

Longview School Comprehensive Attendance Policy

Statement of Overall Objectives

School attendance is both a right and a responsibility. Longview School 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 Longview School recognizes that consistent school attendance, academic success and school completion have a positive correlation, Longview School developed a Comprehensive Student Attendance Policy to meet the following objectives:

- To increase school completion for all students;
- To raise student achievement and close gaps in student performance;
- To identify attendance patterns in order to design attendance improvement efforts;
- To know the whereabouts of every student for safety and other reasons;
- To verify that individual students are complying with education laws relating to compulsory attendance;

Description of Strategies to Meet Objectives

Longview School will:

1. Create and maintain a positive school 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.
2. Maintain accurate recordkeeping via a Register of Attendance to record attendance, absence, tardiness or early departure of each student.
3. Track individual student attendance and individual and group trends in student attendance problems.
4. Develop early intervention strategies to improve school attendance for all students.

Determination of Excused and Unexcused Absences, Tardiness, Truancy and Early Departures

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

- **Excused:** An absence, tardiness or early departure may be excused if due to personal illness, illness or death in the family, impassable roads due to inclement weather, religious observance, quarantine, required court appearances, attendance at health clinics, approved college visits, approved cooperative work programs, military obligations, obtaining learner's permit, road test or other such reasons as may be approved by the Director.

- **Unexcused:** An absence, tardiness or early departure is considered unexcused if the reason for the lack of attendance does not fall into the above categories (e.g., family vacation, hunting, babysitting, haircut, tanning, shopping, oversleeping).

Student Attendance Recordkeeping/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 school's code for the reason.

Students will sign in when they arrive at school and sign out when they leave on an attendance sheet. This sheet will be reviewed by the school Attendance Clerk each week. Attendance will also be taken by all teachers with first period classes. All data will be entered into the school's Register of Attendance.

Student Attendance/Course Credit and Grades

Longview School believes that classroom attendance and participation is related to and affects a student's performance and grasp of the subject matter and, as such, is properly reflected in a student's daily, marking period, and final grade. Consistent with the importance of classroom attendance, unexcused absence, and excessive legal absences will affect a student's grade for the day, marking period, and/or course. Each

teacher will incorporate this policy individually into her/his grading system in accordance with explicit guidelines he/she has set up.

Upon returning to school following an 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 missed work, assignments and/or tests in accordance with the time schedule specified by the teacher. When work is not made up, excused absences will not be differentiated from unexcused absences.

For high school students, more than 30 days of absence will result in loss of credit for the course without the following:

- Therapeutic support with information sharing with the school;
- A plan worked out between the support, school, and family which is being followed;
- Sufficient work made up.

Parental Notification

Persons in the parental relationship to a student will be notified by the school Director should a student have excessive absences and a conference will be scheduled during which attendance issues will be discussed.

Attendance Incentives

In order to encourage student attendance, Longview School teachers will provide classroom acknowledgment of the importance of good attendance. In addition, annual awards will be given for those students with exceptional attendance records.

Disciplinary Consequences

Unexcused absences, excessive excused absences, tardiness, and early departures will result in disciplinary sanctions as issued by the school's Judicial Committee and as decided in Longview School staff meetings. Parents/persons in parental relation will be given the opportunity to attend family conferences (generally held three times per year) which, when significant, will include discussion of their child's absences, tardiness or early departures and the importance of class attendance and appropriate interventions.

Intervention Strategy Process

- In order to effectively intervene when an identified pattern of unexcused absences, tardiness, or early departures occur, designated school personnel will pursue the following:
- Identify specific element(s) of the pattern (e.g., grade level, building, time frame, type of unexcused absences, tardiness or early departures);
- Contact the school staff most closely associated with the element. In specific cases where the pattern involves an individual student, the student and parent/person in parental relation will be contacted ;
- Discuss strategies to directly intervene with specific element;
- Implement changes, as approved by the school Director;
- Utilize appropriate school and/or community resources to address and help remediate student unexcused absences, tardiness or early departures;
- Monitor and report short and long term effects of intervention.

Appeal Process

A parent/person in parental relation may request a review of their child's attendance record. Any question about the record, consequences, or interventions can be appealed to the school Director whose decisions regarding attendance matters are final.

Building Review of Attendance Records

The Director will work in conjunction with the school Attendance Clerk and other staff in reviewing attendance records regularly. 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.