

CARLE PLACE SCHOOL DISTRICT

Comprehensive
Student Attendance
Policy

2013/2014

(Pending approval from the Board of Education)

**CARLE PLACE SCHOOL DISTRICT
COMPREHENSIVE STUDENT ATTENDANCE POLICY**

Statement of Overall Objectives

School attendance is both a right and a responsibility. The Carle Place School District is an active partner with students and parents in the task of ensuring that all students meet or exceed the New York State Learning Standards. Because the Carle Place School District recognizes that consistent school attendance, academic success and school completion have a positive correlation, the School District will develop, review and, if necessary, revise a Comprehensive Student Attendance Policy to meet the following objectives:

- a) To increase school completion for all students;
- b) To raise student achievement and close gaps in student performance;
- c) To identify attendance patterns in order to design attendance improvement efforts;
- d) To ensure the maintenance of an adequate attendance record verifying the attendance of all children at instruction;
- e) To promote the safety of the District's students throughout the school day;
- f) To verify that individual students are complying with education laws and regulations relating to compulsory attendance;
- g) To determine the District's average daily attendance for State aid purposes.

Description of Strategies to Meet Objectives

The Carle Place School District will:

- a) Create and maintain a positive school building culture by fostering a positive physical and psychological environment where the presence of strong adult role models encourages respectful and nurturing interactions between adults and students. This positive school culture is aimed at encouraging a high level of student bonding to the school, which in turn should lead to increased attendance.
- b) Develop a Comprehensive Student Attendance Policy based upon the recommendations of a multifaceted District Policy Development Team that includes representation from the Board of Education, administrators, teachers, students, parents and the community. The District will hold at least one public hearing prior to the adoption of this collaboratively developed Comprehensive Student Attendance Policy.
- c) Maintain accurate record keeping, in accordance with State law and regulations, via a Register of Attendance to record the attendance, absence, tardiness or early departure of each student;

- d) Utilize data analysis systems for tracking individual student attendance and individual group trends in student attendance problems.
- e) Develop early intervention strategies to improve school attendance for all students. These strategies may include:
 - Notification to administrator of a pattern of absences;
 - Written notification to parents;
 - Conference with teacher(s);
 - Meeting with Principal and Parent(s)/ Person(s) in parental relation;
 - Review by the District's Child Study Team;
 - Schedule an appointment with the district physician;
 - Home visit by District social worker;
 - Initiation of a Person in Need of Supervision (“PINS”) petition.
 - Notification to agencies such as Child Protective Services, as warranted.

Determination of Excused and Unexcused Absences, Tardiness and Early Departures

Based upon our District's educational and community needs, values and priorities, the Carle Place School District has determined that absences, tardiness and early departures will be considered excused or unexcused according to the following standards.

- a) **Excused:** An absence, tardiness or early departure may be excused if the reason for the absence is appropriately documented to the District in accordance with the provisions of this policy, and the reason for the absence is due to personal illness, illness or death in the family, impassable roads due to inclement weather, religious observance, quarantine, required court appearances, disciplinary suspensions, pre-arranged and approved appointments with members of the District's staff, attendance at health clinics, approved college visits, approved cooperative work programs, obtaining learner's permit, road test, all approved school field trips and assemblies, military obligations or other such reasons as may be approved by the Board of Education, or its designee.

Every effort should be made to schedule non-emergency medical and/or dental appointments outside of school hours.

- b) **Unexcused:** An absence, tardiness or early departure is considered unexcused if the reason for the lack of attendance does not fall into the above excused categories (examples of unexcused absences could include but are not limited to family vacation,

hunting, babysitting, hair cut, oversleeping, leaving school without permission, excessive and continual lateness to class, cutting, employment).

Student Attendance Record Keeping/Data Collection

The record of each student's presence, absence, tardiness and early departure shall be kept in a register of attendance in a manner consistent with Commissioner's Regulations. An absence, tardiness or early departure will be entered as "excused" or "unexcused" along with the District code for the reason.

Commencing July 1, 2003, attendance shall be taken and recorded in accordance with the following:

- a) For students in non-departmentalized kindergarten through grade six (i.e., grade level classes which are held in one room and supervised group movement to other scheduled school activities such as physical education in the gym, assembly, etc.), such student's presence or absence shall be recorded after the taking of attendance once per school day, provided that students are not dismissed from school grounds during a lunch period. Where students are dismissed for lunch, their presence or absence shall also be recorded after the taking of attendance a second time upon the student's return from lunch.
- b) For students in grades seven through twelve, each student's presence or absence shall be recorded after the taking of attendance in each period of scheduled instruction except that where students do not change classrooms for each period of scheduled instruction, attendance shall be taken in accordance with paragraph "a" above.
- c) Any absence for a school day or portion thereof shall be recorded as excused or unexcused in accordance with the standards articulated in this policy.
- d) In the event that a student at any instructional level from kindergarten through grade twelve arrives late for or departs early from scheduled instruction, such tardiness or early departure shall be recorded as excused or unexcused in accordance with the standards articulated in this policy.

A record shall be kept of each scheduled day of instruction during which the school is closed for all or part of the day because of extraordinary circumstances including adverse weather conditions, impairment of heating facilities, insufficiency of 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 of Education.

Attendance records shall also indicate the date when a student withdraws from enrollment or is dropped from enrollment in accordance with Education Law Section 3202(1-a).

At the conclusion of each class period or school day, all attendance information shall be compiled and provided to the designated school personnel who are responsible for attendance.

The nature of the absence, tardiness or early departure shall be coded on a student's record in accordance with the established District building procedures.

Responsibility of Parents/Guardians

Parents are expected to call the school nurse/attendance office if their child will be absent. Upon returning to school, each student must bring a written excuse, signed by the parent or guardian, stating the date, length of time and reason for absence. If the notice is not received within two (2) school days of the student's return, the absence will be determined to be an unexcused absence.

Student Attendance/Grading Policy

The Carle Place School District believes that classroom participation is integral to a student's successful performance and grasp of the subject matter and, as such, is properly factored into a student's final grade. Students are expected to attend all scheduled classes. Since attendance is a substantial factor in classroom participation, any unexcused absence from class will impact on the student's class grade for the marking period. The District shall employ intervention strategies, as set forth in this policy, toward students who are demonstrating patterns of unexcused absences or excused absences that appear to be affecting the child's academic performance. However, it is District policy that a student's grade shall not be penalized in cases of properly excused absences, tardiness and early departures for which the student has adequately performed any assigned make-up work, assignments and/or tests.

For grades K-6, any student absence without excuse for 10% of the school year shall be deemed at risk for retention, and the parent shall be informed of such. Students at risk shall be provided with early intervention strategies as set forth in this policy. Notwithstanding any other reasonable basis to retain a student, at the discretion of the District and in accordance with this policy, students who are absent without an excuse for 20% of the school year will be retained.

Parent(s)/person(s) in parental relation to students who are at risk of being retained or who are at risk of receiving a significant grade reduction due to deficiencies in class participation as it relates to attendance, shall receive notice of their child's possible retention or significant grade reduction, in accordance with this policy.

Students will be considered in attendance if the student is:

- a) Physically present in the classroom or working under the direction of the classroom teacher during the class scheduled meeting time; or
- b) Working pursuant to an approved independent study program.
- c) Receiving and adequately engaging in approved alternative instruction. This may include but not be limited to alternative home instruction provided by the District or alternative instruction provided at school-sponsored events.

Students who are absent from class due to their participation in a school-sponsored activity are to arrange with their teachers to make up any work missed in a timely manner as determined by the student's teacher.

Upon returning to school following a properly excused absence, tardiness or early departure, it shall be the responsibility of the student to consult with his/her teacher(s) regarding arrangements to make up any missed work, assignments and/or tests in accordance with the time schedule specified by the teacher.

Students with Disabilities

For students with disabilities, the District will consider whether the student's absence is related to his/her disability or medical condition. The District will not apply its attendance policy to a student with a disability for purposes of student retention or class participation grades, where the student's absences are related to the student's disability/medical condition.

Notice of Attendance Standard

In order to ensure that parent(s)/person(s) in parental relation and students are informed of the District's policy regarding the effect of class participation on student grades as well as minimum attendance standards for grade K-6 promotion, and the implementation of specific intervention strategies to be employed prior to effect of absences on class participation grade, and/or grade promotion, the following guidelines shall be followed:

- a) A plain language summary of the District's Comprehensive Student Attendance Policy will be mailed to parent(s)/person(s) in parental relation and provided to students at the beginning of each school year or at the time of enrollment in the District. Individual buildings/grade levels will address procedures to implement the notification process to the parent(s)/person(s) in parental relation.
- b) Copies of the Attendance Policy will also be included in parent/student handbooks.
- c) At periodic intervals, the Principal or his/her designee will notify the parent(s)/person(s) in parental relation of the student's absence, tardiness, or early departure and explain the relationship of the student's attendance to his/her ability to successfully pass the course or be promoted.
- d) Parent(s)/person(s) in parental relation to students as well as the students who are at risk of retention or of receiving a significant grade reduction due to a lack of class participation as it relates to student absences, shall receive written notification of their student's risk of retention or significant grade reduction due to lack of participation. Such notice shall set forth the student's name, grade, number of absences/tardiness/early departures from/to class, name of class and teacher's name; provide a means by which the parent(s)/person(s) in parental relation can contact the District to discuss the matter; advise the student's parent(s)/person(s) in parental relation of the District's attendance requirements regarding grade advancement and class participation; and, if a decision has been made to retain the student or significantly reduce a student's grade based on a lack

of classroom participation as it relates to absence, the notice shall set forth procedures which the parent(s)/person(s) in parental relation must follow if they wish to appeal the decision.

- e) A designated staff member will review the District's Attendance Policy with students, in an age-appropriate manner, who have excessive and/or unexcused absences, tardiness or early departures. Further, appropriate student support services/personnel within the District, as well as the possible collaboration/referral to community support services and agencies, will be implemented where appropriate.

Notice of Students who are Absent, Tardy or Depart Early Without Proper Excuse

A designated staff member shall notify the parent(s)/person(s) in parental relation to a student who is absent, tardy or departs early without proper excuse. The staff member shall reference the District's Comprehensive Student Attendance Policy.

If deemed necessary by appropriate school officials, or if requested by the parent(s)/person(s) in parental relation, a school conference shall be scheduled between the parent(s)/person(s) in parental relation and appropriate staff members in order to address the student's attendance. The student may also be requested to attend this conference in order to address appropriate intervention strategies that best meet the needs of the student.

Attendance Incentives

- a) At commencement, students who have maintained perfect attendance for each year in grades 3-6, 7-12 and/or 9-12 will receive a perfect attendance award.
- b) By maintaining good attendance, students will be eligible for all school field trips and extra-curricular activities.

Disciplinary Consequences

Unexcused absences, tardiness and early departures will result in disciplinary sanctions as described in and in accordance with the District's Code of Conduct. Consequences may include, but not be limited to, student warning, parent meeting, detention, in-school suspension, and denial of participation in interscholastic and extracurricular activities and field trips.

Intervention Strategy Process

In order to effectively intervene when an identified pattern of unexcused absences, tardiness or early departures occur, designated District personnel will pursue the following:

- a) Identify specific patterns (e.g., grade level, building, time frame, type of unexcused absences, tardiness or early departures);
- b) Contact the District staff most closely associated with the attendance pattern. In specific

cases where the pattern involves an individual student, the student and parent(s)/person(s) in parental relation will be contacted;

- c) Discuss strategies to directly intervene with a specific pattern;
- d) Implement changes, as approved by appropriate administration;
- e) Utilize appropriate District and/or community resources to address and help remediate student unexcused absences, tardiness or early departures;
- f) Monitor and report short and long term effects of intervention;
- g) Recommend intervention to the Superintendent or his/her designee if it relates to change in District policy or procedure.

Appeals Process

Parent(s)/person(s) in parental relation may request a building level review of their child's attendance record with the Principal or his/her designee. Appeals from the Principal's decision on the building level review may be sought, in writing, to the Superintendent, within five (5) school days of the Principal's decision. Appeals from the Superintendent's decision may be sought, in writing, to the Board of Education, within five (5) days of the Board of Education's decision.

Building Review of Attendance Records

Commencing with the 2003-2004 school year, the building principal and/or assistant principal will work in conjunction with the building attendance clerk and other designated staff in reviewing attendance records at the end of each term. This review is conducted to identify individual and group attendance patterns and to initiate appropriate action to address the problem of unexcused absences, tardiness and early departures.

Annual Review by the Board of Education

The Board of Education shall annually review the building level student attendance records and if such records show a decline in student attendance, the Board shall make any revisions to the Policy and plan deemed necessary to improve student attendance.

Community Awareness

The Board of Education shall promote necessary community awareness of the District's Comprehensive Student Attendance Policy by:

- a) Providing a plain language summary of the policy to parents or persons in parental relation to students at the beginning of each school year and promoting the understanding of such a policy to students and their parents/persons in parental relation;

- b) Providing each teacher, at the beginning of the school year, or upon employment, with a copy of the policy;
- c) Providing copies of the policy to any other member of the community upon request;
- d) Conducting a presentation at back to school night; and
- e) Including a summary of the policy in the school calendar.

References:

Education Law Sections 3024, 3202, 3205, 3206, 3210, 3211, and 3213.
8 New York Code of Rules and Regulations (NYCRR) Sections 104.1, 109.2 and 175.6
School District Code of Conduct.