

**DOWNE TOWNSHIP BOARD OF EDUCATION  
DISTRICT POLICY MANUAL**

**ATTENDANCE, ABSENCES, AND EXCUSES**

**PUPILS  
POLICY 5113**

**Date Adopted: 3/16/92**

**Date Revised: 7/15/2008, 11/16/2010, 5/10/2011, 11/18/2014, 10/17/17,  
10/16/18, 8/18/20**

The Board of Education requires the pupils enrolled in the schools of this district attend school regularly in accordance with the laws of the State of New Jersey. The educational program offered by this district is predicated on the presence of the pupil and requires continuity of instruction and classroom participation. The regular contact of pupils with one another in the classroom and their participation in a well-planned instructional activity under the tutelage of a competent teacher are vital to this purpose.

Attendance at school may be excused for certain absences as defined by the Board. All absences for reasons other than excused, shall be unexcused.

Pupils absent from school for any reason are responsible for the completion of assignments missed because of their absence. No pupil excused for a religious holiday shall be deprived of an award or eligibility to compete for an award or the opportunity to make up a test given on the religious holiday.

Prolonged or repeated absences, excused or unexcused, from school or from class, deprive the pupil of the classroom experience deemed essential to learning and may result in retention at grade level or loss of credit toward graduation requirements in accordance with policies of this Board.

Pupils shall be subject to the school district response for unexcused absences during the school year as outlined in NJAC 6A:16-7.8(a)4 and the regulations included within this policy. In addition, unexcused absences from school or from classes within the school day shall subject a pupil to the disciplinary rules of the Board of Education, which may include the denial of a pupil's participation in co-curricular activities and/or athletic competition. Repeated trancies that interfere with efforts of the Board and its staff in the maintenance of good order and the continuity of classroom instruction may result in the suspension or expulsion of any pupil.

Definitions

For the purposes of this policy, the following definitions shall apply:

“Attendance” shall be defined as the presence of a pupil in school and in the classroom to which he/she is assigned at the times scheduled for instruction or other school activities.

- A pupil will be considered to have attended school if he/she has been present for at least 60% of the school day or 4 hours.

“Excused Absence” shall be defined as the absence of a pupil from school for a full day or a portion of a school day for one or more of the following reasons:

- A. The pupil's illness (physician's note required);
- B. Death in the family (parent note required);

## POLICY 5113

- C. Court Appearance (copy of court order required);
- D. Religious Holiday in accordance with the provisions of NJSA 18A:36-14 through -16 (parent note required);
- E. Quarantine of the home (physician's note required);
- F. Suspension from school;
- G. Student excluded from school by the school nurse for medical reasons (physician's note is required when the student is absent for more than two (2) days after being excluded by the school nurse).

“Truancy” shall be defined as a pupil’s absence from all or a part of the school day without the knowledge of the pupil’s parent(s) or legal guardian(s). A pupil will also be considered truant if he/she:

- A. Leaves school without the knowledge or approval of the Chief School Administrator;
- B. Leaves class due to illness and does not report to the school nurse as directed; or,
- C. Is present in school but is absent from class without approval. Such truancy from a class may be referred to as cutting a class.

“Unexcused Absence” shall be defined as all absences for reasons other than those listed above.

### Notice to School of a Pupil’s Absence

- A. The parent(s)/guardian(s) is requested to call the school office in the morning of the pupil’s absence.
- B. The parent(s)/guardian(s) who anticipates a future absence or anticipates that an absence will be prolonged, should notify the Chief School Administrator at least a week in advance. The Chief School Administrator will assist in the arrangements for make-up work.

### Readmission to School After an Absence

- A. A pupil returning from an absence of any length must present to the school nurse a written statement, dated and signed by the parent(s)/guardian(s) explaining the reasons for the absence.
- B. A student who has been absent by reason of having or being suspected of having a communicable disease must present written to evidence to the school nurse of being free of communicable disease.

### Instruction

- A. Teachers are expected to cooperate in the preparation of home assignments for pupils who anticipate an excused absence of five (5) days duration. The parent(s)/guardian(s) must request such assignments.
- B. A pupil who anticipates an excused absence due to a temporary or chronic health condition may be eligible for home instruction. The parent(s)/guardian(s) must request home instruction.
- C. Pupils absent for any reason are expected to make up the work missed. The pupil is responsible for requesting missed assignments and any assistance necessary.
- D. In general, pupils will be allowed a reasonable amount of time to make up missed work, which shall be two days for every day absent.
- E. A pupil who missed a test because of an excused absence shall be offered an opportunity to take the test or an alternate test.

## **POLICY 5113**

### Denial of Course Credit

- A. The teacher will determine the credit to be awarded a pupil for make-up work, subject to the rules set forth in this section. Where class participation is a factor in the learning process, the teacher may consider a pupil's absences in determining a final grade, except that absences for the observance of a pupil's religious holiday or for a suspension from school cannot adversely affect the pupil's grade. The teacher may record an incomplete grade, for a pupil who has not had full opportunity to make up missed work.
- B. An elementary pupil will be retained at grade level in accordance with the Board's policy on retention.

### School District Response to Unexcused Absences During the School Year

For up to four (4) cumulative unexcused absences, the Chief School Administrator/designee shall:

- A. Notify the parent(s)/guardian(s) of each unexcused absence prior to the start of the following school day;
- B. Conduct an investigation, if necessary, of the cause of each unexcused absence, including contact with the pupil's parent(s)/guardian(s);
- C. Proceed in accordance with the provisions of NJSA 9:6-1 et seq. and NJAC 6A:16-11, if a potentially missing or abused child situation is detected; and,
- D. Cooperate with law enforcement and other authorities and agencies, as appropriate.

For between five (5) and nine (9) cumulative unexcused absences, the Chief School Administrator/designee shall:

- A. Notify the parent(s)/guardian(s) of each absence prior to the start of the following school day;
- B. Conduct an investigation, if necessary, of the cause of each unexcused absence, including contact with the pupil's parent(s)/guardian(s);
- C. Develop an action plan, in consultation with the pupil's parent(s)/guardian(s) to address pattern of unexcused absences, if any, and to have the child return to school and maintain regular attendance;
- D. Revisit the action plan, as needed, to identify patterns of unexcused absences and establish outcomes, based on the pupil's needs and specify the interventions for achieving the outcomes, supporting the pupil's return to school and regular attendance that may include any or all of the following:
  - Refer or consult with the Intervention and Referral Services Team in accordance with the provisions of NJAC 6A:16-8;
  - Conduct tests, assessments or evaluations of the student's academic, behavioral and health needs;
  - Consider an alternate educational placement;
  - Make a referral to a community-based social and health provider agency or other community resource;
  - Make a referral to the court program designated by the New Jersey Administrative Office of the Courts;
  - Proceed in accordance to NJSA 9:6-1 and NJAC 6A:16-11 if the pupil is considered to be a potentially missing or abused child;
  - Cooperate with law enforcement and other authorities/agencies as appropriate.

## **POLICY 5113**

For ten (10) or more unexcused absences, the following procedures shall be initiated:

- A. Refer to the court program as required by the New Jersey Administrative Office of the Court in accordance with NJAC 6A:16-7.8;
- B. Make a reasonable to notify parent(s)/guardian(s) of the mandatory referral;
- C. Consult with parent(s)/guardian(s) and involved agencies to support the return of the student to school and regular attendance;
- D. Cooperate with law enforcement agencies and other authorities and agencies as appropriate;
- E. Proceed in accordance with NJSA 18A:38-28 through -31, Article 3B, "Compelling Attendance at School."

For students with disabilities, an attendance plan and punitive/remedial procedures shall be applied in accordance with the student's IEP.

### **Discipline**

- A. At the discretion of the Chief School Administrator, students may be denied participation in co-curricular activities or athletic competition for unacceptable attendance;
- B. Students deemed to be truant shall be subject to appropriate discipline;

### **Late Arrival & Early Dismissal**

Late arrivals and early dismissals are as disruptive to the educational process as absenteeism. The parent/guardian shall inform the school in advance whenever possible. A student to be dismissed early must be met in the school office by the parent/guardian or authorized agent.

### **Late Arrival**

Parents/guardians must provide a note, stating the reason for the late arrival. The written explanations are a protection for the child as well as for attendance documentation.

When it is necessary for a child to arrive ten (10) or more minutes after the beginning of the school day for reasons other than a family emergency or medical/dental appointment, time missed by the student shall be counted as unexcused time and will be made a part of the student's permanent attendance record. Parents/guardians may be required to provide documentation of the reason(s) the arrival of their child to school after the beginning of the school day.

### **Early Dismissal**

Teachers have been directed to dismiss students only upon direction from the office. It is requested that parents not ask to take their children out of school early except when an emergency makes early dismissal unavoidable. Such requests must be provided in writing, stating the reason for making the request. The written explanations are a protection for the child as well as for attendance documentation.

When it is necessary for a parent/guardian to pick up a child ten (10) or more minutes prior to the end of the school day for reasons other than a family emergency or medical/dental appointment, time missed by the student shall be counted as unexcused time and will be made a part of the student's permanent attendance record.

## **POLICY 5113**

Parents/guardians may be required to provide documentation of the reason(s) for removing their child from school prior to the end of the school day. Three unexcused pick-ups will equal one unexcused absence.

Three late arrivals or three early dismissals will equal to one unexcused absence.

Excessive absences including those resulting from late arrivals or parents/guardians picking up their child before the end of the school day may result in the district filing a complaint with New Jersey Division of Child Protection & Permanency (DCP&P) and/or the court program designated and required by the New Jersey Administrative Office of the Courts in accordance with and required by the provisions of NJSA 18A:38-28 through 31, Article 3B, Compelling Attendance at School and other applicable state and federal statutes.

### **Recording Attendance**

- A. Teachers must accurately record the pupils present, tardy, and absent each day in each session or each class. Attendance records must also record pupil's attendance at out-of-school curricular events such as field trips.
- B. Teachers must classify and record each absence as excused, unexcused or truancy;
- C. The student's report card will record the number of times the student was absent and tardy in each marking period.
- D. A student's absence for the observance of a religious holiday will not be recorded as such on any transcript.

### **Appeal**

A student who has been denied course credit for excessive absences may appeal that action in accordance with the following procedures:

- A. The pupil or his/her parent(s)/guardian(s) shall file a written appeal to the Chief School Administrator within five school days of receiving notice of the action. The appeal should state the reasons for admitted absences, documentation that would reduce the number of absences, and reasons why the pupil should receive course credit.
- B. The Chief School Administrator will respond in writing no later than ten (10) school days after receiving the appeal.
- C. The student or his/her parent(s)/guardian(s) may appeal an adverse decision of the Chief School Administrator to the Board of Education, and the Commissioner of Education, in that order.

### **Attendance Improvement Plan**

- A. The Chief School Administrator will collect attendance data from the school and calculate the average daily attendance rate for the district. The attendance rate shall be calculated by dividing the total number of pupil days present for all pupils by the total possible number of pupil days present for all pupils and multiplying the result by one hundred.
- B. When the average daily attendance rate for the district or for a school does not meet the New Jersey Department of Education requirements, performance objectives to improve pupil attendance pursuant to the provisions of NJAC 6A:32-12.2 (s) shall be developed.

The Chief School Administrator shall submit an annual report to the New Jersey Department of Education on student attendance.

## POLICY 5113

The Chief School Administrator reserves the right to modify requirements set forth in this policy for students who accrue absences related to COVID-19 due to contraction of or exposure to COVID-19 and/or direct exposure to individuals who may have contracted COVID-19. A doctor's note must be provided to serve as documentation of these circumstances. They will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis.

Legal References:	<u>N.J.S.A.</u> 18A:11-1	General mandatory powers and duties
	<u>N.J.S.A.</u> 18A:35-4.9	Pupil promotion and remediation; policies and procedures
	<u>N.J.S.A.</u> 18A:36-14, -15, -16	Religious holidays; absence of pupils on; effect
	<u>N.J.S.A.</u> 18A:36-19a	Newly enrolled students; records and identification
	<u>N.J.S.A.</u> 18A:36-24 through -26	Missing children; legislative findings and declarations
	<u>N.J.S.A.</u> 18A:38-25	Attendance required of children between six and 16; exceptions
	<u>N.J.S.A.</u> 18A:38-26	Days when attendance required; exceptions
	<u>N.J.S.A.</u> 18A:38-27	Truancy and juvenile delinquency defined
	<u>N.J.S.A.</u> 18A:38-31	Violations of article by parents or guardians; penalties
	<u>N.J.S.A.</u> 18A:38-32	District and county vocational school attendance officers
	<u>N.J.S.A.</u> 18A:40-7	Exclusion of pupils who are ill
	<u>N.J.S.A.</u> 18A:40-8	Exclusion of pupils whose presence is detrimental to health and cleanliness
	<u>N.J.S.A.</u> 18A:40-9	Failure of parent to remove cause for exclusion; penalty
	<u>N.J.S.A.</u> 18A:40-10	Exclusion of teachers and pupils exposed to disease
	<u>N.J.S.A.</u> 18A:40-11	Exclusion of pupils having communicable tuberculosis
	<u>N.J.S.A.</u> 18A:40-12	Closing schools during epidemic
	<u>N.J.S.A.</u> 18A:54-20	Powers of board (county vocational schools)
	<u>N.J.S.A.</u> 52:17B-9.8a through -9.8c	Marking of missing child's school record
	<u>N.J.A.C.</u> 6A:8-5.1	Graduation requirements
	<u>N.J.A.C.</u> 6A:16-1 et seq.	Programs to support student development
	<u>See particularly:</u>	
	<u>N.J.A.C.</u> 6A:16-7.6	Attendance
	<u>N.J.A.C.</u> 6A:30-1.1 et seq.	Evaluation of the Performance of School Districts
	<u>N.J.A.C.</u> 6A:32-8.1 et seq.	Student Attendance and Accounting
	<u>N.J.A.C.</u> 6A:32-8.3	Student attendance
	<u>N.J.A.C.</u> 8:61-2.1	Attendance at school by students or adults with HIV infection

Wetherell v. Board of Education of Township of Burlington, 1978 S.L.D. 794

Wheatley v. Board of Education of City of Burlington, 1974 S.L.D. 851

C.R., on behalf of J.R., v. Board of Education of the Scotch Plains-Fanwood Regional School District, 1988 S.L.D. (June 22)

## **POLICY 5113**

Student Attendance Policies and Procedures Compliance Checklist, New Jersey  
Department of Education

2014-2015 List of Religious Holidays Permitting Pupil Absence From School

Jerkins v. Anderson. 191, N.J. (2007)

<b><u>Cross References:</u></b>	5020	Role of parents/guardians
	5111	Admission
	5114	Suspension and expulsion
	5124	Reporting to parents/guardians
	5125	Pupil records
	5141.2	Illness
	5141.4	Child abuse and neglect
	5142	Pupil safety
	6146	Graduation requirements
	6146.2	Promotion/retention
	6147	Standards of proficiency
	6147.1	Evaluation of individual student performance
	6154	Homework/makeup work
	6171.4	Special education
	6173	Home instruction

# Downe Township School District

## Newport, New Jersey

### ABSENT / TARDY GUIDELINES

Please note that our attendance requirements have been revised effective the 2017-2018 school year. Students with the following number of days absent or tardy will be subject to the actions listed below:

<b>1-4 Unexcused Absence / Tardy</b>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Daily absence confirmation phone calls</li><li>2. Parent acknowledgement of absence / tardy</li><li>3. Parent receives a letter of concern and copy of the complete attendance policy</li><li>4. In-district monitoring of absence / tardy pattern</li><li>5. Referral to law enforcement if neglect/abuse is suspected</li></ol>
<b>5-9 Unexcused Absence / Tardy</b>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. In-district investigation of absence / tardy pattern</li><li>2. Parent receives a copy of the Absent/Tardy Guidelines and a letter of concern stating that due to the number of absences, their child could be retained in the current grade. Possible home visit by administration</li><li>3. Academic evaluation</li><li>4. Parent-involved action plan to be created with referral to community resources (if needed)</li><li>5. Referral to law enforcement if neglect/abuse is suspected</li></ol>
<b>More than 10 Unexcused Absence / Tardy</b>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Mandatory referral to NJ Administrative Court for Disorderly Persons Offense</li><li>2. Parents notified of referral to NJ Administrative Court via a letter from the School Superintendent</li><li>3. Law enforcement notified of referral to the NJ Administrative Court</li><li>4. Referral to law enforcement if neglect/abuse is suspected</li></ol>
<b>16 or More Absences</b>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Mandatory meeting with the Attendance Review Committee</li><li>2. Mandatory referral to NJ Administrative Court for Disorderly Persons Offense</li><li>3. Parents notified of referral to NJ Administrative Court via a letter from the School Superintendent</li><li>4. Law enforcement notified of referral to the NJ Administrative Court</li><li>5. Referral to law enforcement if neglect/abuse is suspected</li></ol>