

**DHS Attendance Policy  
2011-2012**

**Connecticut State Law on Attendance:**

All children over five and under eighteen years of age shall be required to attend a public day school, unless the parent or person having control of such child is able to show, to the satisfaction of the Board of Education, that the child is receiving elsewhere equivalent instruction to that provided in a public day school. The parent or person having control of a child seventeen years of age or older may consent to such child's withdrawal from school. Such parent or person shall personally appear at the school district office and sign a withdrawal form.

The Board has the responsibility to monitor compliance with all laws and regulations governing student attendance. Student attendance shall be monitored administratively for compliance with Board policies and the administration will work with the parent and those persons having control of the child to assist them in the assumption of their responsibilities relative to State Laws and Board of Education policies. Parents who do not assume responsibility for their child's attendance as required by law, may be referred to the State Prosecutor for prosecution. Procedures for implementation of this policy shall be governed by administrative regulations.

LEGAL REFERENCE: Connecticut General Statute 10-184, Chap. 168, Sec. 1-199

The faculty and staff expect students to be in class unless they are ill, observing a religious holiday, suspended, or due in court. A student who leaves school without parental consent, is absent from school on a regular basis without school authorization, has a high rate of absenteeism or has four (4) unexcused absences in any one month or ten (10) unexcused absences in any school year shall be reported to the Department of Children & Families. Parents/Guardians are compelled to send their child to school and could incur legal liability for failure to do so.

**UNEXCUSED ABSENCES** - Those absences that are not excused (as defined below) and which are in violation of the Board's requirement of regular attendance of all students. Vacations scheduled during school days are considered unexcused absences. School work will not be provided prior to the absence. Any student with 10 or more consecutive unexcused absences will be considered to have left the school and will be exited. Students who wish to return after exiting, will need to re-register at the school. There is no guarantee that students in this case will be able to have the same teacher/course(s) as they did when previously enrolled.

**EXCUSED ABSENCES** - Any absence from a regularly scheduled school day for:

- a) Reasons of health, including illness, incapacity, or doctor's visits. The District reserves the right to require a physician's or other appropriate certification for absences in excess of five (5) consecutive days or a total of fifteen (15) days in any school year.
- b) Recognized religious observances.
- c) Family emergency.
- d) Other circumstances that are clearly emergencies that prevent school attendance.
- e) Documentation from a physician will be required. If the parent/guardian does not provide documentation from a physician of a chronic or extended illness, the principal will review the child's attendance for needed services and/or applicable sanctions of the attendance law.

Student absences can be excused, provided that a parent/guardian contacts the Danbury High School Attendance office within (3) school days of absence.

**CREDIT ONLY:**

Students who accrue a total of (7) unexcused absences in a semester will lose the right to attain a letter grade. In addition, students that accrue a total of (10) absences (excused or unexcused) will also lose the right to attain a letter grade. Credit may still be granted if a student:

- a) completes all missing work with the allowed time frame;
- b) demonstrates understanding of all course competencies; **and**
- c) passes the midterm (for absences in Semester 1) or final examination (for absences in Semester 2).

Students who satisfy all of the above criteria will be given a Credit Only (CO) on their report card and transcript, which indicates the student is receiving credit without a letter grade. A grade of a (CO) is equal to a Grade Point Value of 1.0. For averaging purposes, (CO) counts as a 65.

**OTHER EXCUSED ABSENCES (OEA)** - The following are examples of Other Excused Absences:

**Prearranged Appointments** – We strongly encourage parents/guardians to schedule appointments for their child outside of the school day. However we understand that in some cases, an appointment may need to occur during the school day. Please notify the school of any such appointments as they arise. When your child goes to school, the office will mark the time of arrival/dismissal. This includes student court appearances.

**Family Death or Emergency** - For absences because of a death in the family or an emergency beyond the family's control, the parent/guardian must notify the school and provide documentation for the absence.

**Chronic/Extended Illness** - For students who are absent because of chronic illnesses, a disability, or because of a need for homebound services, the parent/guardian must consult with the principal at the beginning of the enrollment of the student in school or upon the onset of the student condition that affects regular attendance.

Reasons of health, including illness, incapacity, or doctor's visits. The District reserves the right to require a physician's or other appropriate certification for absences in excess of five (5) consecutive days or a total of fifteen (15) days in any school year.

Documentation from a physician will be required. If the parent/guardian does not provide documentation from a physician of a chronic or extended illness, the principal will review the child's attendance for needed services and/or applicable sanctions of the attendance law.

**Religious Observances** - Absences as a result of observances of religious holidays should be prearranged by the parent/guardian, who is responsible for notifying the child's school of the religious holiday(s) to be observed. If the parent/guardian is unable to prearrange the absence, a request for exemption must be received no later than the third day after the student's return to school from the absence occasioned by the religious observance.

**Suspensions** - For absences because of suspension, the parent/guardian will be notified of the suspension and the date when the student will be expected to return to school. The student must return on the indicated date.

**Extra-Curricular Activity Absences** - Activity absence is any absence that is school related or school sponsored. Extra-curricular activities include, but are not limited to field trips, competitive events, student activities and college visits. Absences beyond 10 in a school year require prior administrator approval.

**Exceptional Circumstances** - The principal may approve prearranged absences for situations in which an exemption from attendance appears to be in the best interests of the student and his/her family.

- Prior to the student's absence, the parent or guardian must report in writing the rationale for the absence, dates of absence, and siblings within the school division for whom the exception will be also requested.
- The principal must provide the response in writing to the parent/guardian.
- In documented extenuating circumstances, the principal may approve an absence after-the-fact as exempt from the sanctions of the attendance policy.
- For those circumstances which cause the student to be absent and prior request for approval is not possible, the parent/guardian must request in writing within two days of the student's return to school.
- No more than five (5) days may be approved by the principal for exceptional circumstances during a school year. For requests of more than five days, the request must be endorsed by the principal and approved by the superintendent/designee.

#### **TARDY EXCUSED (TE) and EARLY DISMISSAL EXCUSED (EDE):**

The following procedures must be followed in order to be excused:

- Late arrival: Call the office prior to the student's arrival at school to document the late arrival. When students arrive at school they must go to the office for a pass. The time of arrival will be documented.
- Early dismissal: call the office prior to the student's departure. Student must go to the office for dismissal. The time of dismissal will be documented. Written documentation must be provided in excess of 5 early dismissals.

#### **TARDY UNEXCUSED (TU) and EARLY DISMISSAL UNEXCUSED (EDU):**

The following conditions provide the *ONLY* acceptable reasons for a student's late arrival or early dismissal from school:

- Health
- Recognized religious observances
- Family emergency
- Late Bus

All late arrivals and early dismissal reasons that do not fit the excused criteria above will be marked as unexcused. Excessive, more than 5, tardies or early dismissals and/or a pattern of late arrival or leaving early will necessitate parent/guardian communication with the school to support regular attendance. Three unexcused tardies equals one unexcused absence. Students who arrive after the bell will be marked tardy. Students arriving in a class more than fifteen minutes after the bell without a pass will be marked unexcused absent from that class.

Students who are absent, excused or unexcused, are expected to make up all work. Students have as many school days to make work up as they were absent, and this time period begins upon the student's return to school. School work will not be provided prior to unexcused absences.