

## Students

### Attendance

Classroom learning experiences are the basis for public school education. Time lost from class is lost instructional opportunity.

The administration has established an attendance regulation which reflects that time lost from class is essentially irretrievable in terms of opportunity for instructional exchange; that excessive absences deprive teachers and students of teaching time that could be better spent on programs and activities; and that a student has an obligation to give, as well as receive, in the context of the classroom setting. The Brookfield Public Schools strongly discourage parent/guardians/guardians scheduling vacations during times when school is in session.

### Definitions

The following is a listing of definitions pursuant to this regulation.

1. “Absence” - is when a student in grades K through 12 is not in attendance for an entire class period or school day with or without parent/guardian permission.

A student is considered to be “in attendance” if present at his/her assigned school, or an activity sponsored by the school (e.g., field trip), for at least half of the regular school day. A student who is serving an out-of-school suspension or expulsion should always be considered absent.

2. “Excused Absence” includes absences one through nine from school with appropriate documentation including:
  1. a signed note or an email from the student’s parent/guardian;
  2. a signed note from a school official who spoke in person with the parent/guardian regarding the absence, or
  3. a note confirming the absence by the school nurse or by a licensed medical professional, as appropriate.

Documentation should explain the nature of and the reason for the absence as well as the length of the absence. Separate documentation must be submitted for each incidence of absenteeism.

Absences may be deemed as excused due to:

- A. Illness or injury (with doctor’s verification after the tenth absence and all absences thereafter.)
- B. Death in the family
- C. Religious holidays
- D. Court appearances
- E. School sponsored activities

- F. Lack of transportation that is normally provided by a district other than the one the students attends, (This reason does not require documentation.)
- G. An emergency, or
- H. Limited absence from school for special activities or extraordinary educational opportunities with parent/guardian consent, subject to the advance approval by District Administration.
- I. Any suspension or expulsion

For the tenth absence and all others thereafter, the same reasons cited above shall constitute “excused” absences. Documentation by a medical professional is required for illness, regardless of the length of the absence.

**THE BROOKFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS DISTRICT STRONGLY DISCOURAGES PARENTS/GUARDIANS FROM SCHEDULING VACATIONS DURING TIMES WHEN SCHOOL IS IN SESSION.**

The administration will determine whether absences are excused or unexcused. The school does not consider all absences from class or school which have been explained by parents/guardians to be excused. However, for purposes of the reporting of truancy to the State Department of Education (SDE) of Connecticut, the state approved definitions of “excused” and “unexcused” absences will be used. The District is not precluded from using separate definitions on such absences for its internal uses.

Students who have been absent from school must turn in a note or email from a parent/guardian if it is to be considered excused, otherwise it will be treated as an unexcused.

- 3. “Unexcused Absence” is an absence from any entire regularly scheduled school day for which the absence is not excused as defined above. A student’s absence shall be considered unexcused unless the absence meets the definition of an excused absence, listed above, including the fulfillment of the documentation requirements, or if an absence is the result of school or District disciplinary action.
- 4. “Class Cut” is when a student misses a class and has no legitimate reason for doing so or is tardy to or dismissed from school and does not have a legitimate excuse.
- 5. “Tardiness” is when students arrive at school later than the beginning of school. Tardiness may be explained by a parent/guardian but any absence from class that results will be considered as an accumulated absence and the student may lose credit. Students tardy to school are responsible for work done in classes missed as well as assignments made or due.
- 6. “Truant” is any student ages five (5) through eighteen (18) inclusive, who has four (4) unexcused absences from school in any one month or ten (10) unexcused absences from school in any school year.
- 7. “Habitual Truant” is any student who has twenty (20) unexcused absences within a school year.
- 8. “Loss of Credit” will take place upon the fifth unexcused absence from a semester course or a tenth unexcused absence for a full year course.

## Students

### Attendance (continued)

1. If a student is absent from school, the parent/guardian will send an email or a written note to the appropriate school office as early as possible that day.
  - Center School-[cesattendance@brookfieldps.org](mailto:cesattendance@brookfieldps.org),
  - Huckleberry Hill- [hhesattendance@brookfieldps.org](mailto:hhesattendance@brookfieldps.org),
  - Whisconier- [wmsattendance@brookfieldps.org](mailto:wmsattendance@brookfieldps.org).
2. If no contact is received, the school will make a reasonable effort to notify the parent/guardian by telephone of the student's absence. Detailed records of student attendance are maintained on the District student management system.
3. When the student has four (4) unexcused absences in a month or ten (10) unexcused absences in a year, a referral will be made to the appropriate staff. The appropriate staff will arrange a meeting with the parent/guardian to review and evaluate the reason for the student being a truant. This meeting shall be held not later than ten (10) days after the child is identified as a truant. If the parent/guardian declines to attend the meeting, that fact shall be documented and the meeting will be held. The appropriate staff will develop a plan to help improve the student's attendance.
4. If the parent/guardian of a child identified as "truant" fails to attend the required meeting or fails to cooperate with the school in trying to solve the truancy problem, the Building Principal or designee shall notify the Superintendent. The Superintendent shall, within 15 calendar days, file a written complaint with the Superior Court under the Family with Service Needs law.
5. If the student identified for special education has ten (10) unexcused absences, a Planning and Placement Team (PPT) meeting shall be held. The PPT will review the student's academic achievement and previous evaluations to determine if additional testing for special education is necessary.
6. After twenty (20) unexcused absences within a school year, the student will be identified as an habitual truant.
7. The appropriate staff shall coordinate services and refer truants and habitual truants to community agencies providing child and family services.

## Students

### Attendance (continued)

#### Attendance Procedures (Grades 9-12)

Note: Students at the high school, through eighteen, are covered by the applicable definitions and procedures pertaining to “truancy.”

#### 1. Absence Limitation

- a. Credit will be withheld in a semester or year course if a student exceeds five (5) absences in a semester. Parent/guardians will be informed in writing of any loss of credit.
- b. For purposes of this regulation all absences will count, except for those deemed as excused.
- c. Family trips and vacations will not generally be regarded as reasons for exceeding the absence limitation. Parent/guardians are strongly discouraged from scheduling vacations during times when school is in session. Any parent/guardians contemplating family vacations during school should contact the school at least two weeks prior to the vacation to ascertain its probable impact on their child’s absence and credit situation.

#### 2. Explanation of Student Absences

- a. All class absences will count toward the absence limitation even when explained by a parent/guardian.
- b. Procedure for Parent/guardians to Explain Absences:

##### (1) Absence from School

If a student is absent from school, the parent/guardian should email [bhsattendance@brookfieldps.org](mailto:bhsattendance@brookfieldps.org) that morning to report the absence. If a parent/guardian is unable to email, the student will be required to bring a note from the parent/guardian to the office upon returning to school.

##### (2) Tardiness to School

If a student will be late to school, parent/guardians are requested to contact the school office via email or by written note as soon as possible that day.

A student is considered tardy when he/she arrives at school later than the start of the first period.

A Junior or Senior who has a first period study hall is considered tardy when he/she arrives at school later than the start of the second period.

Tardiness may be explained by a parent/guardian, but any absence from a class will be considered as an accumulated absence. Tardiness will be considered excused for reasons listed in Definitions 2-A through 2-I.

## Students

### Attendance (continued)

#### (3) Early Dismissal from School

If a parent/guardian wishes to have a student dismissed from school early, the student should bring in a note from the parent/guardian to the office before school and secure an Early Dismissal Pass. In an emergency situation, a parent/guardian may call the school office to request an early dismissal pass for his/her student.

Students are not permitted to leave the building or school grounds without securing an Early Dismissal Pass.

- c. The Board of Education treats all students equally regardless of age. Students who are 18 or older are responsible for abiding by all attendance regulations including absences, dismissal, tardiness and class cutting. Students age 18 and over who do not live at home and who have filed with the high school office a verification of their legal and financial emancipation may provide their own verification.
- d. Failure to account for absences as described above will result in the absence being treated in the same manner as cuts.

#### 3. Cuts

- a. A cut is an absence from a scheduled class unless (1) authorized in advance by appropriate school personnel, or (2) explained by a parent/guardian to the satisfaction of the administration, as described in the previous section.
- b. Students who are found to be cutting classes will be subject to both academic and disciplinary consequences as determined by the school principal or his/her designee.

## Students

## Attendance (continued)

## Administrative Discretion

The administration will reject any explanation which it deems as not factual. The administration reserves the right to excuse any absence which it concludes has occurred because of mitigating circumstances.

## Waiver of Policy/Regulation

A student may request a waiver. All waivers are to be considered in a consistent manner. The administrator will consider all approved absences and any extenuating circumstances and attempt to render an impartial judgment. At the discretion of the administration, a parent/guardian may be requested to appear at the meeting to verify legitimacy of the waiver.

## Legal Reference: Connecticut General Statutes

10-184 Duties of parent/guardians. (as amended by PA 98-243 and PA 00-157)

10-198a Policies and procedures concerning truants (as amended by PA 00-157 and PA 11-136)

10-199 through 10-202 Attendance, truancy in general. (Revised 1995 - PA 95-304)

10-221(b) Board of education to prescribe rules.

46-149 Family with Service Needs.

*Campbell v New Milford*, 193 Conn 93 (1984).

*Action taken by State Board of Education on January 2, 2008, to define "attendance."*

*Action taken by the State Board of Education on June 27, 2012 to define "excused" and "unexcused" absences.*

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BROOKFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS  
Brookfield, Connecticut