

AGAWAM PUBLIC SCHOOLS

ATTENDANCE POLICY GRADES 9-12

The outside workplace is an environment that expects individuals to be punctual and demonstrate commitment. The Agawam Public Schools district Attendance Policy is dedicated to preparing students for both the workplace and life's environment. We encourage good school attendance, since only through regular attendance can a student take full advantage of the educational opportunities offered. We believe in a direct and positive correlation between good school attendance and academic success. Furthermore, attendance in school is mandated by Massachusetts General Laws, specifically Chapter 76 sections 1, 2, 4, and 19.

COMPULSORY ATTENDANCE AGES

Massachusetts law establishes the state Board of Education as the agent, which determines mandatory and permissible school attendance ages, with exceptions listed in law. Generally, the State Board requires that all children be enrolled in school beginning in September of the calendar year in which they attain the age of 6 and that they attend school regularly until they reach age 16.

Under law, the School Committee of each city must enforce the school attendance of all children of compulsory school age residing therein.
File: JCA/JG-1 Legal Refs: M.G.L. 15:1G and 76:1

DUTY OF PARENT – SCHOOL ATTENDANCE OF CHILD – PUNISHABLE

(C. 76 § 2 Duties of Parents – Attendance of Children)

Every person in control of a child shall cause him/her to attend school as therein required, and, if he/she fails to do so for 7 day sessions or 14 half-day sessions within any period of 6 months, he/she *shall, on complaint by a supervisor of attendance, be punished by a fine of not more than twenty dollars*. No physical or mental condition capable of correction, or rendering the child fit subject for special instruction at public charge in institutions other than public day schools, shall avail as a defense unless it appears that the defendant has employed all reasonable measures for the correction of the condition and the suitable instruction of the child.

INDUCING ABSENCES

(C. 76 § 4 Inducing Absences – Penalty)

Whoever induces or attempts to induce a minor to absent him/herself unlawfully from school, or unlawfully employs him/her or harbors a minor who, while school is in session, is absent unlawfully there from, shall be punished by a fine of not more than two hundred dollars (\$200.00).

TRUANCY

Unnecessary absence due either to a student's willful decision or a parent's inability or unwillingness to ensure attendance is a violation of law and district policy. Parents who support or enable a chronic pattern

of unnecessary absences for children under the age of 16 may be subject to agency or court action. The Attendance Officer may file a report with the Department of Social Services for Educational Neglect and/or file a “Failure to Cause” at Springfield Juvenile Court on said parent or guardian. Chronic truancy and excessive absenteeism will result in the Attendance Officer filing a “Child in Need of Services” (CHINS) petition with the Springfield Juvenile Court.

ABSENCES FOR STUDENTS OVER 18 YEARS OLD

For purposes of any procedure for verification of absences from school, a student 18 years of age or over, with respect to his/her own absences from school, shall have all the responsibilities and powers, which in the case of a minor, would be charged to the parent or guardian. Form “M” from the Agawam High School Code of Conduct Student Handbook must be completed by the parent/guardian to allow the 18-year-old student to be responsible for his/her own verification of absence needs to be submitted to the office.

CREDIT/PROMOTION IMPLICATIONS

When a student’s unexcused absences exceed 5 days in a semester course or 10 days in a full-year course, the school may deny credit for that course. Students will receive the grade that they earned in a course for which credit is denied due to attendance. If a student receives a passing grade in a course required for graduation, but is denied credit due to excessive absence, the student may fulfill the necessary requirements by retaking the course for credit.

- a. When a decision to deny credit is made, the school will notify the parent or guardian of the intended action.
- b. The parent/guardian and the student will have the right to appeal the denial of credit only for the reasons listed above. The student and parent must write a letter requesting a review of the circumstances and the restoration of credit to the Attendance Officer, 760 Cooper Street, Agawam, MA 01001. All letters must be received within 10 calendar days from the date of notification of loss of credit. At this point, the parent and/or student will have the opportunity to provide documentation for the absences or explain extraordinary circumstances.
- c. The attendance committee will consist of the Attendance Office, student’s guidance counselor, assistant principal, and two staff members.
- d. Parents/guardians or student will be notified of the committee’s decision within 5 days.

CLASS CUTS AND SCHOOL TRUANCY

Class cuts and truancy from school are considered absences.

TARDINESS TO CLASS

When a student is tardy to class for more than half of the period, it will be counted as one absence. If a student enters class with a legitimate pass from a school official – administrator, teacher, nurse, guidance

counselor, or adjustment counselor – the student will not be considered tardy. If a student is tardy to class without a pass, the teacher must accept the student and follow discipline outlined in the AHS Code of Conduct Student Handbook.

TARDINESS TO SCHOOL – SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL

Students arriving tardy during first period must report directly to said first period class and sign in. Teacher attendance will be taken at the end of first period. The attendance sheet will reflect the tardy and time of arrival. When arriving to school after first period, students must report to the office. (Discipline is referenced in the AHS Code of Conduct Student Handbook.)

The following are acceptable reasons for tardiness:

1. Doctor or dentist appointment
2. Court appearance
3. Bereavement
4. Religious observance
5. Any Other reason that the Administration deems appropriate

All of the above reasons must be documented as follows:

1. Parental note for bereavement
2. Appointment card for doctor or dentist
3. Court document for court appearance

DISSMISSAL FROM SCHOOL

Dismissal from school is referenced in the AHS Code of Conduct Student Handbook.

Agawam Public Schools - 2005

Approved by School Committee on November 22, 2005, by a vote of 7 -
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