

NORTH BRANFORD PUBLIC SCHOOLS
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September 25, 2012

Dear Parent or Guardian:

After the close of the last school year, the State Board of Education adopted new definitions of excused and unexcused absences for the purpose of reporting truancy. It is noteworthy that the district may continue to use separate definitions for its internal uses (including decisions on promotion/retention, grading and disciplinary action). The North Branford Board of Education is in the process of revising its Student Attendance and Truancy policy. However, we are required to use the state's definitions for the purposes of reporting truancy. As such, I thought it was important to communicate this information to the school community at this time.

General Information

Regular and punctual student attendance in school is essential to the educational process. Connecticut state law places responsibility for assuring that students attend school with the parent or other person having control of the child.

An "unexcused" absence is any absence from a regularly scheduled school day, which absence is not excused.

A student is considered to be 'in attendance' if present at 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. A student not meeting the definition of 'in attendance' is considered absent.

Excused Absences

A student's absence from school shall be considered excused if written documentation of the reason for the absence has been submitted within ten school days of the student's return to school and meets the following criteria:

A. For absences one through nine, a student's absences from school are considered excused when the student's parent/guardian approves such absence and submits appropriate documentation; and

B. For the tenth absence and all absences thereafter, a student's absences from school are considered excused for the following reasons:

1. student's illness;
2. student's observance of a religious holiday;
3. death in the student's family or other emergency beyond the control of the student's family;
4. mandated court appearances (additional documentation required);
5. the lack of transportation that is normally provided by a district other than the one the student attends (no parental documentation is required for this reason); or
6. extraordinary educational opportunities pre-approved by district administrators and in accordance with State Department of Education Guidance.

Unexcused Absences

A student's absence from school shall be considered unexcused unless they meet one of the following:

- A. the absence meets the definition for an excused absence (including documentation requirements); or
- B. the absence meets the definition of a disciplinary absence.

Disciplinary Absences

Absences that are the result of school or district disciplinary action are excluded from these definitions.

Documentation Requirements

Documentation of absences must include a signed note from the student's parent/guardian, a signed note from a school official that spoke in person with the parent/guardian regarding the absence, or a note confirming the absence by the school nurse or by a licensed medical professional, as appropriate. Documentation must 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. For example, if a student is out sick two consecutive days, that student must submit the appropriate documentation covering both sick days. If a student is out sick two nonconsecutive days, that student must submit the appropriate documentation following each absence.

Sincerely,



Scott Schoonmaker
Superintendent of Schools