apply to Middle School students who are enrolled in high school level courses.

#### Benchmarks for Intervention

Parents/Guardians will be notified at regular intervals during the school year regarding their child's attendance record.

In addition, to assist students in meeting the minimum 90% attendance standard for the Lakeland Central School District, absence benchmarks for intervention have been established.

For a One-half Credit Course they are as follows:

- A. The parent(s)/guardian will be contacted either by automated telephone call or other electronic communication for any absence for which there is no prior telephone call or excuse received from the parent(s)/guardian.
- B. 8 Days: The parent(s)/guardian may be contacted by a school administrator to schedule a meeting or telephone conference for purposes of discussing the student's attendance issues, which may include drafting an agreement between all parties identifying those attendance and academic behaviors and strategies that will likely result in the student's successful completion of the course. (Discussed below).
- C. End of term: Review of agreement and student progress and attendance for credit award determination.
- D. Failure to meet the terms of the agreement may result in loss of eligibility to sit for the final examination.

For a One Credit Course they are as follows:

- A. The parent(s)/guardian will be contacted either by automated telephone call or other electronic communication for any absence for which there is no prior telephone call or excuse received from the parent(s)/guardian.
- B. 10 Days: The parent(s)/guardian may be contacted by a school administrator to discuss the student's attendance issues.

C. 16 Days: The parent(s)/guardian may be contacted by a school administrator to schedule a meeting or telephone conference for purposes of discussing the student's attendance issues, which may include drafting an agreement between all parties identifying those attendance and academic behaviors and strategies that will likely result in the student's successful completion of the course. (Discussed below).

D. End of term: Review of contract and student progress and attendance for credit award determination.

E. Failure to meet the terms of the agreement may result in loss of eligibility to sit for the final examination.

If a student exhibits a pattern of unexcused absence, tardiness or early departure, the parent(s)/guardian will be contacted. In addition, the student shall meet with the classroom teacher and/or a guidance counselor in an effort to remediate the underlying problem. The Principal or designee may meet with the student and/or his/her parent(s)/guardian.

All verbal, electronic and written contacts with the parent(s)/guardian will be documented by the District.

### Appeals

A student or his/her parent(s)/guardian will have the right to appeal to the Principal or designee regarding the accuracy of the number of or type of absences for any class as well as a determination that a student has not earned credit in a course or courses. Chronic illness or medical conditions which may affect a student's attendance will be considered.

The Principal's decision denying a student credit in a course of courses may be appealed to the Superintendent of Schools or designee within 10 days of the Principal's determination.

### Additional Interventions

In the event that school level interventions have not improved the student's attendance, the Principal or designee may:

1. recommend disciplinary action in accordance with the District Code of Conduct
2. recommend that a Person in Need of Supervision (PINS) petition be filed with the Family Court.
3. after, investigation, make a report to Child Protective Services (CPS) for educational neglect.
  - Educational neglect is defined as the failure of a parent/guardian to ensure that a child's prompt and regular attendance in school or the keeping of a child out of school for impermissible reasons results in an adverse effect on the child's educational progress or imminent danger of such an adverse effect.
  - The report must be made by a mandated reporter who has reasonable cause to suspect educational neglect.

### Encouraging Student Attendance: (Incentives)

At the elementary level, teachers shall utilize attendance incentives such as recognition of students with good attendance and consideration of such students for special privileges.

At the secondary level, eligibility for extra and co-curricular activities, interscholastic sports and attendance at school sponsored activities shall be restricted to those students whose attendance supports course credit in each of their academic subjects.

### Incentives:

A. Different incentives will be established for different grade levels as appropriate to each building's resources and limitation.

B. Incentives will be offered throughout the year for students with excellent (or perfect) attendance. Incentives may include certificates of recognition, drawings for prizes, privileges, etc.

### Oversight Responsibilities

A. The Building Principal and/or his/her administrative designee shall be responsible for reviewing student attendance records and initiating appropriate action consistent with this policy.

B. The Board of Education shall annually review building level student attendance records to determine if the comprehensive student attendance policy is effective. If a decline in attendance is evident, the Board shall revise the policy as deemed necessary to improve student attendance.

### Distribution of Policy

The Superintendent of Schools, at the direction of the Board of Education, shall publish to the community information about the District's Comprehensive Student Attendance Policy.

The policy shall be available on the District website, explained at student assemblies and at assemblies on open school nights (if any), and a plain language summary of the policy shall be prepared for distribution to parents/guardians. Each teacher and new teacher(s), promptly upon hire, shall be provided with a copy of the policy and any amendments thereto. Copies of the policy shall also be maintained by the District's Records Access Officer for issuance upon request by any interested party.

Adoption Date: 7/2/2002, Revised: 3/19/2015; 07/02/2002, 05/05/2005, 07/21/2005, 01/22/2009, 04/16/2009, 06/03/2010, 06/14/2012, 06/13/2013  
5000 - Students

### **Comprehensive Student Attendance Policy**

Regulation Info 5119R

In the case when a student is absent from school due to circumstances beyond the control of the student and it is considered an illegal absence, principals may make a recommendation to the Assistant Superintendent for Instruction to allow the student to make up the work missed during the absence.

The following criteria will be considered in order for the Assistant superintendent to allow work to be made up:

- There is not a history or pattern of illegal absences;
- The reason for the absence is such that the event could not have been scheduled during a time when school is not in session.

The Assistant Superintendent will review each absence on a case-by-case basis. Building administration, in conjunction with the classroom teacher, will determine if the make-up work will receive full credit.

