

## **Student Attendance, Absenteeism, and Truancy**

### **Purpose**

The Pittsfield School Board requires that all school-aged children enrolled in the District attend school in accordance with RSA 193:1–7, Board policy, and administrative procedures. Regular attendance is essential to academic success, continuity of instruction, and student engagement.

### **Attendance Requirement**

Attendance is required of all students enrolled in the District during the days and hours that school is in session unless excused in accordance with this policy.

### **Key Definitions**

All absences (excused and unexcused) count toward attendance monitoring and intervention thresholds, while legal truancy determinations are based solely on unexcused absences.

#### **Chronic Absenteeism**

Missing 10% or more of enrolled school days for any reason.

#### **Truancy (Legal Definition)**

Ten (10) half-days of unexcused absence constitutes habitual truancy under RSA 193:1–7.

#### **Half-Day Definition**

A half-day absence is defined as missing more than two (2) hours of instructional time.

#### **Excused Absences (Administrative Determination)**

The Principal or designee shall determine whether an absence is excused based on satisfactory evidence of a legitimate reason. The District retains sole authority to approve or deny all absences.

The following may be considered excused absences:

1. Documented illness or medical condition
2. Recovery from an accident
3. Required court attendance
4. Medical or dental appointments
5. Death in the immediate family
6. Observation of a bona fide religious holiday
7. Other reasons approved in advance by the Principal

#### **Conditions and Limitations**

- Parent notification alone does not constitute an excused absence.
- All absences are subject to verification and approval by the District.

- The District may require documentation for any absence at any time.
- Absences lacking sufficient documentation may be classified as unexcused.

**Medical Absences**

- Parent-reported illness may be accepted for up to three (3) consecutive days or five (5) cumulative days per semester.
- Absences exceeding these thresholds require verification from a licensed medical provider.
- Failure to provide requested medical documentation may result in absences being classified as unexcused.
- The District may require medical documentation at any time when a pattern of absences is identified, regardless of the number of days reported.
- Documentation of an ongoing medical condition does not exempt a student from attendance expectations. Excessive absences related to any condition remain subject to administrative review and intervention.

**Unexcused Absences and Truancy**

Absences not approved under this policy shall be considered unexcused.

Truancy is defined as absence from school or class without approval or justification as determined by the District.

Ten (10) half-days of unexcused absence during a school year shall constitute habitual truancy.

Truancy determinations and legal enforcement under RSA 193:1–7 are based on unexcused absences.

**Chronic Absenteeism**

Chronic absenteeism is defined as missing ten percent (10%) or more of a student’s enrolled school days for any reason, including excused and unexcused absences and suspensions.

Chronic absenteeism is an educational concern requiring intervention.

Truancy is a legal violation based on unexcused absences and may result in law enforcement involvement.

**Monitoring and Early Intervention (Non-Discretionary)**

All absences, whether excused or unexcused, shall be recorded and counted toward attendance thresholds.

The District shall implement a uniform, threshold-based attendance monitoring and notification system. These actions are mandatory and shall not be subject to staff discretion.

At established thresholds, including but not limited to:

- Five (5) absences – notification
- Ten (10) absences – administrative review

- Fifteen (15) absences – mandatory intervention

These actions are not discretionary.

the District shall:

- Notify the parent/guardian in writing
- Initiate administrative review
- Implement appropriate intervention strategies

These notifications are intended to address attendance concerns and ensure student access to education and are not, in themselves, determinations of truancy.

### **Pattern-Based Intervention**

A pattern of absences, regardless of designation, shall result in mandatory administrative review and may require intervention, documentation, and/or parent engagement to ensure regular attendance and access to education.

The District may:

- Re-evaluate previously excused absences
- Require additional documentation
- Require parent/guardian meetings
- Develop and implement attendance intervention plans

Excessive absences, regardless of designation, may be determined to be unjustified if sufficient documentation or compliance is not provided.

### **Administrative Authority**

The Principal is designated as the attendance officer and is responsible for:

- Determines excused/unexcused status
- Requires documentation
- Initiates intervention and enforcement

Health office staff may document reported reasons for absences but shall not determine whether an absence is excused for enforcement purposes.

The determination of the Principal or designee shall be final.

### **Intervention and Enforcement**

When a student:

- Meets habitual truancy thresholds,

- Is chronically absent, or
- Fails to respond to intervention efforts, the District shall take appropriate action, which

may include: □ Mandatory parent/guardian meetings

- Attendance intervention plans
- Referral to outside agencies

Failure to demonstrate improvement in attendance may result in:

- Referral to law enforcement
- Referral to DCYF for educational neglect
- Court action under RSA 193:1–7

### **Family Vacations / Educational Opportunities**

Absences for family travel or educational opportunities require prior written approval from the Principal. Approval is not guaranteed.

### **Communication**

This policy shall be published annually in the student handbook and made available to parents/guardians at the beginning of each school year.

### **District Policy History:**

*Reading: September 3, 2009, September 22, 2010*

*Adopted: September 17, 2009 September 9, 2010*

*Revised: January 15, 2015, March 17, 2022, September 11, 2025, May 7, 2026*

*Reviewed: December 20, 2018, August 15, 2024, September 4, 2025, April 2, 2026*

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**

RSA 189:34,

[Appointment](#)

RSA 189:35-a

[Truancy Defined](#)

RSA 193:1

[Duty of Parent; Compulsory Attendance by Pupil](#)

RSA 193:16

[Bylaws as to Nonattendance](#)

RSA 193:7

[Penalty](#)

RSA 193:8

Notice Requirements

**NH Dept of Ed Regulation**

N.H. Code Admin. Rules Ed 306.04(b)(1)

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