

District Attendance Policy

Adopted June 2002

KENMORE-TOWN OF TONAWANDA UNION FREE SCHOOL DISTRICT

INTRODUCTION

This policy was developed in response to the amended section 104.1 of the Regulations of the Commissioner concerning pupil attendance. The revised regulation affects three general areas:

- Content and responsibility for the record of pupil attendance
- Review of attendance data by school building administrators for the purposes of identifying pupil attendance problems and initiating action to improve pupil attendance
- Development of a comprehensive attendance policy by each school

The policy was developed in June, 2002 and full implementation was achieved in the 2002-2003 school year. An annual review by the Policy Development Team allows for continuing revision.

Policy Development Team:

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- Donald Benker, Kenmore Teachers' Association, President
- Marilyn Carmichael, Assistant Principal, High School
- Michael Cornell, Teacher, High School
- Laura Fleischman, Student
- Barbara Field, Principal, High School
- Thomas Wolff, Director
- Florence Kern, Principal, Middle School
- Patricia Kosis, Teacher, Elementary
- Barbara Mollon, Parent
- Bonnie Parsons, Program Supervisor, Elementary
- Michael Ray, Teacher, High School
- Paul Stencel, Board of Education

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The Kenmore-Town of Tonawanda School District recognizes attendance as a critical factor for student success in school. Consistent school attendance, improved academic performances, and school completion have a positive correlation and will contribute to our efforts to assure that our students attain the higher standards established by the Board of Regents. A cooperative effort by the district, the parents, the students, and the community is essential to achieve this goal. This policy applies to school offerings during the regular school year as well as summer school. The school year is interpreted as July 1st through June 30th. It applies district-wide.

Goals

- *To help students develop life-long habits of promptness and good attendance in all activities of life, vocational, social educational;*
- *To encourage all parents to accept the responsibility for sharing in the development of these life-long habits for their children;*
- *To continue to raise student achievement to higher levels; and*
- *To increase the school retention rate through the completion of high school so that options and opportunities are broadened for the students as they transition to adulthood.*

Objectives

To achieve these goals, the district has the responsibility to provide a district-wide attendance program that is based upon accurate record keeping, a systematic analysis of the data, and a positive school climate. More specifically, this program must:

- *Assure accessibility to data on average daily attendance by district, by building, by grade and by class at the secondary level;*
- *Assure we are in compliance with the compulsory attendance law;*
- *Know the whereabouts of every student for safety and accessibility as a practical matter in the operation of a building;*
- *Identify patterns of attendance as a basis for improvement;*
- *Keep parents informed about the attendance records of their children;*
- *Disaggregate student achievement data by attendance patterns; and*
- *Develop comprehensive data on school drop-outs by buildings, and grades.*

STRATEGIES:

The district will maintain a register of each student's attendance to include:

1. Name
2. Date of birth
3. Full names of parent(s) or persons(s) in parental relation
4. Address where the pupil resides
5. Phone number(s) where the parent(s) or person(s) in parental relation may be contacted
6. Date of the pupil's enrollment
7. A record of the pupil's attendance on each day of scheduled instruction. Attendance shall be taken and recorded in accordance with the following:

- for pupils in non-departmentalized grade levels, such pupil's presence or absence shall be recorded after the taking of attendance once per school day.
- for pupils in departmentalized grade levels, such pupil's presence or absence shall be recorded after the taking of attendance in each period of scheduled instruction; and
- any absence for a school day or portion thereof shall be recorded as excused or unexcused.

Excused (Legal)

- Student Illness
- Illness or death in the family
- Documented medical appointment
- Court appearance and/or short-term placement
- In-school music lessons
- School approved field trips
- Shadow days
- Supervised Cooperative Work Program
- College visits
- Assigned suspension in school or supervised out-of-school suspension alternative
- Military obligations
- Quarantine
- Religious observance
- Impassable roads or weather conditions
- Power outage/other emergency conditions

Unexcused Absences (Illegal)

Will include but are not limited to the following:

- Truancy from school
- Truancy from a class or classes during the school day
- Truancy from suspension
- Road tests
- Babysitting-except for emergency situations
- Educational neglect – occurs when a student is absent with knowledge and consent of his parents, stated or implied, for other than excused reasons

8. A record of each scheduled day of instruction during which the school is closed for all or part of the day because of extraordinary circumstances including water supply, shortage of fuel, destruction of or damage to a school building, or such other cause as may be found satisfactory to the Commissioner; and
9. The date when the pupil withdraws from enrollment or is dropped from enrollment in accordance with Education Law section 3202 (1-a).

Attendance Codes

Code	Description	Code	Description
9	Left	H	Excused 8 th Period
1	Tardy 1 st Period	I	Illegally Absent
2	Tardy 2 nd Period	J	Illegally Tardy
3	Tardy 3 rd Period	K	Home Instruction
4	Tardy 4 th Period	L	Legally Absent
5	Tardy 5 th Period	O	Suspension Support Alt.
6	Tardy 6 th Period	P	Legally Absent A.M.
7	Tardy 7 th Period	Q	Legally Absent P.M.
8	Tardy 8 th Period	R	Truant
A	Excused 1 st Period	S	Suspended (out of school)
B	Excused 2 nd Period	T	Tardy up to 1 st Period
C	Excused 3 rd Period	U	Illegally Absent A.M.(before noon)
D	Excused 4 th Period	V	Illegally Absent P.M. (after noon until end of day)
E	Excused 5 th Period	X	In School Suspension
F	Excused 6 th Period	Y	Field Trip
G	Excused 7 th Period	Z	Legally Tardy

All entries in a register of attendance shall be made either by a teacher, or by an employee other than a teacher designated by the Board of Education.

The Board of Education shall designate a teacher or other district employee to supervise the keeping of the register of attendance within each building; at the district level.

The entries in the register of attendance shall be verified by the oath or affirmation of the person making the entries in the register of attendance.

The retrieval of the data will be provided by student, by building, by district. Summary data on enrollment, possible and aggregate attendance, and average daily attendance by grade for the district and each building will be calculated centrally and disseminated to each building, the Superintendent, and the Board of Education at the close of each attendance period and annually.

ABSENCE AND TARDINESS :

Absences will occur for a whole day, or a substantial part of a day. A written excuse explaining the reason for absence should be submitted within three (3) days of the day on which a student returns to school. If an excuse is not provided, the absence is recorded as unexcused. Students have the right and responsibility to make up all missed work within a reasonable time for all excused absences. In case of unexcused absences, missed work may be made up only at teacher discretion.

EXCESSIVE ABSENCE and TARDINESS:

Students whose absences and instances of tardiness, both excused and unexcused, exceed 15% during a given period of time will be considered excessively absent and will be referred for administrative review. Parents will be notified of the impending review and informed of the outcome.

Continued Excessive Absence

Continued excessive absence and tardiness may result in, but is not limited to, the following options:

- Administrative-parent contact;
- A parent conference at the building level;
- Disciplinary action for truancy;
- Referral to district attendance office;
- Referral to Truancy Intervention Program (TIP);
- Referral to Child Protection Services for educational neglect; or
- Referral to the PINS Division Unit of Family Court in cases of truancy.

Exceptions

Absences for the following reasons will be considered exceptions:

- Cases of prolonged illnesses and/or hospitalization upon presentation of a medical excuse from the attending physician within 5 days of return to school;
- Cases of chronic illness resulting in frequent absences upon presentation of an acceptable statement from the attending physician; and
- Absences for legally acceptable reasons as defined in this policy.

TRUANCY:

Truancy will result in one or more of the following:

- Student will be assigned detention or other disciplinary action;
- Parent will be notified through a copy of referral, a letter, or a phone call;
- Parent conference;
- Referral to district attendance counselor;
- Truancy Intervention Program (TIP); or
- An administrative hearing to determine the appropriateness of:
 - an alternative educational program;
 - referral to Child Protection Services for educational neglect by the parent;
 - referral to a division of Family Court;
 - other agency referrals; or
 - a superintendent's hearing if truancy persists

TARDINESS:

Parents, teachers, social workers, counselors and administrators share responsibility for assisting students in establishing habits of promptness. Students are expected to be in homeroom and classes on time. Failure to do so will result in disciplinary action. Tardiness to school will be recorded as excused or unexcused.

TRUANCY INTERVENTION PROGRAM (TIP):

The schools, combined with the efforts of the Town of Tonawanda and Kenmore Village police departments, will address repeated truancy problems. Referrals will be made through the district-wide attendance office.

CLASS CUTS:

Students are expected to attend all assigned classes. Absence from class affects the level of classroom participation and ultimately the class average. Class cuts and unexcused tardiness are considered truanancies.

APPOINTMENTS DURING SCHOOL HOURS:

Students may be released during school hours, except for emergencies, upon a written request of a parent or guardian. A student will not be released to any person not known to the principal or teacher except upon presentation of a written request by the parent or guardian. Where possible, appointments at the doctor, dentist, etc. should be scheduled outside of school hours. If appointments are scheduled during school hours, the following conditions are prescribed:

- Students should be signed out at the school office by the parent or responsible adult.
- Students are not sent home alone during school hours except by special consent of the parent or directive of an administrator.

INCENTIVES:

At all levels, incentives and recognition of excellent attendance records can be achieved through a variety of awards developed within each building at all three levels, such as:

- Assembly programs;
- Honor/merit lists disseminated within the district, to the media for publication, district newsletter, web-sites;
- Letters to individual students;
- Letters to parents;
- Ice cream socials for students and their parents;
- Lunch with the principal;
- Prizes;
- A criterion for awards, honors;
- Pre-determined bonuses; or
- Teacher rewards within the classroom.

NOTICE TO PARENTS:

On a regular basis, parents will be contacted to check on the absence of students unless the parent has already notified the school verbally or in writing. At the elementary level, each building will maintain a "child-safe" program. Parents are expected to contact the school office. Calls will be made as soon as attendance is taken, if the student is unaccounted for. At the middle and high school level, telephone calls will be made daily, if possible, to parents/guardians.

Parents should be directed to the attendance information that is included on all computer-generated progress reports during orientation sessions; through newsletters, calendars, and handbooks.

Whenever absenteeism and tardiness are of concern and when they are excessive, parents will be notified in writing and requested to meet with school personnel.

Upon a referral to the district attendance office, a direct contact will be made with the parents of the student. Initial follow-up will be a visit to the home, a meeting in the school, or in the district office.

Notes to parents to recognize satisfactory/improved attendance of their children is a significant incentive.

INTERVENTION STRATEGIES:

In addition to those already described, others will result from the creativity within a school: staff, school improvement team, student councils, and a parent-teacher-student association. Examples of these strategies as well as incentives will be reported by buildings in preparation for the annual reviews.

DESIGNATION OF REVIEWER:

The principal of each building, in coordination with the staff member delegated to supervise the collection/maintenance of attendance records, will conduct a review of attendance data at the close of each attendance period and for the year-end summary.

ANNUAL REVIEW:

The Board of Education will conduct an annual review to include a summary of attendance data for each building and the district. If data show a decline in rates, the Board is expected to revise the policy and develop a plan of intervention strategies to improve attendance.

DISSEMINATION:

All parents and students will be informed at the beginning of each year of the attendance policy in a plain language summary. Teachers will receive copies of this policy. The community will be advised of this policy through Board of Education meetings, press releases, web-sites. Copies of the policy will be available for review in each school building and the central office.