



*Serving With Pride The
Township of Manalapan
and the
Borough of Englishtown*

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August 2023

Dear Parent/Guardian,

As a district we recognize the importance that attending school ultimately has on student success. A student who is chronically absent is at a greater risk of academic, social and emotional disadvantage when compared to his/her peers. Traditionally speaking, chronically absent students lag behind their peers when it comes to academic achievement and academic growth.

In order to prevent chronic absenteeism and comply with state statute, our district implements the attendance policy and procedures outlined below. Please be sure to utilize the Genesis Parent Portal to record student absences and communicate with the Health Office so we can accurately reflect absence reasons.

Absence Categories

Student absences are recorded in one of the following categories based on the information provided (or not provided) by parents/guardians. For those of you returning to the district, you may notice our categories have been updated, based on feedback, to clearly delineate their differences.

- **State-Excused Absence:** Any absence that meets the criteria of the following three applicable reasons granted by the New Jersey Department of Education:
 - Religious observance (N.J.A.C. 6A:32-8.3(h));
 - “Take Our Children to Work Day” or other rule issued by the Commissioner; or
 - Participation in observance of Veterans Day (N.J.S.A. 18A: 36-13.2) or district board of election membership activities (N.J.S.A. 18A: 36-33).
- **Unexcused: District Verified Absence*:** Any absence for (1) illness or medical appointments accompanied by a doctor's note, (2) court ordered appearances accompanied by written documentation, or (3) family illness or loss accompanied by written documentation.
- **Unexcused: Truant Absence*:** Any absence that is not listed above, including vacations.

*We recognize that absences are inevitable; therefore, your child's first five unexcused absences, if reported by a parent/guardian, will be considered unexcused: district verified absences regardless of the reason for the absence.

Administrative Actions

Administrators will take the following actions listed at each attendance threshold noted below:

Five Unexcused (5) Absences:

- A letter will be sent through the Genesis Parent Portal reminding the parent/guardian of the district attendance policy.
- **Five (5) Unexcused: Truant Absences:**
 - A letter will be sent through the Genesis Parent Portal reminding the parent/guardian of the district attendance policy.
 - Administration may request a parent meeting/phone conference to develop a collaborative attendance improvement plan.
- **Ten Unexcused (10) Absences:**
 - A letter will be sent through the Genesis Parent Portal alerting the parent/guardian that the student has reached this threshold. This letter will also be placed in the child's cumulative folder.
- **Ten (10) Unexcused: Truant Absences:**
 - A letter will be sent through the Genesis Parent Portal alerting the parent/guardian that the student has reached this threshold. This letter will also be placed in the child's cumulative folder.
 - A court referral may be made based on the discretion of the attendance officer.
 - The district attendance officer or school administrator may schedule a parent meeting.
- **Fifteen Unexcused (15) Absences:**
 - A letter will be sent through the Genesis Parent Portal alerting the parent/guardian that the student has reached this threshold. This letter will also be placed in the child's cumulative folder.
 - This letter will serve as initial notification that an attendance review committee, including the parent/guardian, will convene to determine remediation for missed instructional days, which may include retention, attendance at the District summer program, or attendance at additional school-based supports.
 - A court referral may be made based on the discretion of the attendance officer.
- **Eighteen Unexcused (18) Absences:**
 - A letter will be sent through the Genesis Parent Portal alerting the parent/guardian that the student has reached this threshold. This letter will also be placed in the child's cumulative folder.
 - Your child will be identified by the State of New Jersey as a "chronically absent" student.
 - If your child reaches this threshold in two consecutive years, the attendance review committee will convene to determine remediation for missed instructional days, which may include retention, attendance at District Summer Program with 90% attendance, or attendance at additional school-based supports. Should attendance still be a concern in the summer program, a truancy referral may be made to the court.

Let's prevent the effects of chronic absenteeism by working together to make sure your child attends school on a regular basis!

Sincerely,



Nicole Santora, Ed.D.
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