

**ATTENDANCE, ABSENTEEISM, AND TRUANCY**

Absences. The Pittsfield School Board requires that school-aged children enrolled in the District attend school in accordance with all applicable state laws and Board policies. The educational program offered by the District is predicated upon the presence of the student and requires continuity of instruction and classroom participation in order for students to achieve academic standards and consistent educational progress.

Attendance shall be required of all students enrolled in the District during the days and hours that school is in session, except that the Principal may excuse a student for temporary absences when receiving satisfactory evidence of conditions or reasons that may reasonably cause the student's absence.

The Board considers the following to be excused absences:

1. Documented illness;
2. Recovery from an accident;
3. Required court attendance;
4. Medical and dental appointments;
5. Death in the immediate family;
6. Observation or celebration of a bona fide religious holiday;
7. Such other good cause as may be acceptable to the Principal or permitted by law.

Any absence that has not been excused for any of these reasons will be considered an unexcused absence.

A documented illness is determined with the recommendation from a physician or medical practice. On-going medical conditions, such as asthma, should be documented in the nurse's office. Absences due on-going medical conditions are considered documented and do not need multiple verifications from a doctor or medical practice.

In the event of an illness, parents/guardians must call the school and inform the District of the student's illness and absence. For other absences, parents must provide written notice or a written excuse that states one of these reasons for non-attendance. The Principal may require parents to provide additional documentation in support of their written notice including but not limited to doctor's notes, court documents, obituaries, or other documents supporting the claimed reason for non-attendance. The decision of the Principal is final in determining "other good cause".

Family Vacations / Educational Opportunities. Generally, absences other than for illness during the school year are discouraged. The principal or his/her designee may, however, grant special approval of absence for family vacations, provided written approval is given in advance. Parents are asked to submit a family vacation / educational opportunity request form to the Principal at least two weeks prior to the planned trip for absence(s) to be considered excused. This advance communication will allow teachers enough time to work with parents and the student regarding homework completion.

Truancy. Truancy is defined as any unexcused absence from class or school. Any absence that has not been excused for any of the reasons listed above will be considered an unexcused absence.

Ten half-days of unexcused absence during a school year constitutes habitual truancy.

A half-day absence is defined as a student missing more than two hours of instructional time and less than three and one-half hours of instructional time. Any absence of more than three and one-half hours of instructional time shall be considered a full-day absence.

The Principal is hereby designated as the district employee responsible for overseeing truancy issues.

Chronic Absenteeism. Chronic absenteeism is defined as being absent from school for ten percent or greater of the academic year for any reason, including both excused and unexcused absences, suspensions, and time missed due to changing schools. Based on a 180-day school year, being absent for eighteen or more days in a school year is considered chronic absenteeism.

The principal is designated as the district employee responsible for overseeing chronic absenteeism issues.

Intervention Process to Address Truancy and Chronic Absenteeism. The Principal shall ensure that the administrative guidelines on attendance properly address the matter of truancy and chronic absenteeism by including a process that identifies students who are habitually truant or chronically absent, as defined above.

When the principal identifies a student who is habitually truant is in danger of becoming habitually truant, chronically absent, or in danger of becoming chronically absent, he/she shall commence an intervention with the student, the student's parents / guardians, and other staff members as may be deemed necessary. The intervention shall include the processes including, but not limited to:

1. Investigates the cause(s) of the student's truant behavior;
2. Considers, when appropriate, modification of his/her educational program to meet particular needs that may be causing the truancy ;
3. Involves the parents in the development of a plan designed to reduce the truancy ; and
4. Seeks alternative disciplinary measures, but still retains the right to impose discipline in accordance with the District's policies and administrative guidelines on student discipline; and
5. Determination as to whether school record keeping practices and parental notification of the student's absences have an effect on the child's attendance.

Parental Involvement in Truancy Intervention and Chronic Absenteeism. When a student reaches habitual truancy status, ~~or~~ is in danger of reaching habitual truancy status, has reached chronically absent status, or is in danger of reaching chronically absent status, the principal will send the student's parent/guardian a letter which includes:

1. Investigates the cause(s) of the student's truant behavior;
2. Considers, when appropriate, modification of his/her educational program to meet particular needs that may be causing the truancy ;
3. Involves the parents in the development of a plan designed to reduce the truancy ; and
4. Seeks alternative disciplinary measures, but still retains the right to impose discipline in accordance with the District's policies and administrative guidelines on student discipline; and
5. Determination as to whether school record keeping practices and parental notification of the student's absences have an effect on the child's attendance.

Developing and Coordinating Strategies for Truancy Reduction and Chronic Absenteeism. The Board

encourages the administration to seek truancy-prevention, truancy-reduction, chronic absenteeism-prevention, and chronic absenteeism-reduction strategies along with the recommendations listed below. However, these guidelines shall be advisory only. The Superintendent is authorized to develop and utilize other means, guidelines, and programs aimed at preventing and reducing truancy.

1. Coordinate truancy-prevention and chronic absenteeism-prevention strategies based on the early identification of truancy, such as prompt notification of absences to parents/guardians.
2. Assist school staff to develop site attendance plans by providing development strategies, resources, and referral procedures.

The principal shall also ensure that this policy is included in or referenced in the student handbook and is mailed to parents annually at the beginning of each school year.

***District Policy History:***

Reading: September 3, 2009  
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 Revised: August 15, 2024  
 Reviewed: September 4, 2025  
 Adopted: September 11, 2025

***Legal References Disclaimer:*** *These references are not intended to be considered part of this policy, nor should they be taken as a comprehensive statement of the legal basis for the Board to enact this policy, nor as a complete recitation of related legal authority. Instead, they are provided as additional resources for those interested in the subject matter of the policy.*

NH Statutes	Description
RSA 189:34,	<u>Appointment</u>
RSA 189:35-a	<u>Truancy Defined</u>
RSA 193:1	<u>Duty of Parent; Compulsory Attendance by Pupil</u>
RSA 193:16	<u>Bylaws as to Nonattendance</u>
RSA 193:7	<u>Penalty</u>
RSA 193:8	<u>Notice Requirements</u>
NH Dept of Ed Regulation	Description
N.H. Code Admin. Rules Ed 306.04(b)(1)	<u>Attendance and Absenteeism</u>