



# WHAT STUDENTS AND PARENTS SHOULD KNOW ABOUT HIGH SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

For years, studies have shown there is a direct correlation between student attendance and academic performance. The old phrase, "you can't learn if you're not in school," applies now more than ever before. As student expectations and course outcomes become more demanding, there is more pressure to be in school on a regular basis.

The Manchester School District takes attendance very seriously and will enforce and comply with the NH law relative to attendance RSA 193.1 Duty of Parent: Compulsory Attendance by Pupil and the NH law relative to truancy: NH RSA 189 (189:34 Appointment, NH RSA 189:35 Truancy Defined and NH RSA 189:36 Duties). Students are required to be in school every day that school is in session unless their attendance is exempt per NH law or their absence meets criteria to be considered an excused absence. Unexcused absences are not acceptable. The District will address habitual unexcused absences consistent with the NH laws which include the filing of educational neglect petitions with the Court.

## **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT THE DISTRICT'S ATTENDANCE POLICY**

### **1. What are the changes in the new Attendance Policy?**

When a high school or middle school student has been absent from a particular class five (5) days or more in a marking period, that student shall receive an "NG" "No Grade" for that marking period. The "NG" shall be not less than 64.99 for a student whose grade would have been a "D" or better without excessive absenteeism. Failures due to absenteeism shall be designated on student records. The use of "NG" shall result in the automatic printing of the comment "due to excessive absences." A STUDENT WHO RECEIVES AN "NG" FOR A MARKING PERIOD GRADE DOES NOT AUTOMATICALLY FAIL FOR THE SEMESTER.

### **2. What types of illnesses are excused under the attendance policy?**

Students must be in school unless the absence has been permitted or excused for one of the reasons listed below which may require documentation. Excessive excused absences shall be addressed on a case-by-case basis to determine if there is a pattern of non-attendance. Examples of excused absences include but are not limited to:

1. School-sponsored activities with administrative approval (*No documentation needed*)
2. Classes missed due to Individualized Education Plan or Section 504 Plan (*No documentation needed*)
3. Extreme weather conditions as determined by the Administration (*No documentation needed*)
4. Illness of student or illness of an immediate family member (*Documentation needed*)
5. Death in the family (*Documentation needed*)
6. Religious holidays (*Documentation needed*)
7. Required court appearance or subpoena (*Documentation needed*)
8. Scheduled medical/dental appointments if such cannot be scheduled outside of normal school hours (*Documentation needed*)
9. College visitations as approved by Administration (*Documentation needed*)
10. Chronic illness registered with the school nurse and verified by a physician's note (*Documentation needed*)
11. External suspensions (*No documentation needed*)
12. The Principal or his/her designee shall determine if an absence is excused for any other reason not listed above (*Documentation needed*)

### **3. Are students assigned a detention for arriving late to school?**

During the school year, students will be issued a detention for arriving late to school after the first occurrence unless they are accompanied by a parent or they submit a physician's note for a doctor's appointment. Students will be assigned three detentions on assembly days. Tardies count as 1/3rd of an absence towards the attendance limit.

### **4. If a student exceeds the attendance limit, does he/she fail every class for the marking period?**

No, grades of "NG" (No Grade) are issued only in those classes that exceed the attendance limit. For example, it is very possible for a student to earn a "NG" for a Period A class and earn credit for all the others if he/she is often tardy to school.

### **5. How does a student file an attendance appeal?**

Students must file an Attendance Appeal Form with the Principal at the end of each quarter if they wish to avoid receiving an "NG" as a quarter grade. Everyone must file; nothing is automatic. Students who have more than five (5) unexcused absences must also agree to an Attendance Plan written by the Principal and agreed to by the student and the parent/guardian. Documentation for all absences must be submitted to the main office prior to the completion and submission of all appeal forms.