

Attendance

A core value of the Portsmouth School Department is the importance of regular attendance at school. This value is consistent with the State of New Hampshire statutes and laws that are intended to insure a student's attendance. Lack of regular attendance and school truancy increases the risk of poor academic progress and performance, delinquent behavior, school avoidance and poor self-esteem. Tardiness to class and frequent absences from school causes a disruption to the teaching and learning process and is a distraction to both teachers and students. The Portsmouth School Department staff and administration are committed to working collaboratively with parents and students with issues associated with attendance.

Parents and legal guardians are expected to become familiar with the School Department policies and procedures for attendance and truancy that will be disseminated through the use of school newsletters, correspondence and agenda books.

It is expected that parents and legal guardians will not schedule vacations when school is in session. It is also expected that medical and dental appointments, whenever possible, will not be scheduled during the school day.

The building principals or his/her designee are responsible for truancy and attendance issues.

Procedures:

The administrative staff shall be responsible for the development and dissemination of attendance procedures stating that continued truancy of student in Portsmouth schools, is an issue that presents a formidable barrier to student learning and success. Attendance procedures shall include the following:

- Opportunities for educators, parents and students to collaborate to improve school attendance including guidance counselors serving as a resource, directing families to community resources, and providing written materials on the importance of regular school attendance.
- Interventions, which may include the following, telephone calls to the parent or legal guardian, home visits by the administration with the family, in school meetings with the administration, parents/legal guardian or student, referrals to the School Resource Officers, meetings with the Superintendent of Schools and court intervention through juvenile court truancy petitions.
- Consequences for unexcused absences, tardiness to school or classes, dismissals, and skipping classes. Consequences may include the loss of recess, in-school detentions, after school detentions, Saturday school, and the loss of credit for classes during the quarter and also as listed in the student conduct policy.
- Early dismissals provided that the parent or legal guardian has written an excuse.
- Frequent absences, dismissals, and tardiness to school due to illness will require a signed excuse from a doctor.

Definitions:

Anticipated absences from school are those that are pre-planned should have prior approval of the building principal. All requests should be made in writing to the principal in advance of the anticipated absence.

A Half-Day of Absence is when a student has missed three hours of the school day.

Half Day of Attendance is recorded when a student attends three hours of the regular length of the school day.

Early Dismissals are the release of a student for part of the school day and are permissible when requested in writing, by a parent or legal guardian, for a reason that would constitute an excused absence.

Absences are permissible when the principal or his/her designee has authorized the student's non-attendance due to the following:

- If a medical visit has occurred a note from the medical practitioner needs to be provided.
- Death in family documented in writing by the parent/guardian.
- School sponsored activities.
- College visits with written documentation from the college.
- Court appearances with written documentation.
- Religious observances documented in writing by the parent/guardian.
- Significant extenuating circumstances

Tardiness is the late arrival of a student to school or class. By level, a student will be considered tardy if they arrive after the start of the instructional day:

The District Truant Officer is an administrator assigned by the building principal to deal with the issues concerning excessive and unexcused absences from school.

Unexcused absence is one that is not excused by the principal or his/her designee.

Legal References:

RSA [193:1](#), *Duty of Parent; Compulsory Attendance by Pupil*

RSA [193:7](#) *Penalty*

RSA [193:8](#), *Notice Requirements*

RSA [193:16](#) *Bylaws as to Nonattendance*

NH Code of Administrative Rules, Section Ed [306.04 \(a\) \(1\)](#), *Attendance and Absenteeism*

NH Code of Administrative Rules, Section Ed [306.04 \(c\)](#), *Policy Relative to Attendance and Absenteeism*