

## **Middle School Attendance Policy**

### ***Philosophy***

Each one of our students has the right to educational opportunities that enable them to grow and develop to his or her fullest potential. To aid in this development, and to maximize student success, the Bellmore-Merrick Board of Education, administration, faculty, and staff believe that we must work cooperatively with students, staff, and families to ensure that regular attendance is maintained. The purpose of an attendance policy is to encourage regular and consistent attendance and punctuality in school for all students and to help students develop responsibility and self-discipline. Regular attendance fosters a climate conducive to learning, preserves effective teaching, and ensures a quality education. There is a strong correlation between regular attendance, academic achievement and successful social development for students. It is recognized that successful implementation of this policy requires cooperation among all members of the educational community.

### ***Absences***

If a student is going to be absent from school, it is the parent/guardian's responsibility to contact the attendance office on the day of the absence. Please make every effort to contact the attendance office no later than 8:45 a.m. the morning of the absence. Written acknowledgment of your child's absence with reason should be submitted no later than 24 hours after the student returns to school. Parents are also encouraged to contact their child's teachers and/or guidance counselor to obtain any work they may have missed.

### ***Excused Absences***

Illness with note from medical professional (AbEx), death in the family/bereavement (Bvmt), required court appearances (CTA), required medical appointment accompanied by appropriate documentation (Doc), religious observance (Rel), suspension (OSS), school sponsored field trip (FLD), other school sponsored activities (ACT), or home teaching (HT)

### ***Unexcused Absences***

Any absence not meeting the above requirements for excused absences shall be considered an unexcused absence (AbUn). Examples include but are not limited to vacation (VAC), illness without doctors note (AbUN), cutting class (Cut), truancy (AbUn).

### ***Excessive Absences***

- Five unexcused absences in a quarter will result in the loss of five points from the child's quarter grade for each course the student had the unexcused absence in.
- Each quarter a student will have the opportunity to complete one make-up assignment per class that will reduce the five absences to four. Any student who does not complete the assignment(s) or who subsequently reaches five unexcused absences will automatically have five points deducted from their quarter grade in that course. Students identified as excessively absent will meet with their grade level administrator and guidance counselor for a mandatory extra help schedule and/or a weekly progress report.

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- Excessive absences in a school year for eighth grade students may result in denial of course credit and promotion. Attendance at the *Bridge to High School* summer program may be required. Excessive absences for a seventh grade student may also result in retention of student at the discretion of the building administration.
- Appropriate legal supports such as a PINS petition and/or CPS referrals may be implemented by the designated school personnel and building administrator upon review of a pattern of poor attendance and/or lateness to school.

### ***Student Responsibility***

It is the responsibility of the student/parent to acquire missed assignments and/or check with their teachers for make-up assignments upon their return to school. Completion of missed work should be made up in a reasonable time and returned to the teacher. Students should be aware that excessive absences or tardiness may result in the revoking of privileges to participate in and attend extracurricular activities or special events, and impact student participation grades.

### ***Lateness***

Classroom instruction begins in the middle school at 7:56 a.m. Any student who is not in their assigned first period class by 7:56 is considered tardy to school. Any student tardy to school must report directly to the attendance office upon entering the building in order to get a late pass to class. Lateness to school is recorded as unexcused unless a valid note is presented in the attendance office on the day of the lateness. Please refer back to the list of excused absences to determine what would constitute a 'valid' note of excusal. Students must be present for at least 5 class periods in order to participate in extracurricular activities.

### ***Excessive Lateness***

Three unexcused latenesses will be considered a full period unexcused absence and will result in a disciplinary action. These penalties may include, lunch detention, after school detention, in-school suspension, and/or students being denied the privilege to participate in or attend extracurricular events.

### ***Notification of Policy to Parents/Guardians and Staff***

- The attendance policy will be included in student handbooks and will be reviewed with students at the start of the school year.
- Parents will receive a summary of this policy by mail at the start of each school year.
- The building administration will review this policy with parents at orientation upon entering middle school.
- The district will provide a copy of the attendance policy and any amendments to faculty and staff. New staff will receive a copy upon their employment with the district.

### ***Appeals Process***

Should a parent/guardian believe that extenuating circumstances exist that warrant exemption from this policy, a written letter of appeal in regard to loss of points and/or denial of course credit can be submitted directly to the grade level administrator and/or building principal within a week of parent/guardian notification.