

# SUMMARY OF WSWHE BOCES' COMPREHENSIVE ATTENDANCE POLICY

Every student has a right to educational opportunities that will enable the student to develop to his or her fullest potential. Daily attendance in school and class is an expectation and responsibility of both the student and parent/guardian.

## Excused vs. Unexcused Absence, Tardy and Early Departure

Any absence for a school day or portion thereof shall be recorded as excused or unexcused. In the event that a student at any instructional level arrives late to class and without a pass, or departs early from scheduled instruction, such tardy or early departure shall be recorded.

The following reasons for student absence, tardy and early departure shall be considered by the BOCES to be excused:

- Personal illness, including doctor and/or hospital appointments
- Extended illness (three consecutive days or more) or chronic health condition (as documented by a physician's note). All excuses for extended illness or health issues shall be submitted within three days of the student's return to school in order to be considered as an excused absence.
- Immediate family illness
- In-school disciplinary actions or suspension (unless the student fails to attend alternate instruction)
- Other (i.e. religious observance, death in immediate family, required court appearance, military obligations, etc.)
- Home school-excused absence
- BOCES-excused absence (including related services, field trips, etc.)
- No school transportation

## Student Attendance & Course Credit

For BOCES to recommend to a home school that a student receive credit for a course, the student must attend regular class meetings. For a full-credit course, 18 days or more of unexcused absence (or, on a prorated basis, 10% or more of the possible days of attendance) shall result in BOCES not recommending credit to the home school (or not recommending a student for an IEP diploma/certificate or GED testing). For a half-credit course, 9 days or more of unexcused absence (or 10% or more of the possible days of attendance) shall result in BOCES not recommending credit to the home school (or not recommending a student for an IEP diploma or GED testing).

Any student absence that is properly excused shall not be counted as an absence for the purpose of determining the student's eligibility for course credit under this policy.

It shall be the student's responsibility to obtain all make-up work from his or her BOCES teacher(s) immediately upon return to the BOCES course or to school. Make-up work shall be submitted to the teacher(s) within two days after the excused absence to be reviewed and graded by the teacher. (Note: Even with excused absences, a student must still pass the course). Every program and/or teacher will have a grading policy that will have a percentage of the class grade allocated for daily class participation. The percentage is determined by each program or teacher for each class. However, students with either excused or unexcused

absences cannot make-up the "class participation" part of their grade.

A tardy or early departure may be excused or unexcused. If excused, the student shall perform the necessary make-up work within the allotted time, in order for the tardy or early departure not to be counted as an unexcused absence for the purpose of determining the student's eligibility for course credit under this policy.

## Appeal Process

When a student reaches 18 days (or 10% of the possible days of attendance) of unexcused absence, his/her record will be reviewed and verified by a BOCES administrator. Following verification, written notification to parents/guardians and home school staff (e.g. CSE, home school principal) will be made of the denial of course credit recommendation. A meeting to review the student's attendance record may be held at the request of parents/guardians or home school staff.

The only basis for an appeal is whether attendance was taken or recorded correctly. The process to be used by parents/guardians would be to request a:

1. Meeting with the teacher to review the student's attendance record;
2. Follow-up meeting, if necessary, with the principal/program administrator; and
3. Review of the attendance record with the District Superintendent.

If the home school does not follow the recommendation of the BOCES, the appeal should be made to the home school administration.

## Interventions

Student attendance may be positively affected by the use of incentives to encourage student attendance and disciplinary sanctions to discourage unexcused student absence, tardy and early departure from school.

Disciplinary sanctions shall be available for use by the BOCES program according to the Code of Conduct and Behavior Management System in order to discourage a student absence, tardy or early departure or a pattern of such by a student.

Notice to the student's parents/guardians, and to home schools regarding absences, and the strategies that shall be employed, including prior to recommending denial of course credit to the student for insufficient attendance, shall be as follows:

- When a student is absent, tardy or departs early from a BOCES course or from school, a call will be made home and a fax sent to the home school that day.
- After five days of unexcused absence from a BOCES course or from school, the teacher will meet with the student and determine with the student an intervention plan, when appropriate.
- After 10 days of unexcused absence from a BOCES course, an Intervention Process meet-

ing will be scheduled within 48 hours (using the school calendar) to recommend intervention strategies and develop an attendance contract. The contract, agreed to by the school and the family, may include a requirement that all future absences shall be considered unexcused unless official documentation is provided. The meeting will be convened by the BOCES teacher and coordinated by a counselor or case manager and will inform and/or include:

- BOCES program administrator
- Parent/guardian
- Home school representative
- Student, where appropriate

If there are more than 15 days of unexcused absences from a BOCES course, an Intervention Process meeting will be arranged within 48 hours in order to develop additional strategies to improve attendance. The BOCES program administrator will coordinate this meeting and inform and involve:

- BOCES classroom teacher
- Home school representative
- BOCES counseling staff
- Parent/guardian
- Student, where appropriate

Copies of the comprehensive attendance policy shall be available in the office of the District Superintendent and in each school and BOCES program building, and will be provided to any member of the community upon request.

## Notice to Parents/Guardians

Any student absence, tardiness, or early departure other than those specified is unexcused. A parental note must accompany any early departure request. Without said note, the student shall not be released.

It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to excuse (or obtain the excuse for) absences, tardiness or early departures and to call BOCES on the morning your child will be absent or late.

As a follow-up to any verbal notification, you may be required to provide a written excuse, including the reason(s). If proper written excuse for the absence is not received by BOCES after three school days, we may call and ask you to send a note regarding your child's absence.