

<b>Regional School Unit 73 Board of Directors</b>	<b>CODE: JE/JH/JHA/JHB</b>
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<b>SUBJECT: Student Attendance/Student Absences and Excuses/Tardiness and Truancy</b>	
<b>DATE OF ORIGINAL POLICY:</b>	<b>July 10, 2008</b>
<b>DATE OF NEXT REVIEW:</b>	2018
<b>CANCELS POLICY CODE:</b>	None
<b>REVISION DATE:</b>	Dec. 13, 2012
<b>JURISDICTION:</b>	<b>RSU 73 Schools</b>

**Purpose:** To specify the Board's student attendance expectations and to clarify the impact absenteeism may have upon a student's promotion, grade or credits earned. Also to define tardiness and truancy.

### **Parental Notification**

If a student is to be excused from school, the parents/guardians are required to notify the main office or attendance office of the student's absence and explain the reason for the absence. Parents/guardians are responsible for calling the school the day of the absence. If calling that day is not possible, then a parental note, complete with date and reason for the absence, must be turned into the appropriate office within 48 hours after the student returns to school. If the note is not received by the end of the second day within the requested time frame, the absence will be treated as unexcused.

### **School-Sponsored Events**

Students participating in school-sponsored events sanctioned by the principal are not deemed to be absent.

### **Excused Absences**

- Approved prearranged absences
- Death in the immediate family
- Family emergencies
- Late arrivals/early dismissals due to medical appointments that cannot be scheduled outside of school hours
- Illness or injury of the student
- Observance of a religious holiday

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### **Recording Attendance**

Official attendance shall be recorded in “half-day” increments or by courses (at the secondary level). Students shall be in attendance for at least two (2) hours to be counted as “present” for one-half day. Students arriving late and/or departing early shall have their attendance record accurately reflect the portion of the school day they were reported as “present.”

Kindergarten and early childhood students attending half-day programs shall be counted “present” for the whole day if they attend for two and one-half (2½) or more hours of any scheduled daily session.

### **Student Absences**

Students attending elementary schools (or enrolled in grades typically defined as elementary grades) shall be in attendance a minimum of ninety percent (90%) of the instructional time scheduled for that school (or grade) and make satisfactory academic progress in order to be unconditionally recommended for promotion to the next grade. All absences (excused and unexcused) shall be included in the calculation of the 90% attendance minimum except that excused absences for religious holidays shall not be counted for the purpose of determining a student’s eligibility for promotion.

All absences must have a written or verbal explanation provided by the parent/guardian within 48 hours of the student’s return to school. An absence for which no acceptable explanation is received shall be deemed unexcused.

Principals, in consultation with the teacher of record, shall review all students’ attendance records reflecting absenteeism in excess of 10% of the scheduled instructional time and shall make a determination, after such review, regarding a recommendation for retention.

Parents/guardians shall be notified, in writing, of any recommendation for retention (non-promotion) due to excessive absenteeism (absences exceeding 10% of the scheduled instructional time). Retention actions due to excessive absenteeism may be appealed by the parent/guardian on the basis of mastery of material.

At the secondary level, students enrolled in any semester-length or year-long credit-bearing course whose attendance record reflects absenteeism in excess of 10% of the scheduled instructional time in that course, may be denied credit.

### **Transcripts**

Students failing to earn credit due to excessive absences will have "NC" (no credit) recorded on their transcript if they are passing the course at the end of the semester or a numerical grade recorded on their transcript if they are failing the course at the end of the semester.

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### **Unexcused Absences**

Unexcused absences include any circumstance not listed above, including any absence due to truancy.

### **Definitions:**

**Tardy** - Reporting to an assigned area late constitutes tardy; reporting to school late constitutes tardy.

**Truancy** - Failure to report to school or an assigned area without a valid excuse constitutes truancy.

Assigned areas for students during the school day are established by individual schedules and other directives by the principals or teacher. Failure to report to the assigned area constitutes truancy. Once a student has arrived at school, the student is expected to remain there for the full school day unless excused in writing by the principal or designee and notification of parent/guardian. Some students in the high schools may have irregular schedules because of their participation in cooperative work programs or other legitimate reasons. Reporting to class or an assigned area more than 15 minutes late constitutes an absence for that period.

Students are expected to be punctual in arriving at assigned areas. Tardiness to class should not be reported as a school tardy. A student is tardy to school when he/she has not reported to first period class or homeroom. A student is tardy to class when he/she has not reported to class or assigned area when scheduled.

### **Approved Prearranged Absences**

Absences for reasons other than illness, death in the immediate family, or for religious purposes are strongly discouraged. If students must be absent for any other purpose and such absence is desired to be "excused," a request for a pre-arranged absence must be made in writing to the principal. The principal shall review the request and, if approved, shall solicit from the appropriate faculty daily work and homework assignments for all days to be missed. The principal shall notify the parents/guardians of approval of the prearranged absence and, if approved, provide the listings of student work as may be collected from faculty.

### **Late Arrivals/Early Dismissals**

Parents/guardians are requested to schedule appointments after the school day to avoid the need for a late arrival or early dismissal. If it becomes necessary for students to be excused from school for an elective medical appointment, or other unavoidable emergency, the parents/guardians must send a signed note to school stating the reason and the planned time of arrival/departure. All students must be signed out by a parent/guardian (or someone legally listed as the parent/guardian on the emergency card) in the office before leaving the school.

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### **Make-up Work**

Excused absences: Students are encouraged to make up work for all absences. Students who have excused absences may receive credit for their work completed in a timely manner after their return to school. Students are responsible for securing and completing make-up assignments. (Students will be allowed two class meeting periods make-up time for each day's absence). Pre-announced tests are taken on the assigned dates. An absence the day prior to the test does not excuse the student from taking the test. Work satisfactorily made up within the prescribed time after returning to school will receive full credit.

Unexcused absences: Credit will be allowed for work missed due to an unexcused absence, but students must meet the 90% attendance requirement.

### **Notification of Retention - Elementary Students**

Prior to the end of each year, the principal shall review absentee records and make determinations relative to eligibility for promotion of all students. When a determination has been made that excessive absenteeism merits retention, the principal will send a retention letter to the parents/guardians advising them that their child shall be retained in the present grade level. This will be reflected in the child's cumulative record.

### **Notification of Failure to Earn Credit - Secondary Students**

Prior to the end of each semester, the principal shall review absentee records and make determinations relative to eligibility for credit in courses in which a student has excessive absences. Parents/guardians may appeal the failure to earn credit as outlined in this regulation.

### **Special Needs Students**

If a student with a disability has health or medical issues that are anticipated to impact regular school attendance, the student's IEP or Section 504 Accommodation Plan team should address those issues and include proposals for handling absences under this policy if any. The principal will consider the team's documentation of student health and medical issues and any proposals concerning student attendance as they apply to this policy.

### **Suspended Students**

Suspension is a consequence of student behavior requiring removal from school. Days missed due to suspension are not included in the absence calculation (Board policy JKD). Students who have been suspended are encouraged to maintain their school responsibilities by completing assignments during their term of suspension. Work successfully completed by suspended students will be accepted for consideration relative to credit/grades.

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## **Appeal Process**

Any parent/guardian may request an appeal of failure to earn credit or a retention decision.

### ***First Level of Appeal***

The parent/guardian may request review of the initial decision to the building principal. If a request is not received within five days of the parent's/guardian's receipt of written notification of the initial decision, the initial decision will be final and non-appealable.

### ***Second Level of Appeal***

The parent/guardian may request review of the principal's decision to the Superintendent or designee. If a request is not received within five days of the parent's/guardian's receipt of the principal's written notification of the decision, the principal's decision will be final and not open for appeal.

### ***Final Level of Appeal***

The parent/guardian may request, in writing, review of the Superintendent's/designee's decision to the Clerk of the Board. If a request is not received within five days of the parent's/guardian's receipt of the Superintendent's/designee's written notification of the decision, the Superintendent's/designee's decision will be final. The parent/guardian will be notified in writing of the date, time and place of the Board meeting at which the decision will be reviewed. The Board's decision will be final and nonappealable.

If a parent/guardian disagrees with the Board's decision, the parent/guardian may prepare a written statement giving the reason(s) for disagreement. This will be placed in and become a part of the student's permanent cumulative record.

**Adopted: December 13, 2012**