

# Saint Patrick's School Attendance Policy

## ***I. Purpose***

The Board of Trustees, the administration, faculty and staff of Saint Patrick's School with Section 104.1 of the Regulations of the Commissioner of Education, recognize that regular classroom attendance is an essential part of a successful educational program and that there is a critical relationship between academically engaged time and student performance. Insistence on good attendance serves as a clear and constant reminder of the importance of the instructional business at hand.

## ***II. Policy***

The objectives of this policy are to ensure the maintenance of an adequate record verifying the attendance of all children at instruction in accordance with Education Law sections 3205 and 3210 and establish a mechanism by which patterns of pupil attendance can be examined to develop effective strategies to improve school attendance.

## ***III. Expectations***

### **A. Students**

1. Students are expected to attend their scheduled classes daily and be on time. The insistence on good attendance serves as a clear and constant reminder of the importance of attendance in instruction, enabling the student to:

- Learn subject matter and earn good grades
- Develop responsible work and study habits, and
- Prepare for the world of work

2. Students must attend all classes and are expected to participate fully.

3. Students are expected to make timely arrangements with their teachers to make up assignments and class work they have missed during their absence.

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## **B. Parents**

1. Under New York State Education Law Section 3205, it is the responsibility of parents/guardians to ensure that their children attend school regularly and on time.
2. When a student is absent from school, parents/guardians must contact the school to report the absence and/or provide appropriate excuses when required (doctor's verification after 3 days absent).
3. Parents/Guardians must provide a written explanation of the absence for their child upon the student's return to school.
4. Parents are required to provide their current home address, telephone number, emergency number(s) and a list of adults to contact in their absence.

## **C. Teacher/Staff Responsibilities**

1. Teachers in conjunction with the school secretary are responsible for maintaining accurate attendance reports and for referring chronic absentees for review by the Building Principal or Designee.
2. Teachers and school personnel will continually stress to students the importance of promptness and regular attendance in all of their classes. Teachers can make a difference in the attendance habits of their students. (Phone calls to parents or guardians are encouraged).
3. School secretary shall maintain a register of attendance for each pupil that includes the student's name, date of birth, home address, names of parents/guardians, telephone numbers to contact parents/guardians, date of enrollment, record of pupil's attendance on days of instruction, and the date of withdrawal or date dropped from enrollment.

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### **D. Administrative Responsibilities**

1. The Principal or Designee is responsible for implementing the attendance policy.
2. The Principal or Designee shall be responsible for working with teachers to assess a situation of absenteeism and devise a plan of improvement.

### ***IV. Explanation of Absences***

#### 1. Excused

**Section 175.6 of the Commissioner's regulations define the following as "excused absences:" personal illness, serious illness or death in the family, impassable roads or weather, religious observance, quarantine, court appearances, medical appointments, school sponsored events, "take your child to work day" or any other reason approved by the Commissioner.**

All instances of excused absence require a written parent/guardian excuse. The excuse must identify the date/time of absence, reason for absence, tardiness or early departure and parent/guardian signature.

#### 2. Unexcused

**Most absences not mentioned above are interpreted under the law as "unexcused absences" including but not limited to vacation, shopping, babysitting, oversleeping, hunting, attending sporting events, needed at home, missing the bus, or any absence for which there is no written explanation submitted within 5 school days. Any reason not listed as excused shall be deemed unexcused unless the Building Principal determines otherwise.**

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### ***V. Activities to Support Good Attendance***

A. The implementation of an effective and efficient student attendance system that is accurately recorded by the teacher, consistently maintained, and fairly administered.

#### School Codes

- P= Present
- NA= No attendance day
- HE= Half Day absence
- AE= Absent, excused
- AU= Absent, unexcused
- TE= Tardy, excused
- TU= Tardy, unexcused

B. The provision of prompt service to pupils in need of help as soon as a need is suspected.

C. The establishment of cooperative relationships between parents and other members of the staff in the interest of the child.

D. The establishment of cooperative relationships with other community agencies which serve families of pupils with attendance problems.

E. The maintenance of an effective policy that encourages student attendance and is in compliance with the commissioner's regulations and rulings.

### ***VI. Intervention***

A. The objective of intervention strategies is to identify the cause(s) of absenteeism, to reduce absenteeism and to circumvent the need for action in the courts (PINS petitions).

B. Teachers and other appropriate staff members (e.g., teacher, nurse, secretary, principal) shall be responsible for preliminary contact with parents and students to assess a situation of absenteeism and devise a plan of improvement.

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C. The Building Principal or designee, based upon the referrals of teachers and the established attendance records, shall identify intervention strategies. Such strategies may include, but are not limited to:

- communication with the parent/guardian
- counseling and other support services
- remediation beyond the school day
- progressive disciplinary action
- related community agencies services
- letter mailed home when excessive tardiness or early dismissals become an academic concern
- letter mailed home after ten total absences, excused and unexcused
- letter mailed home after sixteen total absences, excused and unexcused
- referral to the School Retention Committee after the 26th absence.

### ***VII. Incentives***

The Commissioner has recommended that all schools implement an incentive program to improve attendance. Students with responsible attendance may be eligible for perfect attendance awards at the end of the school year.

### ***VIII. Disciplinary Sanctions***

A. When other forms of intervention fail, non-academic sanctions, including the loss of privileges (participation in extracurricular activities or attendance at school sponsored events) may be imposed.

B. Excessive or unreasonable absences and tardiness may properly be the basis for disciplinary action. The use of detentions and in school suspensions related to unexcused absence from school is authorized. A student may be suspended for poor attendance that is willful insubordination. Such removal shall be pursuant to Section 3214 of the Education Law. IX.

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### ***IX. Implementation and Review***

A. The Board shall review building level pupil attendance records and if such records show a decline in pupil attendance the Board shall make any revisions deemed necessary to improve pupil attendance.

B. The Principal shall release this policy to parents/persons in parental relation at the beginning of each school year and take other steps to promote the understanding of this policy.

C. The Principal shall provide each teacher with a copy of this policy after approval/amendment and provide new teachers with a copy upon employment.

D. Copies of this policy shall be made available upon request to any member of the community on the school website.