

## **Foster School Department**

### **Policy #5142**

#### Attendance

#### **PURPOSE**

The purpose of this attendance policy is to improve student attendance when students are not sick. We know how detrimental it can be when students regularly miss instruction (both in the short-term and long-term) and when families don't view consistent school attendance as a priority.

#### **COMPULSORY ATTENDANCE**

Rhode Island law Title 16-19-1 requires every child to attend public school during all the days and hours that the public schools are in session in the city or town in which the child resides.

Students are, therefore, expected to be present each day of the school year unless officially excused. (Refer to the complete list of excused absences below).

#### **EXCUSED ABSENCES, TARDIES AND DISMISSALS**

The following are the excused reasons for an absence, tardy or dismissal from school:

- Illness or injury – medical or dental appointments which are unable to be scheduled after regular school hours (verified by a doctor's note and/or receipt)
- Official, verified court appearance
- Death in the family
- Religious Holiday
- Dismissal by Certified School Nurse Teacher or Principal

Please send in all excuses in writing within five (5) school days to the office secretary upon the student's return to school.

#### **UNEXCUSED ABSENCES, TARDIES AND DISMISSALS**

- Parental and/or personal family matters (e.g., car trouble, missing the bus, etc.)
- Family vacation
- Undocumented illness or injury

#### **TARDIES AND DISMISSALS**

It is required that students be in school all day every day. Students should not arrive late to school or be dismissed early unless it is an emergency or another event that cannot take place at any other time. Tardies and dismissals are part of the attendance policy progressive intervention.

#### **PROGRESSIVE INTERVENTION**

##### **ABSENCES:**

Level 1 – Students who are absent will receive a telephone call home that day notifying their parents.

Level 2 – Students with five (5) unexcused absences from either class or the school day will:

→Receive a letter including the school Attendance Policy

→Receive contact from school personnel to problem solve school attendance pattern

Level 3 – Students with ten (10) unexcused absences from either class or the school day will:

→Meet with the principal and/or designee (e.g., social worker, etc.), and parent/guardian

→Develop strategies for increased attendance

Level 4 - Students with more than ten (10) unexcused absences from either class or the school day will:

→Meet with the principal, a parent/guardian, and other school personnel as needed

→Develop an Intervention Plan; document the meeting and/or may be:

- Referred to Family Court
- Excluded from participating in after school activities, special events, and clubs
- Referred to outside agencies

#### **TARDIES OR DISMISSALS:**

Level 1 – Students with five (5) unexcused tardies and/or dismissals from either class or the school day will:

→Receive a letter including the school Attendance Policy

Level 2 – Students with ten (10) unexcused tardies and/or dismissals from either class or the school day will:

→Receive a letter including the school Attendance Policy

→Receive contact from school personnel to problem solve school attendance pattern

Level 3 - Students with more than ten (10) unexcused tardies and/or dismissals from either class or the school day will:

→Meet with the principal, a parent/guardian, and other school personnel as needed

→Develop an Intervention Plan; document the meeting and/or may be:

- Excluded from participating in after school activities, special events, and clubs
- Referred to outside agencies

#### **COLLABORATION EFFORTS**

##### **School Personnel Responsibilities:**

- Monitor attendance through Student Information System (e.g., Aspen)
- Communicate with students and families
- Keep teachers and administration informed of any irregularities or concerns

##### **Teacher Responsibilities:**

- Provide make-up work upon parental or student request
- Notify principal and/or designee of attendance patterns

##### **Student Responsibilities:**

- To attend school every day and be on time
  - Make up missed work \*
  - Seek assistance if needed
- Supports available for attendance issues (or other school concerns)
- Teacher
  - Teacher assistant
  - Nurse Teacher
  - Administrator
  - Social worker/Psychologist
  - Other (e.g, secretary, custodian, or volunteer)

\*On the day that you were absent from school

##### **Parent/Guardian Responsibilities:**

- Ensure your child's school attendance all day, every day
- Communicate with school personnel if your child will be absent (for any reason - excused or unexcused) – state the reason for the absence
- Notify school office personnel if your child will have an extended absence (excused or unexcused)
- Contact your child's teacher to request make-up work
- Contact your child's school for support if necessary

## **APPEALS**

All appeals must be received in writing within ten (10) school days to the building principal. Appeals shall follow the normal administrative route from Principal to the Superintendent of Schools to the School Committee.

First Reading: May 24, 2011

Second Reading: 6/21/2011

Adopted: 6/21/2011

Revised: 6/24/2014, 1<sup>st</sup> reading

Adopted: 7/8/2014, 2<sup>nd</sup> reading

Revised: 4/28/2015, 1<sup>st</sup> reading

Adopted: 5/26/2015, 2<sup>nd</sup> reading

## TITLE 16

### CHAPTER 16-19

#### Compulsory Attendance [See Title 16 Chapter 97 – The Rhode Island Board of Education Act]

#### SECTION 16-19-1

**§ 16-19-1 Attendance required.** – (a) Every child who has completed or will have completed six (6) years of life on or before September 1 of any school year and has not completed eighteen (18) years of life shall regularly attend some public day school during all the days and hours that the public schools are in session in the city or town in which the child resides. Every person having under his or her control a child as described in this section shall cause the child to attend school as required by this section, and for every neglect of this duty the person having control of the child shall be fined not exceeding fifty dollars (\$50.00) for each day or part of a day that the child fails to attend school, and if the total of these days is more than thirty (30) school days during any school year, then the person shall, upon conviction, be imprisoned not exceeding six (6) months or shall be fined not more than five hundred dollars (\$500), or both; provided, that if the person so charged shall prove that the child has attended for the required period of time a private day school approved by the commissioner of elementary and secondary education pursuant to § 16-60-6(10), or a course of at-home instruction approved by the school committee of the town where the child resides, or has been accepted into an accredited postsecondary education program, or has obtained a waiver under subsection (b) of this section, or that the physical or mental condition of the child was such as to render his or her attendance at school inexpedient or impracticable, or that the child was excluded from school by virtue of some other general law or regulation, then attendance shall not be obligatory nor shall the penalty be incurred.

(b) A waiver to the compulsory attendance requirement may be granted by the superintendent only upon proof that the pupil is sixteen (16) years of age or older and has an alternative learning plan for obtaining either a high school diploma or its equivalent.

(1) Alternative learning plans shall include age-appropriate academic rigor and the flexibility to incorporate the pupil's interests and manner of learning. These plans may include, but are not limited to, such components or combination of components of extended learning opportunities as independent study, private instruction, performing groups, internships, community service, apprenticeships, and online courses that are currently funded and available to the school department and/or the community.

(2) Alternative learning plans shall be developed, and amended if necessary, in consultation with the pupil, a school guidance counselor, the school principal and at least one parent or guardian of the pupil, and submitted to the superintendent for approval.

(3) If the superintendent does not approve the alternative learning plan, the parent or guardian of the pupil may appeal such decision to the school committee. A parent or guardian may appeal the decision of the school committee to the commissioner of education pursuant to chapter 39 of title 16.

(c) Nothing in this section shall be deemed to limit or otherwise interfere with the rights of teachers and other school employees to collectively bargain pursuant to chapters 9.3 and 9.4 of title 28 or to allow any school committee to abrogate any agreement reached by collective bargaining.

(d) No school shall use a student's truancy or absenteeism as the sole basis for using an out-of-school suspension as a disciplinary action.

#### History of Section.

(G.L. 1896, ch. 64, § 1; P.L. 1902, ch. 1009, § 1; G.L. 1909, ch. 72, § 1; P.L. 1917, ch. 1492, § 1; P.L. 1922, ch. 2234, § 14; G.L. 1923, ch. 76, § 1; P.L. 1923, ch. 482, § 1; P.L. 1925, ch. 678, § 3; P.L. 1926, ch. 812, § 1; P.L. 1936, ch. 2360, § 1; P.L. 1937, ch. 2505, § 1; G.L. 1938, ch. 181, § 1; G.L. 1956, § 16-19-1; P.L. 1984, ch. 345, § 1; P.L. 1988, ch. 642, § 4; P.L. 1989, ch. 251, § 1; P.L. 1995, ch. 60, § 1; P.L. 2002, ch. 233, § 1; P.L. 2002, ch. 255, § 1; P.L. 2003, ch. 394, § 1; P.L. 2007, ch. 226, § 2; P.L. 2011, ch. 338, § 1; P.L. 2011, ch. 376, § 1; P.L. 2012, ch. 111, § 1; P.L. 2012, ch. 125, § 1.)