

Lindenhurst Middle School

Attendance Policy

INTRODUCTION

Regular school attendance is a critical factor for academic success. Consistent school attendance, academic success, and school completion have a positive correlation. Since school is a partnership, parents are expected to make sure their children attend school on a regular basis.

Although accurate record keeping and analyses of data are critical, we believe the ultimate success of the school attendance program is determined by the quality of the school culture. Creating a positive school culture is a prerequisite for good attendance. By school culture, we mean the overall physical and psychological atmosphere in a school: the behaviors, attitudes, and beliefs exhibited by all school staff, students, parents, and community workers. This culture is accepting and inclusive with opportunities for all to learn.

Lindenhurst strives to build:

- A positive physical and psychological environment;
- Positive, strong, adult role models for students;
- Respectful and nurturing interactions between adults and students;
- A high degree of student-to-student positive relationships;
- A challenging academic program.

OVERALL OBJECTIVES

This attendance policy takes into account the importance of creating a positive learning atmosphere while:

1. Maintaining a register of attendance in accordance with Section 104.1(d) of the Regulations of the Commissioner of Education;
2. Establishing a practical mechanism to account to the parents of all students enrolled in our schools for the whereabouts of their children throughout each day. This information is also necessary for safety and school management reasons;
3. Establishing a system to determine the District's average daily attendance for state aid computations;
4. Confirming that individual students are complying with Education Law in relation to compulsory attendance;
5. Identifying individual and group attendance patterns to design improvement efforts;
6. Providing data to develop interventions to help close the gap in student performance, given the high correlation between attendance and achievement.

Since different grade levels have varying needs, the attendance policy is organized into three sections:

- Elementary
- Middle School
- High School

Each of these three components completes the requirements for section 104.1 of the Regulations of the Commissioner of Education. The organization of the Comprehensive Attendance Policy as distinct components aids in day-to-day operations and implementation.

OBJECTIVES

Every student has a right to educational opportunities that will enable the student to develop to his or her fullest potential. Research repeatedly demonstrates that there is a strong correlation between good attendance and success in school. The regular contact of students with one another in the classroom and their participation in well-planned instructional activities are vital to this purpose. Time lost from class for any reason represents a significant loss of educational opportunity for all students. Therefore, the Lindenhurst Middle School Attendance Policy establishes minimum attendance requirements for the granting of academic credit for courses taken by students in grades six through eight. Successful implementation of this Attendance Policy requires cooperation among all members of the educational community, including parents, students, teachers, administrators and support staff.

NOTIFICATION PROCEDURES

Successful implementation of the Attendance Policy requires cooperation among all members of the Lindenhurst community. Parties to receive notification will include parents, students, teachers, and the community. The following plan has been devised for implementation to insure thorough notification for all concerned parties. Below, please review the procedure that will be in effect throughout the school year during which the policy is implemented and during subsequent school years.

Parents:

- The incoming sixth grade will receive a letter regarding the Attendance Policy and a copy of the policy. Parents will sign a form indicating receipt of the policy;
- When the Attendance Policy is initially implemented, there will be a general mailing to all parents (principal's letter and copy of policy) as well as follow-up letters if policy is revised;
- Presentation and handout at orientation in August for sixth-grade parents and students;
- Letter mailed at periodic intervals;
- Annual presentation at Middle School PTA meetings;
- Handout of policy and letter for new entrant registration;
- A copy of policy to be sent with incremental attendance notifications.

Students:

- Student planner;
- Orientation assemblies;
- Announcements;
- Letter to be sent at periodic intervals;
- Handout for new entrant registration (letter and policy).

Teachers:

- Memo from the principal and copy of the policy;
- Lindenhurst District newsletter;
- Faculty meeting presentation;
- Attendance data will be made available in the Attendance Office.

Community:

- Lindenhurst District newsletter – letter from principal and policy.

ATTENDANCE INCENTIVES

The school will design and implement systems to acknowledge a student's efforts to maintain or improve school attendance. For example:

1. An Attendance Honor Roll shall be maintained and published quarterly identifying those students with perfect attendance, as well as those students whose attendance has improved significantly;
2. Attendance Certificates will be given to students on the Attendance Honor Roll;
3. Good attendance will be one criterion for attending the Middle School Recognition Breakfast;
4. Awards at the Eighth Grade Promotion Exercise and at the end-of-year sixth- and seventh-grade assemblies will be given to students with outstanding attendance or to those students whose attendance has improved significantly.

ATTENDANCE REQUIREMENTS

Applicability:

1. This policy will apply to students in grades 6 – 8;
2. This policy will apply to each course individually;
3. This policy will apply to students with a handicapping condition unless, pursuant to state and federal law, a student's failure to adhere to the policy requirements shall be determined to be a manifestation of the student's handicapping condition;
4. Students attending classes at other facilities, such as a BOCES center, will be subject to the attendance policies of those facilities except that this policy shall apply for the portion of the students' program for which they are enrolled at Lindenhurst Middle School.

Attendance Requirements:

1. Full-Year Course: A student may be absent for no more than 28 absences. A student will be in violation on the 29th absence.
2. Half-Year Credit Courses and Physical Education: A student may be absent no more than 14 times. A student will be in violation on the 15th absence.
3. 10 Week/Quarter-Year Classes: A student may be absent no more than 7 times. A student will be in violation on the 8th absence.
4. Lateness: Tardiness to class of more than 20 minutes will be considered an absence.
5. Double-Period Class: Absence from both periods of a double-period course (science labs, extended math) will count as one (1) absence. However, both class periods will have to be made up for the one (1) absence to be removed from the student's attendance record in that course.
6. Absent Notes: Students are required to bring an absence note on the day they return to school, but no later than five (5) days after the actual absence. The Attendance Office will issue a notice the students must show to teachers informing them that an unexcused absence has been changed to an excused absence.

GUIDELINES

- A student will not be considered absent from class for the following reasons: (Although the absence does not impact the Attendance Policy, it is expected that the class work be made up.)
 1. In-school suspension;
 2. Out-of-school suspension;
 3. Home instruction;
 4. School-mandated testing including Advanced Placement testing (test period only), and psycho-educational testing;
 5. Mandated school meetings initiated by school personnel;
 6. Mandated curriculum-based performances and/or experiences.
- All absences apply to the Attendance Policy. However, absences that are excused may be made up.
- Excused absences are as follows: (Students must make-up work missed in these classes or absence counts against the policy in each course not attended.) Students must initiate the make-up opportunity.
 1. Sickness;
 2. Death in family;
 3. Religious observance;
 4. Court appearance;
 5. Medical appointment;
 6. Field trip;
 7. Testing;
 8. Travel for school athletics or activities;
 9. School-approved modified schedule such as:
 - a. Student-initiated school personnel meeting;
 - b. Music lessons;
 - c. Special rehearsals.
 10. Impassable roads due to inclement weather.
- Unexcused absences include, but are not limited to, the following: cutting, truancy, family vacations, and unapproved student-faculty member meetings. Unexcused absences cannot be made up.
- Coding: The following computer codes will be used in conjunction with this attendance policy.

<u>Entry Code</u>	<u>Entry Text</u>	<u>ABS Reason Key</u>
ABS	Absent	00
LEGA	AbsenceE	01
ISS	In-School Suspension	02
SUSP	Out-of-School Suspension	04
ILAB	Unexcused Absence,needs note	05
PRES	Present	06
EDU	Educational Field Trip	07
EDIS	Early Dismissal	08
NURS	Sent Home, Nurse	09
ILLE	Unexcused Absence	10
TRNT	Truant	11
<u>Late Reasons</u>		
LE2N	Excused Late 2 nd	12
LE3R	Excused Late 3 rd	13
LU2N	Unexcused Late 2 nd	14
LU3R	Unexcused Late 3 rd	15
LATE	Late – Excused	16
LATE	Late – Unexcused	17
ALLE	Arrive Late, Leave Early	18

- Make up options for excused absences: Teachers will determine what constitutes a makeup of an excused absence from among the following and at their discretion. (PLEASE NOTE: Makeup work must be completed within the number of days absent, but within no more than five (5) school days after the student's return. If the work is not completed, these absences count towards the total number of absences permitted.)
 1. An after-school make-up class;
 2. A free-period/lunch make-up class;
 3. A before-school make-up class;
 4. The completion of specific reading assignments;
 5. The completion of all classwork and exams;
 6. A conference with teacher;
 7. The completion of alternative projects:
 - a. Reports or projects on related topic;
 - b. Class presentation;
 - c. Article review;
 - d. Internal research;
 8. Peer tutoring;
 9. Independent study assignments;
 10. Other work as determined by the teacher.

This list is not inclusive of all options available. It is the responsibility of the classroom teacher to select the type of make-up. Required make-up work will be determined on an individual basis. This requirement does not constitute a precedent for other students.

Attendance data will be analyzed periodically to identify patterns or trends in student absences.

ATTENDANCE PROCEDURES

Letters of warning for unexcused absences and excused absences **that are not made up** will be sent according to the table below:

	1 st letter _____	2 nd letter & parent _____	Final letter & meetings with <u>consequences</u>
Full-Year Course	9 Absences	18 Absences	28 Absences
Half-Year Course	5 Absences	10 Absences	14 Absences
10 Week/ Quarter-Year Course	3 Absences	5 Absences	7 Absences

Teachers will be required to maintain attendance records in three categories:

1. Excused Absences: Make-up work must be completed within the number of days absent, but within no more than five (5) school days after the student's return. If the work is not completed, these absences count toward the total number of absences permitted.
2. Unexcused Absences: These absences count toward the absence total whether or not work is made up.
3. Total Absences: The number of excused and unexcused absences.

The existence of unexcused absences and excused absences which are not made up, will be reported in the comments section for both the progress reports and for the report card grades. This will provide the opportunity for at least seven (7) official notifications of concern regarding the student's absences, i.e., four progress reports and three report cards.

When a student has reached the ninth and 18th absence in a full-year course; the fifth and 10th absence in a half-year course; or the third and fifth absence in a 10 week/quarter-year course; the teacher will complete the Attendance Policy Referral Form. This form will be delivered to the grade-level assistant principal.

- Teachers will be provided with a form for submission to the grade-level assistant principal.
- On notification of the 18th absence for a full-year course, the 10th absence for a half-year course, and the fifth absence for a 10-week/quarter-year course, the student's guidance counselor will arrange a conference to include the student, the parent or guardian, and where appropriate, the teacher, to advise that course credit is in jeopardy due to unexcused absences. At this meeting, the attendance policy will be reviewed and the make-up policy will be outlined again.

When a student exceeds 28 absences in a full-year course, 14 absences in a half-year course, or seven absences in a 10-week/quarter year course, the teacher will provide written notification to the grade-level principal. A certified letter will be sent to the student and parent, informing them credit has been denied after exceeding the allowable number of absences and also outlining the appeals procedure.

- After the 7th/14th/28th absence, course credit will be denied.
- Students to be denied credit for a course must remain enrolled in the course if they wish to attend summer school. Students may not exceed 35 absences in a full-year course, 20 absences in a half-year course, and 10 absences in a 10-week/quarter-year course if they are to enroll in summer school. **Absences in excess of those listed above will eliminate summer school as an option.**

INTERVENTION STRATEGIES

Achieving the vision of "healthy children...ready to learn" is widely held to be fundamental to the attainment of high academic standards, resulting in a productive, committed citizenship. The District's focus on an attendance policy and programming, coupled with school climate and increased academic performance, offers a unique opportunity to engage the entire school community – parents, staff, students, and community members – in a process which will build upon the strengths of all concerned.

For students with an excessive number of days absent or tardy, district pupil personnel service professionals, i.e., guidance counselors, social workers and psychologists, will try to identify the root causes and seek solutions to the problems. They will work with families and will look for ways to foster better family relationships and improve student attendance. Where necessary, they will help parents find ways to set appropriate limits for children. In addition, referrals to outside agencies may be made.

DUE PROCESS RIGHTS REGARDING CREDIT DENIAL

- The principal or his/her designee will hear the appeal by the parent/guardian and the student. Only reasons for absence or record keeping can be questioned. The appeals hearing will involve the principal or his/her designee, guidance counselor, classroom teacher, student, and parent or guardian. If so desired, the student may have additional representation at the appeals hearing.
- The appeal must be initiated by the parent/guardian and student, and submitted in writing to the principal no later than five school days after the student and parent have been notified of the denial of credit.
- The hearing will be convened within five school days of the receipt of the written appeal. The student and parent or guardian should attend this meeting.

ANNUAL REVIEW

The Board of Education shall annually review building-level student attendance records, and if such records show a decline in student attendance, the Board may revise this Comprehensive Attendance Policy and make any revision to the plan it deems necessary to improve student attendance.