

## **Regulation: Student Absences and Excuses**

Mapleton Public Schools (the “District”) is dedicated to ensuring that its students attend school every day. The purpose of this regulation and accompanying policy, JH: Student Absences and Excuses, is to ensure that all students are in school in accordance with the law, and to provide guidance and procedures to address chronic absenteeism when necessary.

In an effort to prevent students from becoming chronically absent, schools may use attendance teams, District attendance protocol, and/or attendance achievement bands to determine when to intervene. Individual student needs and circumstances will be considered in determining appropriate interventions for chronic absence. For students with disabilities, the student’s Individual Educational Team or Section 504 Team shall be consulted regarding appropriate interventions.

### **Elementary School**

In an effort to encourage good attendance, schools may choose to recognize and reward students for perfect attendance, exemplary attendance, and improved attendance.

Attendance shall be recorded within the first 10 minutes of the school day, and within the first 10 minutes after any transition in the school day, including after lunch, recesses, or class periods.

Students who are absent for all or part of a school day may be restricted or prohibited from participation in after school or extra-curricular events on the day of the absence, at the discretion of the school director (or designee). Other penalties for unexcused absences may include administrative conferences, school detention, make-up time, parental contacts, and involvement of District-level prevention/intervention efforts.

### **High School**

In addition to the above, the following applies to high school students:

1. Nine (9) unexcused absences in a class within an 18-week period (semester) and/or six (6) unexcused absences within a 9-week period (quarter) may result in a loss of credit (NC) for that class.
2. Students over 17 years of age may be removed from class if their cumulative average of class work results in a failing grade. Because students under age 17 must fulfill the requirements of the compulsory attendance law, they will remain in the class regardless of the number of unexcused absences. Students with chronic absenteeism may be placed on a flexible schedule and/or referred to an alternative program. Where extenuating circumstances exist, the school director (or designee) may extend partial/full credit providing that specific conditions established by the school are met.
3. Students are expected to make up school work because of absenteeism.

- a. Students with prearranged absences must make arrangements prior to the absence for completing make-up work.
  - b. Make-up work shall be provided for any class in which a student has an excused absence, unless otherwise determined by a building administrator, or unless the absence is due to the student's expulsion from school. It is the responsibility of the student to pick up any make-up assignments permitted on the day returning to class. The student shall be afforded 3 days to complete make-up work for each day of absence.
  - c. Make-up work may be allowed following an unexcused absence or following a student's suspension from school with the goal of providing the student an opportunity to keep up with the class and an incentive to attend school. This work may receive full or partial credit to the extent possible as determined by a building administrator.
  - d. Unless otherwise permitted by a building administrator, make-up work shall not be provided during a student's expulsion. Rather, the District shall offer alternative education services to the expelled student in accordance with State law. The District shall determine the amount of credit the expelled student will receive for work completed during any alternative education program.
4. Parents/guardians may request a conference with the building administration to discuss a decision related to the attendance policy. The conference must be requested within one week of notification.

### **Notification of Parents/Guardians Regarding Attendance**

The school director (or designee) will make reasonable efforts notify parents/guardians regarding attendance issues, including when tardiness and/or absences (excused or unexcused) become frequent. Parental notification will be done in an effort to identify and resolve attendance issues before penalties are imposed.

Regardless of grade level, the following actions will be taken if a student's unexcused absences reach the levels identified.

1. After three (3) unexcused days, a letter of concern will be sent to the student's parent(s)/guardian(s) requesting a conference with school officials.
2. After six (6) unexcused days, a second letter will be sent to the student's parent(s)/guardian(s) indicating that the student is in violation of District policy regarding the number of unexcused absence days allowed before judicial proceeding may be initiated and requiring a meeting with a parent/guardian within five (5) business days.
3. After ten (10) unexcused days, a third letter will be sent to the student's parent(s)/guardian(s) including a reference to the State compulsory attendance law and notifying the parent/guardian that the student's attendance will be monitored

for the next 10 school days, after which, the District will make a decision whether to pursue legal action for non-attendance.

4. In all cases, letters sent to parents/guardians will be addressed to the current address on file with the District.
5. Parent(s)/Guardian(s) will be notified when a student is at risk of a grade reduction and/or loss of credit (NC) for excessive absences in a class. Parents/guardians may request a conference with the building administration to discuss a decision related to the attendance policy. The conference must be requested within one week of notification.

### **Withdrawal for Non-Attendance**

Students who are seventeen (17) years of age or older may legally drop out of school. Such students should not be formally withdrawn until school administration has attempted to contact parents or guardians by phone and in writing to discuss educational options that may be available, or until otherwise approved by a District administrator.

Before withdrawing a student for non-attendance, the following requirements must be met:

1. The student has missed 10 consecutive days of school and those absences have been unexcused;
2. Reasonable attempts have been made to all phone numbers and addresses listed in the student records database, including non-household relationships and emergency contacts known to the District;
3. District officials have checked state-wide student records for any updates;
4. District officials have initiated a home visit or welfare check on the student; and
5. All attempts to locate the student must be documented in the student's record.

In rare situations, it may be appropriate for a non-expelled high school student who is under the age of seventeen (17) to temporarily withdraw from school until the beginning of the next grading period. Such withdrawals may only occur by joint approval of the school director and the student's parent(s)/guardian(s), and with written permission of District administration. In such cases, a "Temporary Withdrawal with Intent to Return" contract must be developed which must specify, at minimum, the student's intended date of return and the educational or vocational activities planned during the period of withdrawal.

Students withdrawn for non-attendance are not permitted on District property without administrative approval.

### **Eligibility for Homeschooling (Home-Based Education)**

Students with a history of chronic absenteeism within the last six (6) months of enrollment are not eligible to withdraw from school for the purpose of homeschooling until the parent(s)/guardian(s) have fully satisfied application and planning requirements described

in the District's homeschool policy and State law.

**Eligibility for Homebound or Out-of-School Support Services**

Parent(s)/guardian(s) of a student who is anticipated to be absent for more than fifteen (15) school days due to a physical, mental, or emotional disability, or a recovery period from an illness or injury, may request assessment by the District to consider whether homebound instruction or other out-of-school education support services may be appropriate. Specific documentation and appropriate confidentiality waivers allowing physicians treating the child to communicate with District officials are required in order for a student to be considered for out-of-school educational support services.

*Adopted February 11, 2019.*