

# Robbinsville Board of Education

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## REGULATION

Section: STUDENTS  
Regulation 5200: Attendance (M)  
Date Edited: March 2019

### A. Definitions

1. For the purposes of school attendance, a “day in session” shall be a day on which the school is open and students are under the guidance and direction of a teacher or teachers engaged in the teaching process. Days on which school is closed for such reasons as holidays, teachers’ institutes, and inclement weather shall not be considered as days in session.
2. A “school day” shall consist of not less than four hours, except that one continuous session of two and one-half hours may be considered a full day of Kindergarten.
3. “A day of attendance” shall be one in which the student is present for a full day under the guidance and direction of a teacher while school is in session.
  - a. Whenever over-crowded conditions make it necessary to hold two separate sessions with a different group of students in each session, a student attending for all of either session shall be regarded as having attended for the full day. An excused absence for any reason shall not be counted as a day of attendance in the school register.
4. A “half-day class” shall be considered the equivalent of a full day’s attendance only if in session for four hours or more, exclusive of recess periods or lunch periods.

### B. Attendance Recording

1. A record of the attendance of all students on roll in a school register shall be kept each day that school is in session by a teacher or other authorized person. It shall be the duty of this person to keep the attendance records according to these rules and the specific instructions issued by the Commissioner of Education.
2. No student shall be recorded as present unless the school is in session and the student so recorded is under the guidance and direction of a teacher in the teaching process.
3. A student shall be recorded as absent in the school register when not in attendance at a session of the school while a member of the school, except students excused due to religious holidays who shall be recorded as excused.
4. A student shall be recorded as either present, absent, or excused for religious observance, every day the school is in session after the student enters until the date the student is transferred to another school, transferred to an individual home instruction record, or officially leaves the school system.

5. The Commissioner shall annually prescribe a list of religious holidays on which it shall be mandatory to excuse students for religious observance upon the written request signed by the parent or person standing in loco parentis.
6. The mere presence of a student at roll call shall not be regarded as sufficient attendance for compliance with N.J.A.C. 6A:32-8.3.
7. A student not present in school because of his/her participation in an approved school activity, such as a field trip, meeting, cooperative education assignment, or athletic competition will be considered to be in attendance.

C. Excused/Unexcused Absences

1. "Excused absence" is a student's absence from school for a full day or a portion of a day for the observance of a religious holiday pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:36-14 through 16, for Take Your Child to Work Day, or any other absence determined to be excused by the New Jersey Department of Education.
2. "Unexcused absence that counts toward truancy" is a student's absence from school for a full or a portion of a day for any reason that is not excused as defined above or for any unexcused absence that does not count toward truancy listed below.
3. "Unexcused absence that does not count toward truancy" is a student's absence from school for a full day or a portion of a day for the reasons listed below:
  - a. The student's illness supported by a written letter from the parent or legal guardian upon student's return within two school days;
  - b. The student's required attendance in court;
  - c. Where appropriate, when consistent with Individualized Education Programs, the Individuals with Disabilities Act, accommodation plans under 29 U.S.C. §§ 794 and 705(20), and individualized health care plans;
  - f. The student's suspension from school;
  - g. Family illness or death supported by a written letter from the parent or legal guardian upon the student's return within two school days;
  - h. Visits to post-secondary educational institutions;
  - i. Interviews with an admissions officer of an institution of higher education;-
  - j. Examination for a driver's license;
  - k. Necessary and unavoidable medical or dental appointments that cannot be scheduled at a time other than the school day;
  - l. An absence for a reason not listed above, but deemed unexcused that does not count toward truancy by the Principal and attendance committee upon a written request by the student's parent or legal guardian stating the reason for the absence and requesting permission for the absence to be an unexcused absence that does not count toward truancy.

4. "Truancy" means ten or more cumulative unexcused absences that count toward truancy of a student between the ages of six and sixteen as determined by the Board's Attendance Policy and Regulation pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:16-7.6(a)4.iii. and the definition of school day pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:32-8.3. Any unexcused absence not counted toward truancy listed in C.3. above shall be an absence counted toward truancy.
5. Instances of tardiness may constitute an unexcused absence that counts toward truancy.

D. Notice to School of a Student's Absence

1. The parent(s) or legal guardian(s) or adult student is requested to call the school office before the start of the student's school.
2. The parent(s) or legal guardian(s) of the student or an adult student who will attend the morning session, but will not attend the afternoon session should call or provide notice to the school office before the start of the afternoon session.
3. The parent(s) or legal guardian(s) or adult student who anticipates a future absence or anticipates that an absence will be prolonged should notify the school office to arrange make-up work.

E. Readmission to School After an Absence

1. A student returning from an absence of any length of time must provide a written statement that is dated and signed by the parent(s) or legal guardian(s) or adult student listing the reasons for the absence within two school days.
2. A note explaining a student's absence for a non-communicable illness for a period of more than three school days must be accompanied by a physician's statement of the student's illness with medical clearance to return to school.
3. A student who has been absent by reason of having or being suspected of having a communicable disease must present to the school nurse written evidence of being free of communicable disease, in accordance with Policy 8451.

F. Instruction

1. Teachers shall cooperate in the preparation of home assignments for students who anticipate an excused absence of more than three school days duration. The parent(s) or legal guardian(s) or student must request such home assignments.
2. A student who anticipates an absence due to a temporary or chronic health condition may be eligible for home instruction in accordance with Policy 2412. The parent(s) or legal guardian(s) must request home instruction.
3. Students absent for any reason are expected to make up the work missed. The parent / legal guardian or student is responsible for requesting missed assignments and any assistance required. Teachers will provide make-up assignments as necessary.
4. In general, students will be allowed a reasonable amount of time as determined by the teacher to make up missed work.

5. A student who missed a test or an exam shall be offered an opportunity to take the test, exam, or an appropriate alternate test.

G. Denial of Course Credit

1. The teacher will determine the credit to be awarded a student for make-up work. Where class participation is a factor in the learning process, the teacher may consider a student's absences in determining a final grade, except excused absences or absence for a suspension from school will not adversely affect the student's grade. The teacher may record an incomplete grade for a student who has not had a full opportunity to make up missed work.
2. A high school student may be denied credit from a course or denied course credit when he/she has been absent for more than eight of the block sessions and more than four in a semester course, whatever the reason for the absence, except that excused absences or absences caused by a student's suspension will not count toward the total.

Exceptions to this rule may be made for students who have demonstrated to the teacher through completion of make-up assignments that they have mastered the proficiencies established for the course of study.

A secondary student who has been dropped from a course of study may be assigned to an alternate program.

A secondary student denied course credit after completing the course will be permitted to attend a credit completion session to regain the denied credit, provided the student has not been absent from the class more than fifteen times for a full year course.

3. An elementary student may be retained at grade level, in accordance with Policy 5410, when he/she has been absent 20 days or more school days, whatever the reason for the absence, except that excused absences and absences due to student's suspension will not count toward the total.

H. School District Response to Unexcused Absences During the School Year That Count Toward Truancy

1. The following unexcused absences shall count toward truancy:
  - Grades K-6 up to eight cumulative unexcused absences, toward truancy
  - Grades 7-8 up to six cumulative unexcused absences, toward truancy
  - Grades 9-12 up to three days absent toward truancy in any semester and/or six days absent toward truancy in a full year course will result in a warning letter sent home to the child's parents.
2. Other actions include but are not limited:
  - a. Make a reasonable attempt to notify the student's parent or legal guardian of each unexcused absence prior to the start of the following school day;
  - b. Make a reasonable attempt to determine the cause of the unexcused absence, including through contact with the student's parent or legal guardian;

- c. Identify, in consultation with the student's parent, or legal guardian needed action designed to address patterns of unexcused absences, if any, and to have the child return to school and maintain regular attendance;
- d. Proceed in accordance with the provisions of N.J.S.A. 9:6-1 et seq. and N.J.A.C.6A:16-10, if a potentially missing or abused child situation is detected; and
- e. Develop an action plan to establish outcomes based upon the student's patterns of unexcused absences and to specify the interventions for supporting the student's return to school and regular attendance, which may include any or all of the following:
  - (1) Refer or consult with the building's Intervention and Referral Services Team, pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:16-8;
  - (2) Conduct testing, assessments, or evaluations of the student's academic, behavioral, and health needs;
  - (3) Consider an alternate educational placement;
  - (4) Make a referral to or coordinate with a community-based social and health provider agency or other community resource;
  - (5) Refer to a court or court program pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:16-7.6(a)4.iv.
  - (6) Proceed in accordance with N.J.S.A. 9:6-1 et seq. and N.J.A.C. 6A:16-10, if a potential missing or abused child situation is detected; and
  - (7) Engage the student's family.
- f. Cooperate with law enforcement and other authorities and agencies as appropriate. If necessary, the following action will be taken by the Robbinsville district for the following attendance truancy issues.
  - (1) A letter will be mailed to the child's home explaining the situation in which the parent(s) and/or guardian must respond within 5 business days of the letter being mailed out. (If contact is made by the parents to the school a plan will be developed to have the child return to school. Should this plan not be followed by the parent(s) or student in any way this process will pick up at the next step 2).
  - (2) Should the parents not respond to the letter from the school within the allotted 5 business days in regards to coming up with a plan about their child's absences the school will send a guidance counselor to their residence with the schools' SRO to have parents contact PERFORM CARE 877-652-7624. (Should the plan which was developed by PERFORM CARE not be followed by the parent(s) or student in any way this process will pick up at the next step 3).
  - (3) All out refusal, non-compliance, failure to communicate, or follow any/all steps set up by this school or PERFORM CARE from the parent(s) at the attempts from the school and/or other departments to

have the child return to school, will be perceived as neglect towards the child by the parent(s), and be seen as a potential to cause the risk of the child suffering an educational deficit, and will result in the building administrator or any designee of the school filing charges against the parents in municipal court. At this time the legal notice form from the school will be sent to the parents of the child and the school administrator/designee will respond to the Robbinsville Municipal Court with the parent's information and request to file charges in municipal court.

3. For a student with a disability, the attendance plan and its punitive and remedial procedures shall be applied, where applicable, in accordance with the student's IEP, pursuant to 20 U.S.C. §§ 1400 et seq., the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act; the procedural protections set forth in N.J.A.C. 6A:14; accommodation plans under 29 U.S.C. §§794 and 705(20); and individualized health care plan and individualized emergency healthcare plan pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:16-2.3(b)5.xii.
4. All receiving schools pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:14-7.1(a), shall act in accordance with N.J.A.C. 6A:16-7.6(a)4.i. and H.1. above for each student with up to four cumulative unexcused absences that count toward truancy.
  - a. For each student attending a receiving school with five or more cumulative unexcused absences that count toward truancy, the absences shall be reported to the sending school district.
    - (1) The sending school district shall proceed in accordance with the Board of Education's policies and procedures pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:16-7.6(a) and H.4 above and the provisions of N.J.A.C. 6A:16-7.6(a)4.ii. through iv. and H.2 through H.3 above, as appropriate.

#### I. Discipline

1. Students may be denied participation in co-curricular activities if the Board establishes attendance standards for participation.
2. Students may be denied participation in athletic competition if the Board establishes-attendance standards for participation.
3. No student who is absent from school for observance of a religious holiday may be deprived of any award or of eligibility for or opportunity to compete for any award because of the absence.

#### J. Recording Attendance

1. Teachers must accurately record the students present, tardy, or absent each day in each session or each class. Attendance records must also record students' attendance at out-of-school curricular events such as field trips.
2. A record shall be maintained of each excused absence, unexcused absence that counts toward truancy and unexcused absence that does not count toward truancy for each student.

3. A report card will record the number of times the student was absent and tardy in each marking period.
4. A student's absence for observance of a religious holiday will not be recorded as such on any transcript or application or employment form.

K. Appeal

1. Students may be subject to appropriate discipline for their school attendance record.
2. A student who has been retained at grade level for excessive absences may appeal that action in accordance with Policy 5410.
3. A student who has been dropped from a course and/or denied course credit for excessive absences may appeal that action in accordance with the following procedures:
  - a. The student shall file a written appeal to the Principal or designee within five school days of receiving notice of the action. The appeal should state the reasons for each absences, any documentation that may support reducing the number of absences for the purposes of course credit, and reasons why the student should either continue to be enrolled in the course or receive course credit for a class the student completed.
  - b. The Principal or designee will respond in writing no later than seven school days after receiving the student's appeal.
  - c. If the student is not satisfied, he/she may submit a written request to the Principal for consideration by an Attendance Review Committee.
  - d. Students may be required to attend a hearing before the Attendance Review Committee. The Attendance Review Committee shall meet to hear the student's appeal and will inform the student of his/her current status. The student's parent(s) or legal guardian(s) and teacher(s) may attend the meeting.
  - e. The Attendance Review Committee shall decide the appeal and inform the student in writing within seven school days of the meeting
  - f. The student may appeal an adverse decision of the Attendance Review Committee to the Superintendent, the Board of Education, and the Commissioner of Education in accordance with Policy 5710, Pupil Grievance and N.J.S.A. 18A. An appeal to the Attendance Review Committee shall be considered to have exhausted the first two steps of the grievance procedure outlined in Policy 5710.

L. Attendance Records

1. Attendance records for the school district and each school will be maintained and attendance rates will be calculated as required by the New Jersey Department of Education. The school district will comply with all attendance requirements and any improvement plans as required by the Department of Education.

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