

STUDENT ATTENDANCE

The Nashua Board of Education has a duty to provide elementary and secondary education for students in Nashua. Daily attendance by each student is vital for fulfilling this duty. It is the right of every student to receive a public education and it is the legal responsibility of parents to ensure that students attend on a daily basis.

When students are truant, the Board is committed to trying to assist parents with their duty to have students attend school. However, if the truancy persists after genuine efforts to assist parents, the Board may request court intervention to compel attendance.

The principal of each school is responsible for attendance and truancy issues at his/her school. Principals may designate an individual to assist them as the coordinator of attendance and truancy issues.

I. Definitions

These definitions apply to all attendance related policies:

1. *Tardy*. Any student who is not at school or in class on time and has not been excused is tardy.
2. *Half Day of Absence*. “Half day of absence” means that a student received at least three hours of instructional time, but less than a full day of instructional time.
3. *Truancy*. “Truancy” means an unexcused absence or tardiness from school.
4. *Habitual Truancy*. “Habitual truancy” means ten half days or more of unexcused absences during a school year.
5. *Unexcused Absence*. An “unexcused absence” is an absence which has not been excused.
6. *Excused Absence*. An “excused absence” is an absence approved by a school principal.
7. *Early Dismissal*. “Early Dismissal” is any dismissal before the end of the school day.

II. Absences

Excused Absences

Excused absences, late arrivals and early dismissals are sometimes necessary for the health and welfare of the student, or result from a significant family emergency or school-sponsored activity. When an excused absence originates from outside the school, it must be documented and, when possible, this documentation should be done in advance. Policy **JH-R** gives detailed information about the requirements and procedures to be followed.

The Board considers the following to be excused absences:

- a. Illness
- b. Recovery from an accident
- c. Required court attendance
- d. Medical and dental appointments

- e. Death in the immediate family
- f. Observation or celebration of a bona fide religious holiday
- g. Approved participation in a school co-curricular or extra-curricular activity
- h. Field trips
- i. Out-of-school suspensions
- j. College visits
- k. Such other good cause as may be acceptable to the Principal or permitted by law

Principals (or their designees) may consider requests from parents to approve excused absences for other extenuating circumstances.

Unexcused Absences

Note that the following are considered unexcused absences:

- Family vacations
- Work
- Car or transportation problems, not including late bus arrival
- Non-medical appointments
- Providing child-care

At the discretion of the principal, class time missed due to habitual tardiness may be counted towards half days of unexcused absence.

If parents are dissatisfied with an unexcused absence decision, they may request a conference with the Principal to again explain the reasons for non-attendance. The Principal may then reconsider the initial determination. However, the Principal's decision shall be final.

Absence and Extracurricular Activities

In order to participate in extracurricular activities students must attend a full day of school on the day of the activity, or, if the activity occurs on a nonschool day, the last school day preceding the activity. Exceptions for an excused absence may be granted by a school administrator.

III. Intervention

The Board directs the Superintendent, Truant Officer(s), Principals and staff to intervene and ensure daily school attendance according to the District attendance protocol policy **JHA**.

When necessary and after the steps of policy **JHA** have been followed, the Truant Officer(s) may pursue available legal remedies to resolve the truancy.

IV. Reporting

The Superintendent will provide a report to the Board in January and June of each year on District attendance. At a minimum this report will provide both a breakdown of excused absences and unexcused absences for each school. Each of these breakdowns will include the numbers of students who have: 0-4, 5-10, 11-15, 16-20, 21-25, 26-30, and 31 or more absences. The number of five (5) and ten (10) day letters that have been waived will also be reported.

V. Consequences

Students aged 16 and older who are habitually truant and who have twenty or more unexcused absences may be served with a summons for each such offense, requiring their appearance in the local circuit court. Each offense shall constitute a violation. Any fine requested by the School District shall not exceed \$100.00 for each offense.

Furthermore, any high school student with twenty or more unexcused absences may be prohibited from any extra-curricular activities and may lose all privileges for a period of one year from the date of the last offense.

The District reserves the right to pursue legal action with parents who fail to meet their legal responsibility to ensure their children attend school on a daily basis.

Legal References:

RSA 193:1 Duty of Parent; Compulsory Attendance by Pupil
RSA 193:7 Penalty
RSA 193:8 Notice Requirements
RSA 193:16 School Attendance
NH Code of Administrative Rules, Section Ed 306.04 (a) (1), Attendance and Absenteeism
NH Code of Administrative Rules, Section Ed 306.04 (c), Policy Relative to Attendance and Absenteeism
NH Code of Administrative Rules, Section Ed 306.18 (c) (6)
RSA 189:35-a Truancy Defined
RSA 189:1-a Duty to Provide Education

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