

## **DOWNE TOWNSHIP ELEMENTARY SCHOOL ATTENDANCE POLICY**

New Jersey Education Law, 18A:38-25 et. seq., requires regular attendance of all students enrolled in the public schools. Accordingly, the Board of Education requires regular attendance of all students. The educational program offered by this district is predicated upon the presence of the student and requires continuity of instruction and classroom participation.

Attendance is required of all students enrolled in the schools during the days and hours that the school is in session. The school administration and teachers cannot successfully fulfill their responsibility to the student unless the student is present on a regular basis. It is the responsibility of the parent of each student to see that the student is in regular attendance.

### **I. ABSENCES (Attendance taken by 9:10 am and 1:00pm Daily)**

#### **A. Downe Township School**

The Board of Education (BOE) establishes the following requirements appropriate to the educational program.

1. Pupils are required to be in classes a minimum of 162 days or 90% of their possible days attendance in any one school year in order to receive academic credit for the year
2. Pupils who have unexcused absences in excess of 18 days or 10% of their possible days attendance will be **considered for retention** in their present grade. Excused absences include but are not limited to: illness verified by a parent/guardian note within three school days of the child's return in grades PK through 5, a doctor's note within three school days of the child's return in grades 6, 7 and 8, death in the immediate family as verified by a parent note, religious holidays as prescribed by the BOE, administrative reasons (suspensions, exclusions), required attendance in court which is documented and other reasons which receive prior written approval by the Principal or Superintendent.
3. All other absences (including family vacation) will be considered **unexcused**. A note is required from a parent/guardian within three days of the child's return.
4. The Principal will consider special cases of unexcused absences in excess of 18 days on an individual basis prior to retention.
5. Parents of pupils that have 8 unexcused absences will receive notification from the Principal and a copy of this policy via direct mailing.
6. After 12 unexcused absences, a second notice will be mailed to the parent requiring a conference with the Principal to discuss ways to improve attendance and to note the possibility of retention.
7. After the 18<sup>th</sup> unexcused absence, the Principal shall notify the student and the parent that the student will be considered for retention in the current grade.

### **II. LATENESS/EARLY DISMISSAL**

The Board recognizes its responsibility to encourage students to develop good work habits and attitudes. The Board considers tardiness to school or class as well as early dismissals detrimental to the student's educational welfare and the efficient operation of the school program. Further, the board recognizes that it is the student's and parents' responsibility for adhering to the school regulations pertaining to tardiness/early dismissals.

Lateness/early dismissal is excusable under the following circumstances but is not limited to only these reasons: documented physician's appointment, late bus arrival (applies to tardiness only), documentation of required court appearances, and other reasons which have received prior written approval from the Superintendent/Principal.

NJSA 18A:36-14 and 15; 18A:38-25 et seq. NJAC 6:20-1.3; 6:8-4.2 (d)2; 6:8-6.2 (b)4

#### **A. All Students (Grades K-8)**

A student is tardy when he/she arrives to school after 9:10AM and if he/she leaves school prior to the end of the day (3:10 pm). Student lateness/early dismissals are cumulative over the course of the school year. All disciplinary measures imposed as part of this policy will also include the corresponding demerits as outlined in the student code of conduct.

1. Students arriving late (after 9:10AM) must be signed in at the Main Office by a parent/guardian.
2. Students leaving early must be signed out at the appropriate area by a parent/guardian.
3. Upon the fifth lateness/early dismissal, the student and his/her parent/guardian will receive a letter and a copy of this policy.
4. Upon the seventh lateness/early dismissal, the student will receive an administrative detention and one demerit.

5. Upon the tenth lateness/early dismissal, the student will receive an additional detention and demerit and notification of this will be mailed home. There must be a mandatory conference between the parent, the student and the Principal to discuss solutions to the problem. They will also be informed that the fifteenth lateness/early dismissal evokes two in-school suspensions.
6. Upon the fifteenth lateness/early dismissal, the student will receive one day in-school suspension and notification of this will be mailed home.
7. Upon the twentieth lateness/early dismissal, the student will receive one day **out** of school suspension, and notification of this will be mailed home. There will be a mandatory conference between the parent, the student and the Principal.
8. Upon the twenty-fifth lateness/early dismissal, the student will receive two days **out** of school suspension, and notification of this will be mailed home. There will be a mandatory conference between the parent, the student and the Superintendent.

### **III. APPEALS PROCEDURE**

1. A student/parent contemplating an appeal of an action which has resulted from the application of the attendance policy must write a letter of appeal. This letter must be submitted to the Principal's office within five (5) days of receiving his/her report card. If the appeal is found to have merit, it will be submitted to the Attendance Policy Appeals Committee.
2. The Attendance Policy Appeals Committee shall consist of: the principal, school social worker, school nurse and two staff members selected by the administration.

The charge to the Committee is to hear an appeal and determine the merit of the argument on a case-by-case basis. The Committee will consider the assertion(s) in conflict with the application of board policy regarding excused and/or unexcused absences and total days thereof, exceptions to established district standards, mitigating circumstances, make up work, doctor's note, absences for school-related activities and any other pertinent issue arising to a case.

3. Any decision made by the Attendance Policy Appeals Committee may be appealed, in writing, to the Superintendent/Principal's office within seven school days of such decision. The Superintendent/Principal will make the final decision.
4. Appeals to the board relating to the decision of the Superintendent must be made in writing within 10 school days of receipt of the Superintendent's decision.
5. Board decisions may be appealed to the Commissioner of Education, the State Board of Education or the New Jersey courts. The appeal must be in compliance with appropriate Statutes and Administrative Code.

(18A:11-1; 18A:36-14, 15, 19a; 18A:36-24 thru 26; 18A:40-7, 8,10, 11; 18A; 46-16, 17; 1:6A-1 et seq.; 6:8-4.3(a)4; 6:8-7.1; 6:20-1.3; 6:28-3(e)5v; 6:28-4.1(f) Wetherell v. Bd. of Ed. of Twp. of Burlington 1978 S.L.D. 794; Wheatly v. Bd. of Ed. of City of Burlington 1974 S.L.D. 851)

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