

# Elementary Attendance Policy

All students are entitled to a free and appropriate education. Good attendance, together with active participation and engagement, are the keys to their success. The Cliffside Park elementary schools will be incorporating a "Perfect Attendance" Award Program to recognize those students with perfect attendance for the marking period. However, the faculty and administration of the Cliffside Park School District also recognize the negative effects chronic absenteeism can have on a child's education. Chronic absenteeism is defined as missing at least 10% (18 days) of the school year. Simply put:

**2 absences per month X 9 months = Chronic Absenteeism**

It is our goal to decrease absenteeism and tardiness, as students, even as young as preschool, are less likely to succeed in school if they are chronically absent. Therefore, the district will be implementing the following response plan in all our elementary schools:

## **Absences:**

For up to (4) cumulative absences, the principal or designee (i.e. secretary, guidance counselor, nurse) shall notify the student's parent(s)/guardian(s) and possibly request a conference.

For between (5) and (9) cumulative absences, the principal or designee (i.e. secretary, guidance counselor, nurse) shall request a mandatory conference with the student's parent(s)/guardian(s) to determine the cause of the absences and develop an action plan specifying interventions to support the student's regular attendance.

For (10) or more cumulative absences, the principal or designee (i.e. secretary, guidance counselor, nurse) shall continue to consult with the parent(s)/guardian(s) through a mandatory conference as this is considered "truancy" under the guidelines of the state of New Jersey. The student's absence history will be reported to Bergen County Crisis Intervention. This agency will assign a caseworker to be sent to the home. A determination regarding the need for a court referral will be made at this point.

Please note: The only exception for an absence is observance of a religious holiday and students must return to school with a note stating such. Medical and dental appointments as well as extended vacations when school is in session are not permitted. Any student who is absent for ten consecutive school days without a doctor's note must re-register at the Board of Education.

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## **Tardiness:**

Tardiness also affects a student's performance in school. Negative effects of tardiness include anxiety, disorganization, and falling behind in all subject areas. At the discretion of the principal and/or teacher, students with an excessive number of tardies may be assigned disciplinary consequences. Parents will also be notified when students are excessively tardy. Students with tardies will not be considered for perfect attendance.

Hard facts to consider as reported in in the U.S. Department of Education's report "Every Student, Every Day":

- Students who are chronically absent in preschool, kindergarten, and first grade are much less likely to read at grade level by third grade.
- Students who cannot read at grade level by the end of third grade are four times more likely than proficient readers to drop out of high school.

We are committed to working with you, our parents, to ensure every student gets the most of every day in school.

Please complete and return to your child's teacher:

I have read the district's Elementary Policy for Attendance and am aware of the consequences for increased absences and tardiness;

\_\_\_\_\_

Child's Name

\_\_\_\_\_

Grade/Teacher

\_\_\_\_\_

Parent's Name

\_\_\_\_\_

Signature