

TEACHING STAFF ATTENDANCE**A. Absences**

Under no circumstances should any person be absent from school without the advance knowledge of the building Principal or his/her immediate supervisors.

Absence from school should be anticipated insofar as possible to avoid difficulties in obtaining substitutes and inaccuracies in records and reports.

All teaching staff will report their unanticipated absences to their immediate supervisor and/or to the District Sub-Caller. The District Sub-Caller will notify the appropriate Building Principal(s) of any building to which the absentee is assigned for each day of absence. The following procedure will be used for all unanticipated absences of regular classroom teachers and teachers of special subjects:

1. In the event that a staff member needs to call the substitute caller line, the staff member should call for a substitute **as soon as possible**, preferably the day before the absence; however, if this is not possible due to the nature of the illness, then the staff member must call the substitute caller line anytime during the evening the night before the absence as well as anytime during the night as the calls are taken by an answering service. Substitute requests can be cancelled the morning of the absence by 5:30 a.m. if there is no longer a need for coverage. *Please note that staff calling the substitute caller line after 5:30 a.m. must also call the school office so that that office staff are notified that there is a possibility that there will be no substitute coverage for that staff member.*

All teaching staff members must submit to their Building Principal and/or immediate supervisor a signed employee leave request form stating the reason for the unanticipated absence on the first day back from leave. A doctor's certification must accompany the form when:

1. More than two (2) consecutive days of absence have occurred; or
2. Verification is requested by the Building Principal and/or immediate supervisor; or

Notwithstanding the foregoing, a doctor's certification must be provided for each unanticipated absence if that requirement is a part of an employee's Attendance Improvement Plan. Any failure to abide by the terms and requirements of an Attendance Improvement Plan will be addressed in accordance with the terms of the employee's Attendance Improvement and Board Policy.

Any anticipated absences for medical and/or personal purposes must be granted in advance by the immediate supervisor and/or Building Principal in accordance with the appropriate terms and conditions of the applicable collective bargaining agreement.

B. Review of Attendance Data

1. A record shall be kept of the attendance of each teaching staff member, including teachers, educational services personnel, and administrators. Any absence, for part or all of a school day, shall be recorded along with the reason for the absence. The record will distinguish sick leave, professional days, unpaid leaves of absence, personal leave, and other leaves. The employee's attendance record will include notation of verification of an absence where such verification is required. The employee's rate of absence shall be calculated every month and entered on his/her attendance record. An employee's attendance record shall be part of the employee's personnel file.
2. At the end of each official year, a cumulative attendance record shall be assembled for each school and for the District.
3. An attendance summary shall be prepared from the cumulative attendance record. The attendance summary shall show the rate of absence for each school and for the District.
4. A record shall be made of the appointment of substitutes for absent employees and the wages paid to substitutes.

C. Attendance Improvement Plan

1. Planning

The Superintendent or his/her designee will meet with Building Principals and appropriate administrators to discuss the attendance summary. The attendance summary shall be analyzed for patterns of absence, such as "excessive absenteeism" in a given school or work place, among certain groups of employees, for certain specific causes, or on certain days of the week, month, or year. Specific strategies for reducing the rate of absence shall be developed.

2. Employees Subject To Attendance Improvement Plans

Any employee that has been found to be “excessively absent” in a school year may be provided with an Attendance Improvement Plan. A determination of whether an employee has been “excessively absent” in a school year will be determined as follows:

For Ten Month Employees

- a. Once a ten (10) month employee has used more than ten (10) sick days in a school year, the District will conduct the analysis outlined below to determine if the employee has been “excessively absent.”
- b. In order to determine if an employee has been “excessively absent,” the District will consider the following: (1) the nature of the employee’s illnesses for which the employee used more than ten (10) absences during one school year; (2) the employee’s current and past patterns of absences, if any; (3) any interruption in the continuity of instruction and District operations caused by the employee’s absences; and (4) any negative impact on the delivery of educational services and District operations caused by the employee’s absences.
- c. If an employee has been determined to be “excessively absent,” he/she will receive written notification of the determination, and may request special consideration and/or initiate an appeal of that determination in accordance with the procedures below.

For Twelve Month Employees

- a. Once a twelve (12) month employee has used more than twelve (12) sick days in a school year, the District will conduct the analysis outlined below to determine if the employee has been “excessively absent.”
- b. In order to determine if an employee has been “excessively absent,” the District will consider the following: (1) the nature of the employee’s illnesses for which the employee used more than twelve (12) absences during one school year; (2) the employee’s current and past patterns of absences, if any; (3) any interruption in the continuity of instruction and District operations caused by the employee’s absences; and (4) any negative impact on the delivery of educational services and District operations caused by the employee’s absences.

- c. If an employee has been determined to be “excessively absent,” he/she will receive written notification of the determination, and may request special consideration and/or initiate an appeal of that determination in accordance with the procedures below.

However, although consecutive absences by a twelve (12) month or ten (10) month employee for one documented illness will still count against an employee’s total available sick leave days, such absences, for purposes of this Policy, may be treated as “one single sick day occurrence” for which consideration may, upon the request of the employee, be given. In that regard, any sick leave days taken as a result of a Board approved extended leave (i.e., maternity, disability, Family Medical Leave Act) will automatically be considered a “one single sick day occurrence.” Extended consecutive absences for other reasons will be considered in accordance with the provisions below.

Procedures For Special Consideration and Appeal

- a. At the conclusion of the school year, an employee who is found to have been excessively absent may submit a written request that the Building Principal and/or immediate supervisor conduct a review of his/her attendance record for the school year so that consideration may be given for “one single sick day occurrence.” In such a review, it is the responsibility of the employee to demonstrate and provide documentation to the Building Principal and/or immediate supervisor to support and/or justify any claimed “one single sick day occurrence.” This review will be completed within twenty (20) school days of the Building Principal and/or immediate supervisor’s receipt of the employee’s written request for review.
- b. The decision of the Building Principal and/or immediate supervisor may be appealed to the Superintendent. However, such appeal must be in writing and must be submitted to the Superintendent within five (5) school days of the employee’s receipt of the Building Principal and/or immediate supervisor’s decision. The Superintendent will issue a decision on the employee’s appeal within twenty (20) school days of receipt of the employee’s written request for an appeal.
- c. The decision of the Superintendent may then be appealed to the Board of Education. However, such appeal must be in writing and must be submitted to the Board Secretary within five (5) school days of the employee’s receipt of the Superintendent’s decision. The Board of Education will consider the employee’s appeal at its next regularly scheduled meeting. Any further appeal shall be consistent with applicable New Jersey Statutes and Regulations.

3. Implementation
 - a. The Building Principal and/or immediate supervisor shall be responsible for implementing the District's plan for the improvement of teaching staff member attendance in his/her school building or department.
 - b. Any employee that has received an Attendance Improvement Plan pursuant to the above provisions is expected to strictly adhere to the provisions of the plan.

D. Attendance Maintenance

1. The Principal and/or immediate supervisor will encourage the regular attendance of the teaching staff members in his/her building or department. He/She shall maintain contact with absent employees and confer personally with each employee who returns from an absence of any duration, impressing upon employees the district's concern for their health and well-being. The Principal and/or immediate supervisor shall, by appropriate means, recognize teaching staff members whose attendance is exemplary.
2. The Principal and/or immediate supervisor shall incorporate, and shall direct other supervisors to incorporate, a teaching staff member's attendance record in his/her evaluation.
3. The Principal may require teachers to evaluate the work done by substitutes in their absence.
4. The Principal and/or immediate supervisor shall report to the Superintendent or his/her designee any teaching staff member whom he/she suspects of misusing sick leave or falsifying the reasons for absence.
5. In case of sick leave claimed, the Board of Education may require a physician's certificate to be filed with the Secretary of the Board of Education in order to obtain sick leave.

E. In-service Training

1. The Principal and/or immediate supervisor will meet with the teaching staff members assigned to his/her building/department at the beginning of each school year to familiarize employees with the following:

- a. Board policy and District regulations on attendance;
- b. District forms for reporting and verifying absences;
- c. Attendance counseling and the Attendance Improvement Plan;
- d. The District's cost for absenteeism and the value of accumulated sick leave to the employee; and
- e. The degree to which attendance will affect evaluation reports.

F. Counseling

- 1. The Building Principal and/or immediate supervisor may, in his/her discretion, call a conference with a teaching staff member where the number and/or pattern of the members' absences or the reasons offered for the member's absences indicate a misunderstanding of the teaching staff member's responsibility to the District or the possible misuse of the privilege of paid leave.
- 2. Prior to the giving of any admonition or reprimand or imposition of discipline of any kind, the Principal and/or immediate supervisor shall determine the nature of the absences and consider any extenuating circumstances.
- 3. A written report/notice of any attendance conference shall be prepared and retained with the teaching staff member's evaluations. The member shall, in accordance with Board policy on teaching staff member evaluation, be permitted to examine the report and affix his/her comments, if any, to the report/notice.

Date: May 31, 2011