

## CHARLOTTE VALLEY CENTRAL SCHOOL COMPREHENSIVE STUDENT ATTENDANCE POLICY

### I. Introduction

In accordance with state law and regulations, it is the policy of the Board of Education (BOE) of the Charlotte Valley Central School District to ensure that there is adequate maintenance of attendance records. The records will first verify the attendance of all children at instruction. Secondly, it will create the means to examine attendance patterns so as to develop effective intervention strategies to improve student attendance. The remaining sections of this document outline the essential components of the district's policy.

### II. Definition of Terms

- A) **Teacher** – is a member of the teaching or supervisory staff of a public or nonpublic elementary, middle or secondary school.
- B) **Employee Other than a Teacher** – is a suitable person, other than a teacher employed by a public or nonpublic elementary, middle or secondary school, in a position appropriate for the maintenance of pupil records. Within the Roscoe Central School District, such an “employee other than a teacher” can be any or all of the following: school nurse, secretary to the principal, pupil personnel secretary, teaching assistant, or teacher aid.
- C) **Pupil** – is a child enrolled in any public or nonpublic elementary, middle or secondary school. For the purposes of this policy, terms “pupil” and “student” shall be used interchangeably.
- D) **Scheduled Instruction** – is every period that a pupil is scheduled to attend actual instructional or supervised study activities during the course of a school day during the school year from July 1 through June 30.
- E) **Non-Attendance** – is the general term applied to situations where students are not in school or in attendance for scheduled instruction. The three categories of non-attendance are absence, tardiness and early departure. The sub-categories of non-attendance outline the differences between non-attendance from school, generally, and from class, specifically as follows:
- **Absence (from school)** – when a pupil has not arrived at school by 11:00 a.m., (s)he is considered absent from school for the day.
  - **Absence (from class)** – when a pupil is not, at all, in attendance for a scheduled class;
  - **Tardiness (from school)** – when a pupil arrives late for daily scheduled instruction prior to 11:00 a.m.
  - **Tardiness (from class)** – when a pupil arrives late for a scheduled class;
  - **Early Departure (from school)** – when a pupil leaves daily scheduled instruction and does not return prior to the conclusion of the regular school day.
  - **Early Departure (from class)** – when a pupil leaves a scheduled class prior to its regular conclusion.

An absence, tardiness or early departure is considered to be either excused or unexcused as follows:

- 1) *Excused Non-Attendance* – occurs when a pupil is not in his/her regularly scheduled class for reasons that are legitimate pursuant to the provisions of this policy as outlined in Section V. of this document. The excused non-attendance also requires that parents or persons in parental relationship to the child, provide appropriate documentation regarding the legitimacy of any excused non-attendance that originates outside of the

confines of the regular school day. (i.e. A pupil is out of school for a day with a head cold. Upon his/her return to school, the pupil brings a written excuse from his/her parent or person in parental relationship that indicates that the student was ill.)

- 2) *Unexcused Non-Attendance* – occurs when a pupil is not in his/her regularly scheduled class for reasons other than those outlined in Section V. (i.e. A pupil is out of school for a day to go shopping for new clothes. Shopping is not an appropriate reason to excuse non-attendance, with or without a written authorization from his/her parent or person in parental relationship.)

F) **Register of Attendance** – is any written or electronic record maintained for the purpose of recording the attendance, absence, tardiness or early departure of a pupil.

### III. Goals and Objectives of the Comprehensive Attendance Policy

Goal #1 - The first goal of the Comprehensive Attendance Policy is to improve overall student attendance.

- Objectives
- 1.1) Exclusive of excused absences, each pupil will attend school for the requisite number of days during each academic year.
  - 1.2) Exclusive of excused absences, each pupil will be in attendance on time, both for the start of school as defined for each student, and for individual classes during the school day.
  - 1.3) Exclusive of excused absences, each pupil will remain both in school in his/her classes throughout the allotted time.

Goal #2 - The second goal of the Comprehensive Attendance Policy is to improve student achievement through the application of appropriate attendance guidelines.

Goal #3 - The third goal of the Comprehensive Attendance Policy is to develop strategies to determine the root causes of poor student attendance.

To achieve the above-referenced goals and the accompanying objectives, the district shall utilize strategies such as positive incentives and appropriate disciplinary and other consequences as outlined in Section VI of this document.

### IV. Record Keeping

A) Effective no later than September 1, 2007, attendance record keeping shall conform to the following:

- 1) Elementary school and middle schools with non-departmentalized K-4 grades shall ensure that attendance is taken once each day, except where students are dismissed from campus for lunch. In that instance, a second attendance shall be taken upon the return from lunch.
- 2) In departmentalized grades, including grades 5-12, attendance shall be taken in each period of scheduled instruction, with an exception for consecutive periods where classes are in the same room.
- 3) In Grades K-12, any absence for a school day or part of a school day shall be recorded as excused or unexcused as provided for in this policy.
- 4) In Grades 5-12, events of tardiness shall be recorded as excused or unexcused as provided for in this policy.
- 5) In Grades K-12, events of late arrival or early departure shall be recorded as excused or unexcused as provided for in this policy.

- 6) A record shall be maintained of each scheduled day of instruction during which school is closed for all or part of the day because of extraordinary circumstances including adverse weather, failure of the heating system or water supply, fuel supply shortage or structural damage to the building, etc.
  - 7) A record shall be made of the date when a student withdraws from enrollment or is dropped from enrollment in accordance with §3202(3-a) of the Education Law.
- B) All entries in the register of attendance shall be made by a teacher or another employee designated by the Board of Education. Any individual authorized to make entries in the register of attendance shall, by oath or affirmation, verify the contents of the entries.
  - C) Effective during the 2007-2008 academic year and beyond, student attendance records shall be reviewed by the Principal of each school building in the District for the purpose of initiating appropriate actions to address unexcused student absences, tardiness and early departures.
  - D) The register of attendance shall consist of any written or electronic record to record attendance, absence, tardiness or early departure of a student. The register shall be maintained for every period that a student is scheduled to attend instruction or supervised study during the course of the school day during the school year, from July 1<sup>st</sup> regarding student presence, absence, tardiness and early departure. The contents of the register for each student shall contain the information prescribed in regulations of the Commissioner of Education (Part 104).
  - E) The coding system shall incorporate the following symbols for entry into the attendance register:
    - (a) - absence
    - (t) - tardy
    - (ed) - early departure
    - (cc) - class cut
    - (tr) - truancy
    - (un) - unexcused events
    - (ex) - excused events

In circumstances wherein the coding system must correspond to grading software, the district's data coordinator shall substitute appropriate software compatible codes in place of the preceding codes.

#### V. Excused and Unexcused Absences

- A) The Board recognizes the following as legitimate reasons for excused absences. Each absence must be verified by the student's parent/guardian, or, where applicable, an appropriate member of the district's personnel:
  - 1) Personal illness and/or injury;
  - 2) Death in the family;
  - 3) Religious observance;
  - 4) Required attendance in court;
  - 5) Approved school-sponsored meetings, activities (including field trips), interscholastic athletics, musical and other competitions;
  - 6) Quarantine;
  - 7) Dental and medical appointments;
  - 8) Military obligations;
  - 9) Approved cooperative/work study program;
  - 10) College visitations {only for juniors and seniors}, with the prior knowledge and approval of parents and counselors, so long as it does not exceed 4 days in a school year;
  - 11) Driver's permit test / road test;

- 12) Appropriate participation (pursuant to established guidelines) in a recognized community function or service (i.e. assisting on ambulance calls, assisting with the fire company, etc.);
  - 13) Verified family emergency;
  - 14) Family attendance at, or participation in, a significant event of educational importance (i.e. attendance at a sibling's college graduation, participation in an Olympic or similar event, etc.);
- B) The Board recognizes the following as inappropriate reasons to be absent from school and are thus considered unexcused absences:
- 1) Student participation in any form of shopping or other mercantile exchange (i.e. Christmas or other holiday shopping, purchase of prom dresses, rental of tuxedos, hair cuts, beauty parlor appointments, etc.);
  - 2) Student attendance at entertainment events that do not originate from within the school (i.e. professional sporting events, concerts, plays, shows, amusement parks, etc.);
  - 3) Travel at times other than the established school vacations as outlined in the school calendar, annually adopted by the Board of Education.
- C) The Board also recognizes that complete lists of reasons for excused and unexcused absences cannot be properly and comprehensively defined. Thus, it empowers the Superintendent and/or his designee(s) to evaluate individual instances that are not specifically defined by this policy.

VI. Description of Strategies to Accomplish Attendance Objectives / Encouraging Student Attendance

The following items are recognized by the Board of Education as being appropriate administrative strategies to employ relative to encouraging pupil attendance:

- A) With the approval of the building administration, in consultation with guidance services, teachers at the elementary level shall utilize attendance incentives (addressing not only attendance but also tardiness and early departure as well), including recognition of students with good attendance, consideration of such students for special privileges and activities that are unavailable to all students, and commendation certificates that shall be issued to the student's parent(s)/guardian(s).
- B) This policy recognizes the positive correlation between school attendance and achievement. At the secondary level, eligibility for extra- and co-curricular activities, interscholastic sports and attendance at school sponsored activities shall be restricted to those students who have acceptable academic achievement in each of their academic subjects.
- C) At the secondary level, class cutting shall be deemed an infraction of the Code of Conduct in the nature of insubordination to the teacher and school administration. The Code shall prescribe a range of disciplinary interventions to address class cutting.

VII. Description of the Process to Address Attendance Intervention Strategies

- A) Whenever a student exhibits a pattern of unexcused absence, tardiness, or early departure, notice will be given to the parent(s)/guardian(s), in writing and /or by telephone communication, and the student shall be conferred with by the classroom teacher and/or a guidance counselor regarding the pattern in an effort to remediate the underlying problem. Notice shall also be given to the Building Principal who may address the matter with the student and/or his/her parent(s)/guardian(s).
- B) In the event that the school level interventions have not improved the student's attendance, the Principal may recommend interventions such as a Person In Need of Supervision (PINS)

petition to the Family Court and/or contact with the appropriate social services agency to initiate a neglect petition.

VIII. Oversight Responsibilities

- A) The Building Principal and/or his/her administrative designee shall be responsible for reviewing student attendance records and initiating appropriate action consistent with this policy.
- B) The BOE shall annually review building level student attendance records to determine if the comprehensive student attendance policy is effective. If a decline in attendance is evident, the Board shall revise the policy as deemed necessary to improve student attendance.

IX. Attendance and Course Credit

Course credit shall not be withheld for students' non-attendance in school or in class. Academic performance, as defined pursuant to the provisions of each year's edition of the student handbook, shall govern the awarding of course credit.

X. Distribution of the Policy

The Superintendent of Schools, at the direction of the Board of Education, shall publish to the community information about the District's Comprehensive Student Attendance Policy. The policy shall be available and explained at student assemblies, at assemblies on open school nights (if any), and a plain language summary of the policy shall be prepared for distribution to parents/guardians. Each teacher and new teacher(s), promptly upon hire, shall be provided with a copy of the policy and any amendments thereto. Copies of the policy shall also be maintained by the District's Records Access Officer for issuance upon request by any interested party.

XI. Reevaluation of the Policy

As part of the process for reviewing essential programming and procedures, the district's Comprehensive Student Attendance Policy will be reevaluated annually.

**Charlotte Valley Central School - Revised Policy # 25**

**Adopted, readopted or revised by the Board of Education on: July 03, 2008**

By: \_\_\_\_\_  
Clerk of the Board of Education