ABSENCES AND EXCUSES

The School Board is concerned about student absence. Because of absences, a student fails to maintain a consistent sequence of instruction, misses the interaction that occurs in the classroom, and is in direct disobedience of State law.

The School District is required to maintain an accurate record of student attendance. Each school building principal must maintain an accurate accounting of student attendance and absence, including a clear documentation of absence, tardiness, and dismissal. The master school register as required by State law shall be computerized. The Superintendent of Schools shall issue instructions for the collection of data for the computer record.

A student missing any part of the scheduled school day shall be considered tardy, dismissed, or absent.

A student absent, tardy or dismissed shall provide a written, dated note signed by a parent or guardian, except a student eighteen (18) years of age or older may sign their own note, indicating the reason for the absence. Alternatively, a parent or guardian may telephone the school’s attendance line and provide a verbal excuse or explanation for a student’s absence, late arrival, or dismissal.

1. An "excused" admittance slip may be granted for illness, bereavement in the immediate family, visits to a physician or dentist, and approved school activities. A parent or adult student can submit a written appeal to the school principal or designee and offer a compelling rationale for requesting an “excused” absence for a purpose not otherwise stated here.

Classroom attendance is an indicator of student effort and necessary to obtain the full effect of subject matter presentation and the interaction between teacher and students.

A. A parent/legal guardian intending for a student to accompany them on a trip/vacation shall submit a written request two (2) weeks in advance of the last day of school to be attended before the trip. Make up for credit will be allowed for five (5) school days missed. All work missed must be made up within five (5) school days of returning to class for the credit to be earned. An absence of more than five (5) school days and/or failure to complete the make-up work in a timely manner shall be an unexcused absence but will not count toward meeting the definition of truancy as otherwise defined in this policy. The sole responsibility for seeking out assignments missed rests with the student/parent.

B. A parent/legal guardian may request an immediate leave of absence for a student for reasons other than illness, bereavement or vacation for a period of up to one (1) day in a given school year. With permission of the principal, all work missed may be made up for full credit providing all work is completed within five (5) school days of returning to school. The sole responsibility for seeking out assignments rests with the student/parent. The intent of this section is to provide a parent/guardian with the opportunity to seek an absence for truly
unique situations without undue penalty on grades, but it is not intended for authorization to participate in such activities as Senior Skip Day, missing exam days, etc.

2. Building administrators are expected to establish procedures and practices to check the legitimacy of the absence. Inappropriate or false statements are considered as "unexcused".

3. All other absences from school and/or class are designated as "unexcused" and grades for those occasions shall be "0".

The infrequent unexcused absence is to be treated by the building principal in the manner determined to be most appropriate for the situation. For purposes herein, students with ten half-days of unexcused absences shall be considered truant. A half-day is defined as missing three (3) or more hours in grades K-5; missing three and one-half (3.5) hours in grades 6-8; and missing two instruction blocks in a four block day, or three one-half (3.5) hours in a more traditionally scheduled day, in grades 9-12.

The truant is to be treated in four stages:

1. Notice and verbal consultation with the student and parent/guardian by the school counselor or, at the high school by the Director of Guidance or by the appropriate Dean of Students as determined by the school principal.

2. A written communication to the parent/guardian stating the number, frequency, and reasons, if any, given for the truancy, and requesting a parent/guardian conference.

3. Involve appropriate community services, and schedule a parent/guardian conference, outline and agree to corrective measures, and confirm the agreement by a written communication.

4. Should the truancy continue, the district’s truant officer will follow up on the case with a home visit. See SSD Form – Truancy Report.

Should all these actions fail to correct or improve the situation, legal action may be appropriate. Only after these corrective actions are or have been attempted shall school or district officials consider filing a petition alleging that a child is in need of services under RSA 169-D. Individual cases should be discussed with the Superintendent of Schools. When legal action is to be initiated, a report may be prepared for the School District attorney.
ATTENDANCE

Recognizing the concern many individuals have about the dangers of children leaving home but failing to reach school, the following shall be initiated:

1. Our six elementary schools and Woodbury School will participate in the program which shall be voluntary for parents/guardians.

2. Parents/guardians who agree to participate are responsible to notify the appropriate school between the designated hours if their child is to be absent or tardy on any school day.

3. Classroom attendance will be taken by teachers in a timely manner.

4. Parents/guardians participating in the program will be telephoned if they fail to advise the school of an absence or tardiness and the child is not present at attendance time in the school.

5. If the parent/guardian cannot be reached by one telephone call to each number listed on the Student Emergency Information Sheet, school personnel will report to the building principal.

   School personnel are reminded of the need to take a timely and accurate attendance. The Superintendent of Schools shall prepare regulations to implement these procedures and provide adequate notice to parents/guardians about the program and the operational procedures.

6. Parents/guardians agreeing to participate but failing to be available to receive telephone calls for three (3) occasions shall be dropped from the program and shall be so notified in writing.
ATTENDANCE PROCEDURES

GRDES 1 - 8

Each school housing Grades 1-8 shall participate in an attendance/absence program to identify children failing to appear at school and who have not been reported as absent by a parent/guardian volunteering for the program.

1. Each school shall install a recorder phone to accept messages during evening and early morning hours.

2. Notice of the program shall be sent home with each student in the school.

3. Attendance shall be taken by the teacher during the ten minute time period following the opening of school and immediately sent to the school office.

4. School procedures must be established so that all students can be accounted for during the 9:00 a.m. to 9:05 a.m. time period in each elementary school and during the homeroom period (7:35-7:45 a.m.) at Woodbury School, including students who may arrive late, e.g. they will report to the office for an admit slip and update of the school attendance report.

5. A procedure shall be established so that a master list of students absent/tardy will be compiled in a timely manner – five (5) to ten (10) minutes after the opening of school.

6. Either the six (6) hour aide and/or the secretary or supervised volunteers shall prepare a list, no later than 9:15 a.m. at the elementary schools and within one (1) hour of the opening of school at Woodbury School, of students who are identified on the telephone answering machine as being absent or tardy.

7. The master list of absences taken at school shall be compared to the absence list prepared from parent telephone calls; and if it is determined a student is not present in school and not reported by phone to be absent, assigned personnel shall:
   a. Telephone the parent/guardian at the numbers listed on the Student Emergency Information Sheet,
   b. Failing to reach a parent/guardian before 9:20 a.m., report the student’s name to the building principal

8. The building principal will review the circumstances of the case and determine to:
   a. Continue searching for the parent/guardian, or
   b. Leave the case for future notice to the parent/guardian

   It is recognized that the resources available to school personnel for follow-up are limited and the only realistic follow-up will be a written notice of the incident sent by mail.

9. The daily telephone log shall be filed and retained for a period of two (2) years. The log shall list student name, telephone numbers called, person answering and response. If line is busy use “BY” and proceed to the next number.