

**LEYTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS
BOARD OF EDUCATION #5001**

Compulsory Attendance and Excessive Absenteeism

"School success is 90 percent showing up; the other half is mental."

Yogi Berra

Research on policies and practices that effectively encourage regular student attendance share some key components:

1. Education of parents regarding school attendance requirements.
2. Effective policies and practices to monitor attendance.
3. Clear definition of excessive absenteeism and a two-stage response to excessive absences.

The board has considered this educational research and used it to create the following policy on Compulsory Attendance and Excessive Absenteeism.

Attendance Defined

Pursuant to Title 92, Chapter 2 of Nebraska's Uniform System of Accounting, paragraph 006.02, students shall be counted in attendance when they are present on days when school is in session. A student shall be counted present only when he or she is actually at the school or is present at a school sponsored activity which is supervised by a member or members of the school staff. This may include authorized independent study, work-study programs, field trips, athletic contests, music festivals, student conventions, instruction for homebound students or similar activities when officially authorized under policies of the School Board. It does not include "making up" school work at home or activities supervised or sponsored by private individuals or groups.

Required Attendance

Every person residing in the school district who has legal or actual charge or control of any child who is of mandatory attendance age shall cause that child to attend a public or private school regularly unless the child has graduated from high school or has been allowed to disenroll pursuant to this policy.

Students who are identified by Public Health and are required to quarantine due to COVID-19, or any other infectious disease, but are able to attend classes virtually will be counted "present" for the purposes of attendance. Virtual Instruction will be used by the school district consistent with the District's Return to School Plan.

To “attend” virtually, students will be given a schedule from the administration with the classes the student must complete and the start and ending time for those classes. Generally, these will be consistent with the starting and ending times of the in-person class. Students are expected to be logged in to the online interface for the class no later than the scheduled start time and must remain logged in through the completion of the scheduled ending time for class, unless dismissed by the instructor. Classes with less or no formal instruction will be monitored, and attendance taken, as established by the administration consistent with the expectations of the class.

Mandatory Attendance Age

All children who are or will turn six years old before January 1 of the current school year are of mandatory attendance age. Children who have not turned eighteen years of age are of mandatory attendance age.

A child who will not reach age 7 before January 1 of the current school year may be excused from mandatory attendance if the child’s parent or guardian completes an affidavit affirming that alternative educational arrangements have been made for the child. A copy of the required affidavit is attached to this policy.

Discontinuing Enrollment – 5 Year Old Students

The person seeking to discontinue the enrollment of a student who will not reach six years of age prior to January 1 of the current school year shall submit a signed, written request and to the superintendent using the form which is attached to this policy. The school district may request written verification or documentation that the person signing the form has legal or actual charge or control of the student. The school district shall discontinue the enrollment of any student who satisfies these requirements. Any student whose enrollment is discontinued under this subsection shall not be eligible to reenroll in this school district until the beginning of the following school year unless otherwise required by law.

Discontinuing Enrollment – 16 and 17 Year Old Students

Only children who are at least 16 years of age may be disenrolled from the district. The person seeking to discontinue the child’s enrollment shall submit a signed, written request and submit it to the superintendent using the form which is attached to this policy. The district will follow the procedures outlined on the attached form in considering requests to disenroll.

Only children disenrolling to attend a non-accredited school may be exempt from this policy. The person with legal or actual charge or control of the child must provide the superintendent with a copy of the signed request submitted to the State Department of Education for attending non-accredited schools. The superintendent may confirm the validity of the submission with the State Department of Education.

Attendance Officer

Each building principal is designated as an attendance officer for the district. Each building principal, at his or her discretion, may delegate these responsibilities to any other qualified individual. The attendance officer is responsible for enforcing the provisions of state law relating to compulsory attendance. This responsibility includes but is not limited to filing a report with the county attorney of the county in which a student resides. Compensation for the duties of attendance officer is included in the salary for the superintendent or designee.

Expectations for Regular Attendance:

1. Students are expected to attend every class, every day. An "Unexcused Absence" will be recorded in the event that both the parent/guardian and school district believe the student should be in school.
2. All other absences, including absences for minor illnesses, family events, and routine medical appointments are simply "absences."
3. Upon return from every absence or partial-day absence, students are expected to meet with teachers.
4. Students must not be absent from any course more than seven days in any given quarter, excluding school activities or college visits, in order to earn academic credit for that course for that quarter. Students who lose credit in any given course due to absences may appeal that loss of credit to his/her building principal.

Attendance Incentives:

Building principals will establish attendance incentives for their students. Those may include:

- Special Recognition of students who have 95% or greater attendance each quarter
- Excusal from certain classroom assignments (final exam, written report) for students with 95% or greater attendance each semester

- Special rewards (movie day, field day, extra recess) for students who have 95% or greater attendance

At the conclusion of each quarter building principals report to the board what incentives were implemented and the effectiveness of the incentive in improving student attendance and engagement.

When students are absent from school, district staff will respond as follows:

First Stage Response to Absences

1. A member of district staff will contact parent via telephone for every absence if the parent has not contacted the school in advance.
2. After a student's third absence in any given quarter, the school's attendance officer will schedule a meeting with the student's parents or guardians. That meeting will be documented on the attached form.
 - a. This meeting must be attended by attendance officer, parents, social worker or principal, and the student (if appropriate)
 - b. The meeting shall be documented
 - c. The meeting shall develop a collaborative plan, in cooperation with the Cheyenne County Diversion office, to assist the student in improving his/her attendance

Second Stage Response to Absences

Students who are absent more than 10% of the days they have been enrolled in a school year may be referred to the county attorney for action under NEB. REV. STAT. § 43-247(3)(a) and (b).

Adopted on: January 15, 2009
Revised on: July 10, 2017
Revised on: April 9, 2018
Reviewed on: July 9, 2018
Reviewed on: July 8, 2019
Reviewed on: January 13, 2020
Reviewed on: July 13, 2020
Revised on: November 9, 2020
Revised on: January 11, 2021
Reviewed on: July 12, 2021
Reviewed on: July 11, 2022
Reviewed on: January 9, 2023
Reviewed on: July 10, 2023

Acknowledgment of Receipt

I understand that consistent school attendance is required by state law. I also understand that student achievement is directly linked to excellent attendance. I have received the board of education's new policy on student attendance and have reviewed it.

Student
Name _____

Student
Signature _____

Date _____

Parent/Guardian
Name _____

Parent/Guardian
Signature _____

Date _____