

Attendance Policy and Procedures

Attendance

Class attendance is essential for gaining the full learning experience provided by the High School. Students must make every effort to be in class on a daily basis to get full benefit from the opportunities for academic, social, personal and creative growth that the school and classroom setting provides.

Class discussions, student collaborative work, teacher guidance and directives all offer learning opportunities that are hard to make up outside the classroom. RSA 193.1 of the New Hampshire Education Laws, states that every child between six and eighteen years of age shall attend school "... during all the time the public schools are in session unless he/she has been excused from attending on the ground that his/her physical or mental condition is such as to prevent his/her attendance ..."

The school day runs from 7:20 A.M. to 2:10 P.M, although a student becomes subject to all school rules from the moment he/she boards a school bus and/or arrives on school property. During these hours, no students are to leave the building unless a school administrator grants permission or the students are participating in an approved school activity under the supervision of a staff member. Students are expected to enter the building as soon as they arrive on school property.

At dismissal time (2:10 P.M.), students who are not participating in academic or co-curricular activities are expected to leave the building and school grounds. No students should be in the building after that time, unless they are under the supervision of a teacher or co-curricular advisor or coach. Students waiting for the late bus are to stay in the cafeteria.

Three Types of Absences

1. **Verified absences** from class are those that are reasonable and within the spirit of the New Hampshire Education Laws. Such absences may include personal illness, family emergencies, unexpected car trouble, and medical appointments. While these are considered reasonable, they **still count toward the limit of nine absences for a semester course or eighteen for a year-long course**. These limits from class constitute 10% of the days in a semester or year-long course; beyond these limits is excessive even for verified absences.

A parent/guardian's phone call to the attendance office on the day of the absence or a parent/guardian's note within five school days of the student's return to school is necessary to document a verified absence. The student must make up any work that has been missed in order to gain proper credit, and no disciplinary consequences will be imposed. **It is the responsibility of the student** to contact each teacher within three days after returning to school to make arrangements for make-up work. **Verified absences will count toward the limit of nine absences for a semester course and eighteen in a year-long course.**

2. **Exempt absences**, like verified absences, are reasonable and within the spirit of the New Hampshire Education Laws. Due to their unique character this type of absence **will not count toward the limit of nine absences for a semester course or eighteen for a year-long course**. The student must make up any work that has been missed in order to gain proper credit, and no disciplinary consequences will be imposed. **It is the responsibility of the student** to contact each teacher within three days after returning to school to make arrangements for make-up work. The following absences are considered to be **exempt absences**:
 - Student attends an approved school activity. An approved school activity is an activity sponsored by a faculty member for which permission has been granted by the Principal prior to the activity. Some examples are field trips, musical performances, sporting events, special lectures, or assemblies. If a student participates in an activity without permission and does not attend a scheduled class, the student will be considered unexcused and truant.
 - Student attends a funeral. **Written verification is required from a parent** within **five school days** of the student's return to school. A phone call by the parent or guardian to the attendance secretary should also be made the day of the absence.

- Student must make a court appearance. **Written verification from the court is required** within **five school days** of the student's return to school. A phone call by a parent or guardian to the attendance secretary should also be made the day of the absence.
- Student must take a military physical or exam. **Written verification from the military is required** within **five school days** of the student's return to school. A phone call by a parent or guardian to the attendance secretary should also be made the day of the absence.
- Student has a chronic illness. **Any student with a chronic illness must have a physician's/health care provider's written verification on letterhead on file with the nurse**. One statement for each academic year is adequate. When a student's absence is related to the chronic illness **the student must bring a written verification by a parent or guardian** within **five school days** of the student's return to school. A phone call by a parent or guardian to the attendance secretary should also be made the day of the absence.
- Student has a serious illness or injury confirmed by a doctor. **Written verification on a physician's/health care provider's letterhead must be provided**. A phone call by a parent or guardian to the attendance secretary should also be made the day of the absence.
- Student is assigned a **School Suspension**.
- Student has an IEP or a 504 Plan in which attendance/absences is related to the handicapping condition. **Written verification through the IEP or the 504 Plan is required**. A phone call by a parent or guardian to the attendance secretary should also be made the day of the absence.
- Student has a scheduled college visit. Verification of a pre-arranged visit must be submitted to the appropriate assistant principal at least one week prior to the visit. The maximum number of school days allowed for exempt status for such scheduled visits is four.
- Student observes a religious holiday. A parent/guardian note must be received and approved by the appropriate assistant principal prior to the day to be observed. (Limit: 2 days per year)

3 **Unexcused absences** from class or school are unreasonable and are not within the spirit of the New Hampshire Education Laws. They are absences taken for illegitimate reasons. Unexcused absences may include, but are not limited to, leaving the building without permission, truancy and class cuts.

Unexcused absences will count toward the limit of nine absences per semester. Unexcused absences will also be subject to the consequences of the discipline code regarding attendance. At the teacher's discretion, the student may be allowed to make up time and work for partial credit after school within three days of the unexcused absence. Notes from parents or guardians will not excuse such an **unexcused absence**.

Tardiness is defined as an unexcused late arrival to class. Tardiness will also be subject to the consequences of the discipline code regarding attendance. Students who are tardy to class may be required to make up time or missed assignments after school.

Truancy is defined as being absent from school without authorized permission. **Ten half-days or five full days of unexcused absence during a school year constitute habitual truancy according to New Hampshire RSA 189: 35a.** 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. Students who are determined to be truant will be placed on Administrative Probation.

The official number of absences from a course will be based on those recorded in PowerSchool by the teacher of that course.

Minimum Attendance Policy

A student who has **any combination of ten (10) or more verified and unexcused absences from a semester class or nineteen (19) or more from a yearlong class will be placed on Administrative Probation** until he/she makes up the time required by his/her assigned administrator.

Students who are placed on Administrative Probation will not be allowed to do any of the following until they have completed the make-up time determined by their assigned administrator:

- Park on school property
- Request permission for family vacation/trip leave
- Attend dances, class trips, or after school social events
- Begin a new driver's education class,
- Sign-in late / sign-out early
- Participate in athletics and/or co-curricular activities*

*Students, who are academically eligible for athletics and co-curricular activities, must complete a minimum of 3 hours per week of make-up time to retain their eligibility for athletics and co-curricular activities while on Administrative Probation.

Reporting an Absence (Parent/guardian's phone call or note is required):

In the event that a student is going to be absent from or late to school due to illness or other reasonable circumstances, **the student's parent or guardian is to phone the school attendance secretary (382-6542) before 8:30 A.M. to inform the school of that expected absence or late arrival to school.** The school administration has the right to determine whether or not that absence or late arrival is excusable or exempt. The attendance office will notify the school nurse of any absences of three or more consecutive days. **Absences of five or more days**, due to illness, require a note from a physician when the student returns to school.

If a parent/guardian's call was not made at the time of the absence, the parent or guardian must provide a written verification to the attendance secretary within five school days of the student's return. The note should include the following information:

- Student's full name and grade
- Date of return
- Date(s) of absence(s)
- Reason for absence(s)
- The signature of the parent or guardian

Upon receipt of a parent/guardian's note, the attendance secretary will verify the absence as excused. The student is responsible for obtaining and completing all missed work in a timely fashion.

No student, regardless of his/her age, is permitted to write or sign tardy, dismissal or absence notes, without specific parental authorization. Forging a note is a serious violation of the discipline code as is a false report over the phone.

If the absence or late arrival falls into the "exempt" category, it is the responsibility of the student and parent/guardian to provide proper written verification to the attendance officer. (See acceptable reasons for "exempt" absences listed above.) In questionable instances, the appropriate principal will make a ruling as to whether the absence is unexcused, verified or exempt.

Dismissals:

Students may be dismissed for legitimate reasons only with a written verification from a parent or guardian. Timberlane Regional High School reserves the right to verify any dismissal note and to approve or restrict the reasons for which students may be dismissed from school. Students may not write their own dismissal notes. **Dismissals count toward the minimum attendance policy restrictions unless they fall in the exempt category.**

- The student must present a dismissal note written by a parent or guardian before their first class of the day, indicating his/her full name, student identification number, the date, the reason for the dismissal and the time of their dismissal. The attendance secretary will then issue a dismissal slip authorizing the dismissal time and date.
- Dismissal notes are to be presented to the Main Office secretaries before 10 A.M.
- A student who has been dismissed may not return to the building until the end of the school day, unless specified in the dismissal note, e.g., dismissal for a dentist appointment but returning to school, or permitted by a building principal. Failure to comply with this rule may result in disciplinary action.

- In cases of emergencies or unusual circumstances, the school nurse will notify an administrator and parent or guardian that a student is to be sent home or to a medical facility. A note must be sent in by the parent/guardian the following day.
- If a student does not follow the proper procedures for dismissal, he/she will be considered to be absent unexcused, and appropriate disciplinary action will be taken.
- Telephone and fax dismissals are not allowed except in emergency situations. Approval from a principal is required.

Tardiness

Students who are late to school or to class are considered tardy. Any student who is tardy after 7:35 AM must sign in at the Main Office with the attendance secretary. Students who are tardy to class are subject to the discipline code, including teacher detentions. Students who are excessively tardy to class will be subject to the academic and disciplinary consequences built into the minimum attendance procedure.

Make-up Work

Make-up work is allowed in the event of a verified or exempt absence or an excused late arrival to school. It is the responsibility of the student to meet with the teacher(s) within three school days following the absence to establish a timetable for completing the make-up work. Make-up work may be allowed for partial credit for any unexcused absence or tardy.

Appeals for Waiver of the Minimum Attendance Procedure

A student, or the parent or guardian of that student, may request a waiver of the minimum attendance policy when the student has exceeded the number of absences allowed in a semester or yearlong course.

An appeal may only be made in cases where exceptional circumstances exist, and an appeal will only be recognized when the student has complied with the provisions of the attendance policy. An appeal must be made in writing and received by the assigned assistant principal at least five school days prior to the end of the marking period in which the absences have occurred. (See the school calendar for the ending dates for each quarter.)

The assigned assistant principal will review the appeal in a timely fashion. After reviewing the appeal, the assistant principal will consider whether or not the absences in excess of the limit are of an exceptional (therefore, exempt) nature and notify the student and/or parent or guardian of the outcome of the appeal.

Vacation Request

On occasion, parents or guardians request permission for students to be absent from school for a family vacation. Permission may be given in such cases, based on the parent or guardian submitting a written statement to the principal beforehand explaining the educational value and benefits of the trip. If the absence is approved, the student will be allowed to make up quizzes and tests missed during the period he/she was absent. If approved, these absences will be **verified but not exempt**. It will be the responsibility of the student to see his/her teachers for these assignments upon return to school. These days will count toward the limit of nine absences per semester.

Sign In/Dismissal Procedure for Seniors and Juniors

Seniors who have an unassigned period(s) before their first scheduled period and after their last scheduled period and juniors with a 2.5 GPA or above who have a study hall for their first or last period need to sign in and out at the Main Office. Both seniors and eligible juniors must be in school on time and remain in school for all other periods. Eligible juniors must have a parent or guardian request in writing to partake in this option. This request requires approval by their assigned assistant principal. **All students signing out must leave school grounds.**

As with other dismissals, seniors or juniors who sign out may not return to school before 2:10 PM except with the permission of a building administrator.