

STUDENT ATTENDANCE

Attendance at school is mandated by the Rhode Island General Law 16-19-1 and School Committee Policies JEA and JEDA for those students who have not reached their sixteenth birthday. After that date, students are in school on a voluntary basis and submit to the state mandate and School Committee policy as a condition of enrollment. Maintaining regular school attendance is necessary in order to achieve the goal of an educated citizenry. Consistent with research and national standards, the Warwick Public Schools asserts that the minimum rate of attendance necessary to meet these goals is ninety-five percent. In order to be eligible to receive grades, Carnegie units, or be promoted, all students must be present in school a minimum of 165 days per school year. The only exception to the attendance policy shall be the enumerated extenuating circumstances that are verified by school personnel.

Extenuating Circumstances:

- Extended/chronic personal, physical, or emotional illness as verified by a physician or dentist
- Extended hospital stay as verified by a physician or dentist
- Extended recuperation from an accident as verified by a physician or dentist
- Extended contagious disease within a family as verified by a physician or dentist
- For any other extenuating circumstances, the student's parents or legal guardian must make a formal appeal to the principal or his/her designee.

For purposes of this policy, *extended* shall be defined as "more than ten consecutive school days."

For purposes of this policy, *excessive* shall be defined as "more than five school days within the same quarter."

For purposes of this policy, *chronic* shall be defined as "more than five school days within a quarter for more than one school quarter."

The only other exception to the attendance policy shall be other absences that are verified by the principal or his/her designee as stated below:

- Prior school system approved travel for education
- Death in the family (not to exceed one week)
- Catastrophe and/or disaster
- Religious observance.

A. Elementary

1. A parent or guardian must call the school to notify the appropriate person of a student's absence.
2. Parents are required to submit a written excuse for each period of absence or late arrival to school.
3. Students shall be allowed two (2) tardies per quarter.
4. Five (5) or more consecutive absences during any marking period will be brought to the attention of the school nurse for review.
5. Excessive absences and late arrivals which are not the result of a clearly defined medical reason will be brought to the attention of the school attendance administrator.
6. Each school shall implement attendance procedures that include both incentives and penalties. These procedures shall be uniform throughout the district. The incentives utilized in each school will be consistent with the maturity of the students in order to provide the desired outcomes sought by the school department. The penalties will include the removal of student social privileges, when appropriate.
7. Family vacations during school time are strongly discouraged. When it is absolutely necessary to remove a student from school for this purpose, students will be responsible for all assigned work while they were absent. These will be counted as unexcused absences.
8. Parents are encouraged to schedule appointments outside of the school day whenever possible.
9. Chronic truancy or tardiness will be referred to the school attendance administrator which may result in a referral to the Rhode Island Truancy Court.

B. Secondary

1. A parent or guardian must call the school to notify the appropriate person of a student's absence.
2. Any student deemed truant will be assigned to an alternative in-house school setting and/or other disciplinary action deemed appropriate after a parent conference is held.
3. Parents are required to submit a written excuse for each period of absence or late arrival to school.

4. Repeated tardiness - Chronic offenders will be brought to the attention of the school attendance administrator.
5. Each school shall implement attendance procedures that include both incentives and penalties. These procedures shall be uniform throughout the district. The incentives utilized in each school will be consistent with the maturity of the students in order to provide the desired outcomes sought by the school department. The penalties will include the removal of student social privileges, when appropriate.
6. School sponsored activities will not be considered as absences.
7. Visits to colleges by seniors with the prior notification by the parents to the school administration will be an excusable absence.
8. Family vacations during school time are strongly discouraged. When it is absolutely necessary to remove a student from school for this purpose, students will be responsible for all assigned work while they were absent. These will be counted as unexcused absences.
9. Parents are encouraged to schedule appointments outside of the school day whenever possible.
10. Students who are truant from class will not be allowed to make up missed work or tests.
11. Those students who have more than fifteen unexcused absences from the class they are failing will not be allowed to enroll in summer school.
12. Chronic truancy or tardiness will be referred to the school attendance administrator which may result in a referral to the Rhode Island Truancy Court.

Each school shall provide a program of interventions designed to assist students and/or families that are experiencing attendance problems. Interventions shall encourage the school and the family to work together, utilizing a problem solving approach, and shall incorporate actions consistent with the maturity of the student and the seriousness of the problem.

Appeals of attendance related decisions should be directed to the school principal.

Adopted: 7/9/96

Revised: 3/2/99, 1/11/00 and 11/13/07

LEGAL REFS.: General Laws of R.I., 16-19-1

CROSS REFS.: JEA, Compulsory Attendance Ages
JED, Student Absences and Excuses
JEDA, Truancy
JEG, Home School Policy

Warwick Public Schools, Warwick, Rhode Island