

# Margaretville Central School District

## Comprehensive Attendance Policy

Because class attendance is an integral part of academic success and achievement, it is the policy of the Margaretville Central School District to initiate and enforce a sound attendance policy for grades Pre-K-12. Said policy will enhance skill development, work ethic, understanding, and knowledge through exposure on a regular basis to a broad spectrum of course work. Due to the relationship between nonattendance and pupil failure, the Margaretville Central School District will adhere to the following policy:

### 1. Objectives

- A. To accurately track the attendance, absence, tardiness and early departure and return of students to and from the school;
- B. To ensure sufficient pupil attendance in instructional or study periods to permit success at meeting learning standards *at all levels*;
- C. To track student location for safety reasons and accountability to parents regarding the location of children during school hours;
- D. To identify attendance patterns;
- E. To verify that individual students are complying with education laws to compulsory attendance;
- F. To accurately record daily attendance for State aid purposes.

### 2. Definitions

- A. **Scheduled Instruction:** Every period that a pupil is scheduled to attend instruction or supervised study activities during the course of a school day during the school year
- B. **Absent:** The pupil is not present for scheduled instruction.
- C. **Tardy:** The pupil arrives late for scheduled instruction.
- D. **Early Departure:** The pupil leaves prior to the end of the pupil's scheduled instruction.
- E. **Excused:** (Legal) any absence, tardiness, or early departure for which the pupil has a valid school approved excuse. Such excused nonattendance shall include: personal illness, illness or death in the family, music lessons, religious observances, quarantine, required court appearances, medical visits, approved college visits, absences approved in advance by the Principal, and other reasons as may be approved by the Commissioner of Education.
- F. **Unexcused:** (Illegal) any absence, tardiness or early departure for which the pupil has no valid school approved excuse. Such unexcused nonattendance shall include shopping trips to the mall, family vacation, caring for a baby, work, missed bus, needed at home, haircut, obtaining learners permit, road test, oversleeping, skipping class, hunting, and any other absence that is not sanctioned by school authorities or the Commissioner of Education.

### 3. Attendance Reporting

High School/Middle School – Attendance will be recorded every day in homeroom and sent to the attendance office. Teachers shall record attendance every period in an attendance log and send period by period attendance to Liz DeBella.

Elementary School – Attendance shall be recorded every day in homeroom and sent to the attendance office.

#### **4. Coding System**

The attendance office to indicate the nature and reason for a pupil missing all or part of scheduled instruction shall use the following coding system:

E = Excused (Legal)

U = Unexcused (Illegal)

AE = Absent Excused

AU = Absent Unexcused

ED = Early Departure

S = Suspended

TE = Tardy Excused

TU = Tardy Unexcused

#### **5. Strategies for Attendance**

In order to encourage students to attend and receive the benefit of instruction, the school has adopted the following rules:

A. Minimum attendance for course credit

- 1) In a two-semester course, absences of 21 class periods will result in loss of credit.
- 2) In a semester course, absences of 11 or more class periods can result in loss of credit.
- 3) The student will not be counted as attending a class if the student misses more than 20 minutes of the class for the purpose of minimum attendance requirements.
- 4) Suspensions – Students who have been suspended upon instruction will only be marked absent if they also miss their scheduled alternative education, if provided, such as home tutoring.

B. The District will notify the student and persons in parental relation if the student is in danger of losing course credit for failing to attend class, when the student has missed 50% of the course's credit.

C. Teachers will provide make up work upon request for excused absences to students who are in danger of losing course credit or missing too many classes.

D. The Principal is in charge of reviewing and organizing any matters relating to a student losing course credit for missing class under the attendance policy.

E. Elementary and middle school students missing more than ten percent of total school days due to excused or unexcused absences may be subject to grade retention.

F. Students who are absent from class for reasons listed under the policy as excused may make up missed class work within five school days of the absence. If the work is not completed, the absence will be unexcused.

#### **6. Attendance to Classes and Assigned Schedule**

A. Students are to attend all classes, study halls, cafeteria, assemblies, etc. Outside obligations (such as jobs, babysitting, etc.) are not to be undertaken during School Hours.

B. Students are to be in class, study hall, cafeteria, assembly, and 9<sup>th</sup> period assignments at the designated time.

C. Students are not to leave the school grounds during regularly scheduled day without permission from an administrator.

## **7. Strategies and Incentives**

- A. For pupils enrolled in full day instruction, the pupil's parent(s) or person in parental relation shall be notified of a pupil's excused and unexcused absence(s), tardiness or early departure according to the following:
- B. Where a pupil has not been marked as present for scheduled instruction and the school has not been previously notified of the absence, the District shall attempt to contact the pupil's parent(s) or person in parental relation to learn the nature of the pupil's absence and notify the parent that the pupil has not arrived at school;
- C. For a pattern of unexcused absences, tardiness, early departures, or any combination thereof, pupil's parent(s) or person in parental relation shall receive a notice containing the dates, times, and the nature of the pupil's unexcused nonattendance.
- D. Disciplinary Procedures – The pupil may be subject to disciplinary procedures for unexcused absence, tardiness, or early departure, including verbal and written warnings, detentions, ISS, and loss of extracurricular privileges, as described in the Code of Conduct.
- E. Incentives – District teachers shall work with the Building Principal and Attendance Officer to create and implement classroom based incentive programs for excellent attendance.
- F. Intervention Strategy Development – The Building Principal shall review student attendance records quarterly, address identified patterns of unexcused pupil absence, tardiness and early departure, and review current intervention methods. Where the Principal determines that existing intervention policies or practices are insufficient, the Principal shall notify the Board of Education prior to its annual review of the program's attendance records, of both insufficient practices and any proposed changes needing Board approval to implement.
- G. Counseling – Margaretville Central School District will make available counseling to students with chronic attendance problems.

## **8. Attendance Officer**

The Board shall designate a person as the Attendance Officer. The Attendance Officer is responsible for reviewing pupil attendance records and initiating appropriate action to address unexcused pupil absence, tardiness, and early departure consistent with the Comprehensive Attendance Policy, including parent and district notification.

## **9. Community Awareness**

The Board of Education shall promote necessary community awareness of the District's Comprehensive Student Attendance Policy by:

- A. Providing a plain language summary of the policy to parents or persons in parental relation to students at the beginning of each school year and promoting the understanding of such a policy to students and their parents/persons in parental relation;
- B. Providing each teacher, at the beginning of the school year or upon employment, with a copy of the policy; and
- C. Providing copies of the policy to any other member of the community upon request.

## STUDENT ABSENCES AND EXCUSES

The following reasons for student absences from school are recognized as valid by the Board of Education:

1. personal illness;
2. family illness or death;
3. impassable roads during hazardous weather;
4. medical / dentist appointments; (doctor's note required)
5. religious observance;
6. quarantine;
7. approved college visits for seniors; (signed document from admissions office)
8. required court appearance; and/or
9. approved school sponsored trips.

Any other absence is considered unexcused (illegal). Each absence must be accounted for. It is essential that parents/guardians provide a written excuse for each absence. Such excuse should contain the reason and the date of absence.

Cross-ref:  
5100, Student Attendance 5161, Truancy and Tardiness

Ref: Education Law \* 1709(2); 3202(1-a); 3025  
8 NYCRR \* 175.6

Adoption Date:

## ATTENDANCE

Every student is expected to be on time and attend all classes; except in those instances listed below as legal absences by the Margaretville Central School Board of Education. Attendance is taken each day and staff will attempt to contact parents to report unexplained school absences.

Students will not be allowed to participate in any extra curricular activity taking place on the day they are absent from school. This includes participation as a spectator or as an attendee at a dance or concert.

When it is necessary for a student to leave school during school hours, a request (excuse) signed by a parent or legal guardian must be brought to the Nurses Office for authorization before Period 1 begins. This request should state the specific reason and time to be excused. Before leaving the building, the student must sign out in the Nurses Office; and, if he/she returns before the conclusion of school, the student must sign in at the time of arrival, and report to class. A phone number where a parent may be reached during the day is to be included with the note.

When a student has missed a day or more of school, an excuse signed by a parent or legal guardian stating the reason for the absence and the date(s) of absence must be given to the student(s) attendance teacher or to Mrs. Hafner in the Nurses Office. An excuse is also required when a student is tardy. All notes are due the day following an absence or tardy.

The following reasons for student absences from school are recognized as valid by the Board of Education:

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2. family illness or death;
3. impassable roads during hazardous weather;
4. medical/dentist appointments; (doctor's note required)
5. religious observance;
6. quarantine;
7. approved college visits for seniors; (signed document from admissions office)
8. required court appearance; and/or
9. approved school sponsored trips.

Students must realize their school work can suffer if they are absent too often. Excessive absences (legal or illegal) may result in loss of course credit. (See attendance policy).

"Skip Days", with or without parental permission, will result in disciplinary consequences for cutting classes. Seniors participating in a "skip day", with or without parental permission, will also be subject to disciplinary consequences, and may lose their right to participate in their graduation ceremony.

Adoption Date:

## TRUANCY AND TARDINESS REGULATION

A student will be considered tardy to school if they are not in their homeroom by 8:19 a.m. A student will be considered tardy to class if they arrive late within the first twenty (20) minutes of class. A student arriving after the first twenty (20) minutes of class has lapsed will be considered cutting class and will be required to serve two (2) hours of detention for each class cut.

Classroom/Office/Guidance Number of unexcused tardies <u>Per marking period</u>	<u>Consequence</u>
1	No-Pass - 1 day
2	Lunch Detention - 1 day and parent/guardian notification via referral
3	For tardy #3, the student will be assigned an hour after school detention

Margaretville Central School believes it is important to ensure students are attending class as well as arriving to class on time, since these are essential aspects of ensuring an orderly environment for learning. Tardiness, whether the fault of the student or others, cannot be excused except for the following reasons:

1. personal illness;
2. family illness or death;
3. impassable roads during hazardous weather;
4. medical/ dentist appointments; (doctor's note required)
5. religious observance;
6. quarantine;
7. approved college visits for seniors; (signed document from admissions office)
8. required court appearance; and/or
9. approved school sponsored trips.

A note explaining the cause of lateness or absence is required. Since excessive tardiness and absences are not conducive to good work habits or learning, parents/guardians should make every effort to have their children in school every day and on time.

### ***No-Pass***

A student on no-pass will not have the privilege of leaving the class or study hall for any reason. Students will be placed on no-pass for:

1. tardiness
2. overdue library materials;
3. water guns, water balloons and hats as per student rules in policy 5300, Student Conduct; and/or
4. academic needs (i.e., failure to turn in homework, signed tests, etc.)

## **ATTENDANCE REGULATION**

Regular attendance is a necessary requirement in the learning process. In order to promote regular classroom attendance, credit for completion of all courses will be based, in part, on classroom attendance and the following criteria:

1. In a two semester course, absences of 21 class periods can result in loss of credit.
2. In a semester course, absence of 11 or more class periods can result in loss of credit.
3. All absences, excused or unexcused, will count toward loss of unit credit determination, with these exceptions:
  - A. Religious holidays
  - B. Where home tutoring is provided in cases of prolonged absences over 31 days, such absences will not be counted in determining unit credit. Arrangements for home tutoring will be made by the Building Principal upon request. In subjects where home tutoring is not normally provided (Art, Music, Technology, Home and Career Skills, Etc.), the student may make arrangements to make up work through after school attendance. Parents are responsible for notifying the Principal in cases of prolonged absences.
4. If a student and his/her parent believe that extenuating circumstances were involved in a specific set of absences, they may petition the Appeal Committee to excuse those absences from being counted in determining unit credit. The Appeal Committee will be composed of the Superintendent, Building Principal, and a member of the secondary faculty. If the parent does not accept the Committee's decision, the parent may appeal to the Board of Education.
5. Teachers in grades 9-12 are responsible for informing the Guidance Office if any of their students do not meet the course attendance requirement necessary, to receive credit for a course. No credit will be received after 20 absences during full year courses, or 10 absences with a semester course.

Teachers will keep an accurate attendance record in their plan/mark book for this purpose. Parents and Guidance will be sent a notice when the student has reached the 50% mark of allowable absences (10 days), and again at the 75% mark (15 days). There will be one notice at the 5 day mark, and another at the 7 day mark for 1/2 year courses. A parent-teacher-student-counselor conference will be required at the 50% mark of allowable absences. The conference will be arranged by the Guidance Office.
6. Students losing course credit due to excessive absences will be ineligible to take all tests, including the final exam, in the class.

Readoption date: