

Attendance/TtruancyAbsences

Children between first and eighth grade who reside in Ashland shall attend the public school to which the child is assigned unless otherwise enrolled in another school as stipulated in RSA 193:1. Attendance shall be required of all students enrolled in the Ashland Elementary School during the days and hours that school is in session, except that the Principal may excuse a student for temporary absences when receiving satisfactory evidence of conditions or reasons that may reasonably cause the student's absence.

Any absence that has not been excused for the reasons below will be considered an unexcused absence:

- Illness
- Recovery from an accident
- Required court attendance
- Medical and/or dental appointments
- Death in the family
- Observation or celebration of a bona fide religious holiday
- Such other good cause as may be approved by the Principal or permitted by law.

Parents and/or guardians are required to call the school in those cases when their child is absent due to illness. For other absences, parents and/or guardians must provide written notice or reasons for the absence. When it is determined necessary, the Principal may require the parent/guardian to provide additional documentation in support of their written notice. Such documentation could include but not be limited to doctor's notes, court documents, or other documents supporting the claimed reasons for the absence. To enhance student safety, parents are encouraged to notify the school of a student's absence on the day(s) of the absence.

If parents wish for their child to be absent for a reason not listed above, the parent must provide a written explanation of the reason for such absence, including why the student will be absent and for how long the student will be absent. The Principal will make a determination as to whether the stated reason for the student's absence constitutes good cause and will notify the parents of his/her decision. If the Principal determines that good cause does not exist, the parents may request a conference with the Principal to again explain the reasons for non-attendance. The principal may then reconsider the initial determination. However, at this juncture, the Principal's decision shall be final.

Any student who has ten or more half-days of unexcused absence shall be considered a habitual truant.

A half-day absence is defined as a student missing more than two hours of instructional time and less than three and one-half hours of instructional time.

Any absence of more than three and one-half hours of instructional time shall be considered a full-day absence.

The Principal or Truant Officer is hereby designated as the District employee responsible for overseeing truancy issues.

Truancy

Truancy is defined as any unexcused absence from class or school. The Principal or Truant Officer, at the discretion of the Principal, is the Ashland School District representative responsible for overseeing truancy issues.

Intervention

School district personnel shall monitor student absenteeism. When it is determined that a student is in danger of becoming habitually truant, school personnel will initiate a process to identify the reasons for the unexcused absences and to develop a plan to correct the truant behavior. This process will ordinarily consist of:

- Meeting with the student to discuss the truant behavior;
- Written notification to the student's parents/guardians to inform them of the truant behavior as well as their legal responsibility to have their child in regular attendance;
- Meeting with the student intervention team to discuss possible interventions;
- Meeting with the parents/guardians to discuss the situation and develop an intervention to correct the truant behavior;
- Disciplinary actions may occur in the event that other interventions are unsuccessful. This may include, but not be limited to required participation in an extended school day or year, a failure to be promoted to the next grade level, and/or court involvement.

The Board will place the item on the agenda of a public school board meeting between the first and second reading. Any public input shall be advisory only and final adoption as to the policy's provisions will remain solely with the Board.

Additionally, the Superintendent shall also ensure that this policy is included in or referenced in the student handbook provided to parents annually at the beginning of each school year.

Legal References:

RSA 189:34, Appointment
RSA 189:35-a, Truancy Defined
RSA 193:1, Duty of parent; Compulsory Attendance by Pupil
RSA 193:7 Penalty
RSA 193:8, Notice Requirements
RSA 193:16 Bylaws as to Nonattendance
NH Code of Administrative Rules, Section Ed 306.04 (a)(1), Attendance and Absenteeism
NH Code of Administrative Rules, Section Ed 306.04 (c), Policy Relative to Attendance and Absenteeism.

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