

Attendance Policy

High School

Attendance in school and in classes is required for academic success. Parent/guardian cooperation is essential in seeing that students are in attendance and adhering to the procedures and regulations established by the administration.

The administration will publish reasonable rules and regulations regarding authorized, excused, and unexcused absences.

Middle School

Attendance in school and in classes is required for academic success. Parent cooperation is essential in seeing that students are in attendance and adhering to the procedures and regulations established by the administration. The specific procedures approved by the Board of Education relative to the implementation of this policy are specified in the following regulations.

Medical Appointments

Students may be excused for medical appointments which cannot be scheduled at any other times. The school administration will take such steps as are necessary to ensure that the child's attendance is properly documented.

Legal Reference: Connecticut General Statutes
 10-184 Duties of parents
 10-185 Penalty
 10-221 Board of Education to prescribe rules
 (subsection b – re: attendance policies)

Policy adopted: 8/29/85

NORWALK PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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NORWALK, CONNECTICUT

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Student Attendance

5113 (a)

The following general regulations are set by the administration:

1. In every instance of absence or tardiness, a written or electronic communication, or personal visit is required of the parent or guardian providing the reason.
2. The school will check attendance daily.
3. Dismissal of a student will be granted at the parent or guardian's request. In the elementary school, dismissal in the custody of others than parents (or their surrogates) is not approved. In considering the merits of the case, the principal and administration should take into consideration the attendance record of the students and the student's academic standing and in a normal situation requests should be granted unless either the attendance record or the academic standing of the student would indicate that further absences from school would not be in the best interest of the student.
4. When a student is excused from school, the responsibility for make-up work rest with the student.
5. No student shall leave the school premises during school hours without permission of the principal or designees. No school child shall be permitted to leave school prior to dismissal at the request of or in the company of any other than a school employee, or a police officer, a court official or a parent of the child unless the permission of the parent be secured first.
6. In the event a student is detained after school at the school's request, parents should be notified of the detention and length of detention time. The following procedure should be observed:
 - A. One day's notice in advance is necessary before the child is detained. By this means, time will be provided for the parents to arrange transportation.
 - B. In all other cases of detention, school staff will inform the parents of the reason for the student's lateness in returning home, or provisions will be made for the student to call his/her parents.

Picking Up Students during School Hours

Parents and/or guardians may need to pick up their children from school before dismissal time. If this is the case, the individual must send a written or electronic communication to the school in advance, indicating the day and time of this request. School staff will receive the request and send it to the administration for approval. At the designated time, the parent or guardian should report directly to the main office to pick up the child. He or she will be asked to sign the child out and will be required to show proof of identification (i.e. driver's license). Once this is completed, the child will be released.

Request for Release of Students during School Day

Request must be from or signed by parent or guardian and include the reason, time and date of dismissal. In cases of divorced or legally separated parents of a child, the principal will require that a legal statement designating the custodial parent or guardian be entered in the child's permanent record as a decision-making guide for administration. In cases where a parent/guardian has de facto custodial rights and where not legal document exists, the principal shall consult with the de facto custodial parent/guardian for permission to release the student to the other parent.

Attendance – Middle School

See the following page for the administrative regulations and procedures relative to middle school attendance.

Attendance – High School

Definition of an Absence

Connecticut General Statute 10-198a guides local districts in defining absences and aids in the development of attendance procedures: *A student is considered to be "in attendance" if present at his or her assigned school, or an activity sponsored by the school (i.e. field trip), for at least half the regular school day. A student who is not "in attendance" is considered absent.*

Similarly, a student is considered to be "in attendance" to an individual class period if present in the class or at a school sponsored activity (i.e. field trip).

In high school a student may be absent 10 class periods in a full-year course or 5 class periods in a semester length course before losing credit.

Excused Absence

An absence is considered *excused* when the attendance clerk receives notification from a parent or guardian.

Unexcused Absence

An absence is considered *unexcused* when the attendance clerk does not receive notification from a parent or guardian.

- Students who are deemed to be unexcused absent from school may be subject to disciplinary consequences. Any student who is unexcused absent may not receive credit for any work due on that day and/or for any work produced by the class on the day of the absence (including assessments).
- If a student is present in school, but does not attend a scheduled class (class cut), such an absence will be considered unexcused. Any student who has cut a class may receive a zero "0" for any work due on that day and/or for any work produced by the class on the day of the absence (including assessments). Also, a student who cuts class will be subject to an **extended detention**. Persistent cutting of classes will result in additional disciplinary action and administrative intervention.

Authorized Absence

Additional documentation beyond the parent notification is required for an absence to be considered "authorized." These absences will not count toward the total. Any absence will be considered "authorized" under the following circumstances:

- Extended illness.
- Student observance of a religious holiday.
- Death in student's family or other emergency beyond the control of the student's family.
- Mandated court appearance.
- Educational opportunities pre-approved by school administration.

Notification Process

Course	First Notice:	Second Notice:	Third Notice:	Denial of Credit:
	Communication Home	Communication Home, Student Meeting with Counselor and Housemaster	Formal Meeting with Student and Parent as well as Counselor and Housemaster	Notified of Loss of Credit in Writing, Right to Appeal
Full-Year Course	3 rd Absence	6 th Absence	8 th Absence	11 th Absence
Semester Length Course	3 rd Absence	x	4 th Absence	6 th Absence
Quarter Length Course	2 nd Absence	x	3 rd Absence	4 th Absence

Denial of Credit

Students with absences (unexcused or excused) totaling 10 in a full-year course and 5 in a semester course may be denied credit for the course. Parents will be notified in writing of the denial of credit, and students will have a designated amount of time from the date of the letter to appeal to the attendance committee for restoration/rescind of credit. Students are expected to maintain their current academic progress and attend class during the appeals process. **A student who does not appeal for restoration/rescind, or whose appeal is denied, will still receive the appropriate course grade, which will be utilized for honor roll calculation, but will not receive credit toward graduation.** Depending on the course and the student's cumulative credit count, the course may need to be repeated.

Right of Appeal

The Attendance Procedure is not designated to deny credit to students who, through no fault of their own, are unable to attend school or class due to legitimate illness or other conditions beyond the student's and/or parent's control. At the end of the **semester or year**, students will have an opportunity to appeal to have credit reinstated/rescinded. To be eligible for the appeal process, students must continue classroom responsibilities and attend class faithfully.

Appeals Committee and Process

The Attendance Appeals Committee is comprised of school administration and other staff, specifically: a teacher, administrator (not the student's housemaster), guidance counselor (not the student's counselor), and a member of the school's support staff (nurse, psychologist, social worker, possibly a second teacher or counselor). If requested by the student and parent, a student trained in the appeals process will also serve on the committee. Students from the other high school will be given priority to promote objectivity and impartiality. (*For example, Norwalk High School students will be asked to serve on the Appeals Committee at Brien McMahon and vice versa.*) The purpose of this committee is to hear from students (and their families) to determine if credit should or should not be granted in situations where students have exceeded the number of absences in a class. Students wishing to appeal must complete the following (to be determined):

- Within a designated amount of time that a student is notified of possible denial of credit, he or she should submit a completed Attendance Appeal Form to the main/house office in order to appeal denial of credit.
- An additional documentation (doctor's notes, etc.) that may help to verify absences should be supplied for consideration.
- The Attendance Appeals Committee will notify the student and his or her family if credit is or is not restored/rescinded.
- In some instances, conditions may be granted for students to have credit reinstated, provided that consistent attendance is achieved.
- Students and/or their parents or guardians may be required to meet with the Appeals Committee to discuss the situation.

All cases will be considered on an individual basis, and when relevant, issues of confidentiality will be respected. The final decision is a majority vote of the Appeals Committee.

****The timeline and specific requirements regarding the Appeals Committee Procedure will be published at the start of each semester or school year.***

Tardiness

Arriving to class on time is an expectation. A student who arrives during the first 10 minutes of class without written authorization from a staff member will be considered **tardy**. After 10 minutes, it will be considered an unexcused absence. Each time a student is **tardy** to class, he or she will receive a school consequence.

The following consequences will be assigned for tardiness:

- Incidents 1-3: Teacher Designated Intervention (Documented) For example: assigned detention, call home, student/parent meeting, lunch detention with teacher...etc.
- Incidents 4-5: Administrator Assigned Detention (Lunch or After School)
- Additional Incidents: Extended Detention, ISS, Tiered Interventions

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