

# REGULATION

## WASHINGTON TOWNSHIP SCHOOL DISTRICT

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Attendance

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### Grades 9-12

#### Introduction

Students are required to attend school regularly. Procedures have been established at the high school (grades 9-12) which enable school personnel to determine the reason(s) for all pupil absences and to take appropriate actions in cases of excessive absenteeism.

For purposes of this regulation, there are three (3) categories of absences:

- a. Level I: Unexcused absences
- b. Level II: Parent explained/authorized absences
- c. Level III: Administrative excused absence with requisite Documentation

Excessive absenteeism is defined as more than ten (10) Level I/Level II absences. Students who accumulate in excess of eighteen (18) Level I/Level II absences may be dropped from the rolls. Furthermore, any student who accumulates in excess of thirty-four (34) days of absence (Level I, Level II, and/or Level III), except where homebound instruction has been provided, will also be considered to be excessively absent, will receive no credit for the school year, and may be dropped from the rolls. Students below the compulsory attendance age of 16, who demonstrate excessive absence, may be placed in the Alternative School.

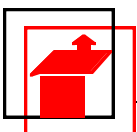
#### **Attendance and Excuses**

1. Attendance will be taken daily and recorded in the student data management system by the homeroom teacher.
2. Parents are required to call the school attendance office by 8:30 a.m. on the day their child will be absent from school. As well, students must submit a parental note explaining the reason for the absence. This note must be submitted upon the student's return to school.

#### Please note:

Parental approval/explained absences are not necessarily considered administratively excused absences except as noted in 4 below.

3. Every student will complete an absence verification form after each absence on which he/she states the reason for the absence. These forms will be kept in the attendance office and referred to as necessary.
4. Absence from school, lateness to school, and/or early dismissal from school may be administratively excused only under the following circumstances:
  - a. Religious holidays approved by the Board of Education



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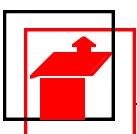
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- b. Death in a family
- c. Confirmed medical/legal appointments
- d. Absences approved in writing by a Doctor or Dentist
- e. Suspension imposed by the administration
- f. College visitations, as delineated in 7 below.

Note(s) and appropriate documentation for these reasons must be submitted within five (5) school days from the time the student returns to school or the documentation may not be accepted. Parents and students are strongly encouraged to make every effort to schedule driving tests, medical appointments and legal appointments at times that will least conflict with the instructional program. Absences from school, lateness to school, and/or early dismissals from school which do not meet the circumstances specified in 4a through f (above) as *administratively excused*, shall be considered unexcused.

- 5. A student who arrives at school after third period on a full day (10:00 a.m.) shall be marked absent for the day. An early dismissal prior to the end of the fifth period on a full day (11:40 a.m.) will be counted as a full-day absence. (See below under early dismissals and delayed openings for guidance on these days.)
- 6. When a student reaches eleven (11) Level I/II absences he/she will be placed in a “non-credit” status. Credits for courses passed will not be granted until satisfactory completion of assigned Saturday School sessions. For each absence beyond ten (10) days the student will be required to attend one (1) Saturday School session. If time is still owed at the year’s end, it will be completed in a Summer Credit Completion program or the student will have to repeat the school year.
- 7. Seniors and juniors will be permitted a maximum of two (2) days excused absence per year for the purpose of college related visitations. In order to have these visitations qualify as excused absences, a parental letter must be submitted at least two (2) school days prior to the anticipated date of the visitation. In addition, upon return the student must present a signed statement, on official letterhead, from the college, vocational school, job placement center, military recruitment center, or other approved post-secondary option location to verify the visit.
- 8. Seniors owing Saturday School session prior to graduation will not be allowed to participate in graduation exercises and will have their diplomas withheld until this time has been completed in the Summer Credit Completion program.
- 9. Any student in “Non-Credit Status” will be ineligible for all formal/semi-formal dances/proms, as well as for senior class trip(s) and Commencement.



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10. Absences for which the school has provided homebound instruction will not be included in this calculation.
11. Seniors who do not complete assigned Saturday School sessions prior to the end of the school year will be required to attend the Summer Credit Completion Program to complete the time owed. Appropriate school work will be provided to these students.
12. Underclass students who do not complete assigned Saturday School sessions prior to the end of the school year will be required to make up their sessions in a Summer Credit Completion Program or the student will have to repeat the school year.
13. Upon reaching unexcused absence #10, the parents of such students will be advised that judicial intervention will be sought for violation of the New Jersey Compulsory Attendance Statute 18A: 38-25.
14. Lateness to homeroom/school/early dismissal is incorporated into the attendance policy as follows:

### Lateness to Homeroom/School

If a student arrives to school after the official start of the school day, the student shall be assigned a detention or accumulate units of lateness/instructional time loss (ITL) as follows:

Late Arrival between 7:20 a.m. and 7:34 a.m. (H.R.) a student will be assigned 1 administrative detention

Late Arrival between 7:35 a.m. and 8:20 a.m. (1<sup>st</sup> Pd.) = 1 unit of lateness/instructional time loss (ITL)

Late Arrival between 8:21 a.m. and 9:10 a.m. (2<sup>nd</sup> Pd.) = 2 units of lateness/instructional time loss (ITL)

Late Arrival between 9:15 a.m. and 10:00 a.m. = 3 units of lateness/instructional time loss (ITL)

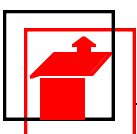
### Early Dismissal from School

If a student requests early dismissal from school, the student shall accumulate units of lateness/instructional time loss (ITL) commensurate with the amount of school time he/she misses as follows:

Early Dismissal between 1:21 and 2:10 PM (8<sup>th</sup> Pd.) = 1 unit of lateness/instructional time loss (ITL)

Early Dismissal between 12:31 and 1:20 PM (7<sup>th</sup> Pd.) = 2 units of lateness/instructional time loss (ITL)

Early Dismissal between 11:45 AM and 12:30 PM (6<sup>th</sup> Pd.) = 3 units of lateness/instructional time loss (ITL)



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### Consequences of Accumulated Units of Lateness/Instructional Time Loss (ITL)

Cumulative units of lateness/instructional time loss (ITL) due to repeated instances of lateness to school and/or requests for early dismissal shall result in the following consequences:

4 Units	1 Day of unexcused absence toward Non-Credit Status
8 Units and every 4 units thereafter	1 Additional unexcused absence toward Non- Credit Status

**PLEASE NOTE:** Units of unexcused lateness are cumulative on a yearly basis. Students who accumulate nineteen (19) days of unexcused absence, (including unexcused absences charged due to repeated lateness to school and/or early dismissal) except absences, for which homebound instruction has been provided, shall be required to repeat the school year. Administratively excused absences from school will count towards the combined maximum total of 34 days.

### Early Dismissal Days and Delayed Opening Days Pursuant to the School Calendar

#### *Early Dismissal Days:*

On early dismissal days, all incidents of unexcused lateness occurring prior to 8:00 a.m. will result in the issuance of an administrative detention. Incidents of student Lateness occurring after 8:00 a.m. and student early dismissals occurring prior to 11:40 AM will constitute an absence for the day.

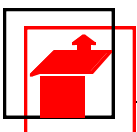
#### *Delayed Opening Days*

On days in which there is a delayed opening, unexcused late arrivals prior to 10:00 AM will result in the issuance of one administrative detention. Unexcused late arrivals after 10:00 AM will result in an absence for the day. Unexcused early dismissals prior 2:10 PM on a delayed opening day will result in an absence for the day. Students must be present in school for a total of four (4) hours to be considered present for the day.

15. A student must be present for a full day of school to participate in any extra-curricular activity scheduled for the same date.

### **Notification Procedures**

1. Attendance office personnel will refer to the appropriate assistant principal the name of any student who has three (3) consecutive days of Levels I, II, and/or III absence or any pattern of absence. The parent/guardian of any such student will be contacted by phone.



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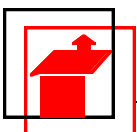
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2. Attendance office personnel will refer to the appropriate assistant principal the name of any student who has four (4) days of Level I and/or Level II absences. The parent/guardian of any such student will be contacted by phone and/or letter.
3. The next parent notification will result when a student reaches eight (8) Level I/ Level II absences.
4. If, despite the warnings, the student reaches the point of excessive absenteeism eleven (11) days), the assistant principal will contact the student and his/her parent(s) or guardian(s) by phone to discuss the reasons for the absences. This parent/guardian contact will take place as soon as possible.
5. In cases of unexcused absences (Level I absences), the building principal or designee, in addition to the above notification procedures, shall implement the State-mandated protocols for responding to unexcused absences as set forth in Section D of Policy No. 5200 – *Attendance*. These protocols require specific administrative action at the following levels of unexcused absenteeism:
  - Up to four (4) cumulative unexcused absences;
  - Between five (5) and nine (9) unexcused absences; and
  - Ten (10) or more cumulative unexcused absences.
6. Attendance office personnel will refer to the appropriate assistant principal the name of any student who has accumulated fifteen (15) days of *absence regardless of level of absence*. The parent/guardian of any such incident will be contacted by phone and/or letter.
7. Attendance office personnel will refer to the appropriate assistant principal the name of any student who has accumulated twenty-five (25) days of absences *regardless of level of absence*. The parent/guardian of any such student will be contacted by phone and/or letter. The Executive Assistant Principal will meet with the parent/guardian and the student to review the student's attendance record to determine the cause(s) of the excessive absenteeism, develop a written action plan to improve the student's attendance, and to review the disciplinary and academic (retention/loss of credit) consequences for continued excessive absenteeism.
8. Attendance office personnel will refer to the appropriate assistant principal the name of any student who has accumulated thirty (30) days of absences *regardless of level of absence*. The parent/guardian of any such incident will be contacted by phone and/or letter.

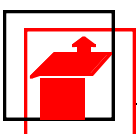


## Conference with the Assistant Principal

1. During the phone conference, the importance of regular school attendance will be stressed. The state laws and school policies on attendance will be discussed. It will be made clear that the school believes that it is the parent's/guardian's responsibility to ensure that their child(ren) attends school regularly. Parents will be notified during the conference that the school will refer the case to the local court if the student's Level I/Level II absences continue.
2. The purpose of the conference will be for the student and parents/guardians to explain each absence and to provide medical documentation for absences as appropriate.
3. It is recognized that every illness does not require treatment by a physician, however, in cases of repeated short-term absences for illness, there should be medical treatment and a doctor's note should be produced within five (5) days indicating the cause for the recurring illnesses.
4. The parents/guardians and students will be warned that future absences will result in strong action being taken.
5. The phone conference will be followed by a letter in which the major points covered will be repeated. A copy of this letter will be placed on file.

## Post Conference Action

1. When a student reaches eleven (11) Level I/Level II absences, he/she will be notified via registered mail, by the assistant principal, that he/she is in "Non-Credit Status". Credits for courses passed will not be granted until satisfactory completion of assigned Saturday School sessions. For each Level I/Level II absence beyond ten (10) absences, the student will be required to attend one Saturday School session.
2. Excessive class absence, therefore, means that the students has not adequately participated in the learning activities of his/her classes and is not entitled to receive full credit for those classes.
3. The usual penalty for excessive absences, therefore, will be the withholding of credit for the classes until successful completion of Saturday School sessions.
4. Absences for which the school has provided homebound instruction will not be included in this calculation.
5. Students who do not complete assigned Saturday School sessions prior to the end of the school year will be required to make up their sessions in a Summer Credit Completion program or repeat the school year. Until the time is completed, the student will be ineligible for participation in any extracurricular/co-curricular activity.



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6. Seniors who do not complete assigned Saturday School sessions prior to the end of the school year will be required to attend the Summer Credit Completion program to complete the time owed.

### **Appeal Process**

The appeal process may be instituted for a review of the number of days of absence, which the attendance records reflect and/or to determine whether the days accumulated are appropriately designated as Level I, Level II, or Level III absences.

#### Tier One

1. A parent or guardian may file a written appeal with the Executive Assistant Principal requesting a conference when a student's absences have exceeded the maximum limit of ten (10) Level I/Level II absences.
2. This written appeal must be submitted to the Executive Assistant Principal within five (5) days after receiving notification that a student has exceeded the maximum limit for absences.
3. The appeal request must state the reason(s) for appeal.
4. The student's total attendance record will be considered on an appeal case.
5. The Executive Assistant Principal will notify the parents or guardians of his/her decision in writing. The notification will be made within three (3) school days after the appeal hearing.

#### Tier Two

A written request to meet with the Superintendent, who represents the Board of Education, must be submitted within seven (7) days if not satisfied with the decision of the Executive Assistant Principal.

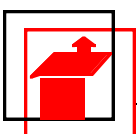
#### Tier Three

A written request may be submitted to the State Commissioner of Education if not satisfied with the decision of the Superintendent.

### **Credit Completion**

It is assumed that students who do not attend classes, regardless of the reason, cannot benefit from the instruction taking place in these classes.

1. Any student who accumulates eleven (11) or more Level I/Level II absences will be responsible to attend Saturday School sessions if he/she wishes to earn credit for the school year.



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### 2. Time Lines:

Days Absent  
(Yearly Basis)

Saturday Sessions Assigned

13-20

One Saturday Session for each Level I/Level II absence beyond twelve (12) absences

21+

Administrative decision based on each individual case; students could be dropped from the rolls

**\*Note:** Should any absence beyond the tenth (10<sup>th</sup>) day be determined to be a truancy, it will be dealt with as per the Student Code of Conduct in addition to owing one Saturday class as per credit completion guidelines.

### 3. Saturday School Session Hours

Saturday School sessions are scheduled each Saturday from 9:00 am to 12:00 noon. Students are to arrive prior to 9:00 am with appropriate schoolwork for the three-hour session.

### Suspension

Suspension, either internal or external, will not be counted as absences toward accumulating absences for non-credit status.

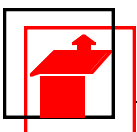
Students are responsible for making up all work missed due to suspension.

### Procedures for Completing Missed School Work Due to Absence

1. Students may make up work missed due to absence with no grade point deduction, except in cases of truancy and cutting class. Students will be given one (1) day make-up for each absent.  
Example: A student who is absent on Tuesday should have all make-up work completed by Thursday.
2. All tests administered during such absence may be made up with full credit. Previously announced tests may be given on the day returned. Teacher judgment will be used in other test make-up situations.
3. A student who is absent due to truancy and/or cutting class will not be given the opportunity to make up missed assignments, quizzes, tests, etc.

### Requests for Family Vacations

1. Parents/guardians should notify the school principal at least two (2) weeks in advance if they are planning to take students out of school.





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2. The time lost due to #1 above will count towards the ten (10) Level I/Level II absences allowed per school year according to policy.
3. Absences taken during posted mid-term and final examination periods are greatly discouraged.
4. The student must make-up work missed during these absences.

### **Long Term Medical Absences**

Students who are placed on homebound instruction due to illness will not have this time counted toward the ten (10) Level I/Level II absences.

#### **Procedures:**

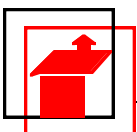
1. Parent/guardian should request homebound instruction through the Executive Assistant Principal no later than five (5) days after the inception of the illness in accordance with the administrative procedure on homebound instruction. (See Regulation No. 2412 *Homebound Instruction*.)
2. A statement by a medical examiner must be produced giving the prognosis of length of time the student will be absent and the nature of the illness.
3. Only medical absences of ten (10) or more consecutive days will be considered for homebound instruction.

### **Dropping Students from Rolls for Excessive Absences**

1. Students who were placed on homebound instruction during the year or were absent for long term hospitalization will not have that time counted towards the nineteen (19) days.
2. When an adult student reaches nineteen (19) absences, he or she will be dropped from the rolls, and will receive no credit for the school year.
3. Parents/guardians of students aged 16 and older will be advised of the excessive absences of nineteen (19) or more days for their child and they will be asked to withdraw the student.

### **Distribution of Information**

1. Every effort shall be made to see that pertinent portions of these procedures are explained to all students.
2. Pertinent excerpts from the procedure will be published in the Student/Parent Handbook.
3. Parents/guardians who are sent letters of warning regarding impending problems with attendance shall also receive a copy of the appropriate portion of this procedure.



## Summer Credit Completion Program

### 1. Definition

The purpose of the Summer Completion Program is to provide an opportunity for students in a “non-credit status” to fulfill attendance requirements while participating in educational activities. Reading and writing skills are to be emphasized throughout the program. Students who are required to attend the Summer Credit Completion Program will be required to pay a registration and per diem fee to be established by the Board of Education.

A student who has exceeded ten (10) Level I/Level II absences and has not made up the time and credits by attending Saturday School sessions will be in a “Non-Credit Status”. The time owed must be made up in a Summer Credit Completion program or the student will repeat the previous school year. A senior who has exceeded ten (10) Level I/Level II absences and owes Saturday School sessions will not participate in graduation. A diploma will not be issued to any student until excess absences have been made up in either Saturday School session(s) or the Summer Credit Completion program.

The Department Supervisor for each state-required content area will be responsible for designing a unit of study requiring a minimum of twelve (12) hours of work. These units of study are to be forwarded to the assistant principal in charge of the Summer Completion Program by the last school day annually.

Depending upon the number of students, one (1) teacher per twenty-five (25) students will be hired by the Board of Education to supervise and assist the students in the Summer Completion Program. Teachers will award a pass/fail grade to the students in the program.

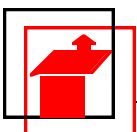
### 2. Procedures for the Summer Credit Completion Program

Students will be required to make up one (1) day for each absence in excess of (10) Level I/Level II absences.

The length of one (1) make-up day will be three (3) hours, equal to one (1) Saturday School session.

Make-up days must be served consecutively. The only permissible reasons for missing a make-up day are:

- a. Religious Holidays
- b. Death in the Family
- c. Confirmed legal appointment
- d. Absences approved in writing by a doctor or a dentist.



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Any absences, other than those listed above, will result in the student being removed from the Summer Completion Program; thus, the entire school year must be repeated.

A student arriving late to the Summer Completion Program must make up the time minute for minute. On the third lateness, the student will be dropped from the Summer Completion Program and will have to repeat the entire school year.

A student must complete designated sections of a unit of study during the three-hour day to earn a passing grade.

Any student who is disruptive in the Summer Completion Program will be referred to the administrator in charge. The student will be sent home and receive no credit for the day. In the event the student does not complete the required days by the end of the program he/she must then repeat the entire school year.

Issued: 25 August 1998

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Revised & Approved: 27 June 2006

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