**ATTENDANCE**

All students have a right to educational opportunities that will enable them to develop to their fullest potential. In order to access these opportunities, students must be in attendance in school. Regular school attendance maximizes students’ interaction with their teachers and peers and is a major component of academic success. Improved school attendance generally increases student achievement and reduces the drop-out rate. The Yonkers Public Schools strives to achieve a rate of attendance of 100% in all schools.

One important goal of the attendance policy is to help provide early identification of attendance problems so that problems can be addressed effectively and in a manner that promotes student attendance and success. This goal can only be accomplished through the cooperation of all members of the school community, including parents, students, teachers, administrators, and support staff.

The Yonkers Public Schools will regularly track student absences whether excused or unexcused. In maintaining student attendance records, the schools will describe an absence as either excused (legal) or unexcused (illegal) as follows:

**Excused absences include:**

• Personal illness with a physician’s note

• Illness or death in family with a note

• Religious observance

• Attendance at a health clinic with a note from the clinic

• Quarantine with a note from a physician

• Required court appearance with a copy of the appearance ticket

• College visit with administrative approval

• Military obligation with a copy of the military order

• Suspension

**Unexcused absences include:**

• Absent from school without a note as required

• Present in school but absent from a class for any reason other than the exceptions noted: (a) administrative altered schedule; (b) school operated pull-out lessons; (c) school testing; (d) curriculum based field trips; and (e) approved participation in school/District extra-curricular activities and athletic events.

The Yonkers Public Schools is committed to reducing chronic absenteeism. **A student shall be considered chronically absent when he or she has missed at least ten percent of enrolled school days**. The emphasis here is on missed instruction, and as such, when determining chronic absenteeism, both unexcused and excused absences shall be taken into account.

It must be noted that a significant, unexcused absentee rate that has a detrimental effect on a student’s education can serve as the basis for a finding of educational neglect against a parent. Additionally, habitual unexcused absence or irregular attendance by a student of compulsory school age constitutes grounds for filing a person in need of supervision (PINS) petition in family court.

**Student Responsibilities**

1. Attend all classes each day and work to meet the academic, behavioral, and attendance expectations of the Yonkers Public Schools.

2. In the event an absence from school or a particular class occurs, provide the main office with a note, signed by a parent or administrator, explaining the absence. Absences for which there is no note on file in the main office will be considered unexcused.

3. Make up any class work, homework, or tests missed due to a class absence.

**Parent Responsibilities**

1. Discuss this Attendance Policy with your child and reinforce expectations for good attendance.

2. If you give your child permission to be absent from school, call the school’s main office on the day of the absence. Send your child to school with a note explaining the reason for the absence on the day he/she returns.

3. If your child is going to be absent from school for more than one day (for an illness as an example), inform the school attendance office by phone on the first day of the absence.

4. Call the guidance counselor or administrator if your child is having attendance problems. A conference will be arranged to assist you and your child.

5. Respond to any and all communications that the school sends to you regarding attendance.

6. Provide your child with the opportunity and support to make-up any work missed due to an absence from school.

**School Administrators, Teachers and Support Staff Responsibilities**

1. School personnel must ensure that appropriate and timely outreach, intervention, and supports are provided for students who exhibit poor attendance.

2. School administration must regularly review cases of chronic absenteeism and must involve teachers, guidance counselors, social workers, and other school staff to help resolve the problem behind the attendance issue. Effective implementation of the Yonkers Public Schools Attendance Policy requires that all participants are informed and fully understand the policy’s purpose, procedures, and consequences for non-compliance. For more detailed information regarding the Yonkers Public Schools policy on attendance, please refer to Board of Education Policy #5100-Attendance found on the Yonkers Public Schools website.

**ELEMENTARY LEVEL ATTENDANCE POLICY**

**Grades Prekindergarten through 6**

In order for elementary level attendance to improve, a focused and closely monitored system must be implemented. To implement the Attendance Policy, a person responsible for attendance in each elementary school, prekindergarten through grade six, must be identified.

1. Classroom teachers send names of children who are absent for five days within an attendance period to the designated attendance person. The names are sent to the attendance person whenever the number of days is reached. These do not need to be consecutive absences. If the classroom teacher does not know the reason for the absence (no note or explanation given), the child’s name is sent to the office.

2. Attendance person calls home or uses the District’s digital messaging system to ascertain why students are absent and fills out a form that is shared with building administrator and classroom teacher.

3. In addition to the phone call, a letter is sent home by the person responsible for attendance.

4. In the event that a student is absent for an additional five days, either within the same attendance period, or a different attendance period, the classroom teacher sends the name(s) to the main office and the person responsible for attendance calls the home and sends a letter to the parent inviting him/her to a meeting with school staff.

5. Decisions will be shared with all concerned parties.

6. Once a child reaches 15 days of absence, the Pupil Support Team (PST) meets and decides upon a plan of action.

7. If a child reaches 20 days of absences and the parent has not shown a commitment to work with the school/ agencies, the family will be referred to CPS and/or a PINS petition will be filed. In addition, parent will be informed that the child is in danger of being retained.

**Attendance as a Criterion for Promotion:**

Attendance will be considered in making a judgment about promotion to the next grade level. A very poor record of attendance can severely impact a child’s level of skills and knowledge required for success at the next grade level.

**GRADES 7 AND 8**

For seventh and eighth grades, attendance is critical to promotion. Promotion will be based on passing three out of four core subjects (English, Math, Social Studies and Science) during the year or in summer school (if available), and two non-core subjects.

**1. To improve attendance, the following steps have been developed:**

a. Attendance will be taken each period by every teacher using eSchoolPLUS.

b. It is the responsibility of the student to bring an absence note, signed by the parent, to school on the day he/she returns to school. The note is to be brought to the school’s main office by the student. There will be a two-day grace period for notes to be brought to school. After this grace period, the absence will be coded as unexcused.

c. On a daily basis, main office personnel are responsible for updating reasons for student absences from class into eSchoolPLUS.

2. **Incremental interventions for seventh and eighth grade absences:**

The following steps of incremental interventions will be carried out by each school as a minimum effort. Each school will add interventions as the nature of the attendance problems indicates and time for staffing allows.

**Step 1: Teacher Intervention**

a. Tell students to bring a note from a parent to excuse an absence.

b. Tell students to make up any work missed as a result of an absence.

c. Notify appropriate Pupil Support Staff, if available, when a student has been absent from a class three times in any two-week period.

**Step 2: Pupil Support Staff Intervention**

a. Meet with each student referred for absence by teachers.

b. Follow these suggested interventions:

1. Discuss attendance with student and possible solution;

2. Contact or meet with parent to identify strategies to improve attendance;

3. Consult with appropriate community resources;

4. Refer a student to his/her grade level administrator if cutting class or school absence continues;

5. Refer to Child Protective Services (CPS) when there are 20 unexcused absences;

6. Refer a student to Family Court as a Person In Need of Supervision (PINS) if the student has 20 or more days’ absences in a marking period and is not responding to parent and/or school supervision regarding attendance.

**Step 3: Administrative Intervention**

a. Meet with staff to discuss interventions that were used to improve student attendance and the outcome.

b. Meet with student, parent, and appropriate staff to assess why prior interventions were not successful and decide on a different approach. Part of the discussion may include:

* additional interventions that have not been used;
* family supports from a community organization;
* removal of privilege to continue participation in extra-curricular activities;
* referral to Committee on Special Education (CSE) if needed.

c. Monitor progress periodically with parent.

d. Refer student to Child Protective Services (CPS) when 20 or more unexcused absences occur.

e. Refer student who has 20 or more days’ absences in a marking period and is not responding to parent and/or school supervision regarding attendance to Family Court as a Person In Need of Supervision (PINS).