

**Attendance Requirements for Course Credit or Promotion****1. Definitions:**

*“Student”* - a student enrolled in the Waterbury Public Schools, any grade and/or age five (5) through (18).

*“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 (10) school days of the student’s return to school and meets the following criteria:

- A. A student’s absences from school are considered excused for the following reasons:
1. Student illness (Note: ALL student illness absences must be verified by an appropriately licensed medical professional to be deemed excused, regardless of the length of absence, for course credit or promotion consideration);
  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 Connecticut State Department of Education guidance.

*“Unexcused Absences”* - A student’s absence from school shall be considered unexcused unless they meet one of the following criteria:

- A. The absence meets the definition of 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.

**Footnotes:**

\*The Connecticut State Board of Education policy states that *“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.”* A student not meeting the definition of ‘in attendance’ is considered absent.

\*\*Such documentation should include a signed note from the student’s parent/legal guardian, a signed note from a school official that spoke in person with the parent/legal guardian regarding the absence, or 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. 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. Schools should take steps to allow non-English speaking parents/guardians to submit documentation in their native language.

**Attendance Requirements for Course Credit or Promotion, continued**

The classroom or homeroom teacher or administrative assistant or administrative designee determines the legitimacy of an excused absence, and final determination will be made by building principal.

1.2 Any student enrolled in the Waterbury School System in grades K – 12:

Twenty Absence Limit. No student may receive course credit for a full-year course after having been absent from that course more than twenty (20) class periods during the school year. These absences will be pro-rated for other than full-year courses and for courses meeting other than five (5) periods per week. All absences in a class will be counted except those incurred while a student participates in school-sponsored activities and/or essential administrative business and/or for an absence that meets the definition of a disciplinary action.

1.3. **TARDINESS/EARLY DISMISSAL** - For the purpose of tardiness and early dismissal, “excused” is defined the same as “excused” absence. A pupil who is tardy or dismissed early must report to the office before reporting to his/her classroom. Regardless whether the tardy or early dismissal is excused or unexcused, the student must be present in school for at least half of the regular school day in order to receive attendance credit for the day.

**For High School and Middle School:** Pupils are considered tardy or dismissed early if not in class when the bell rings. For every three unexcused tardies to school or for every three unexcused early dismissals from school, one unexcused day of absence will be assessed to the student’s academic record for that class period specifically affected by the tardy or early dismissal

At the high school level, the unexcused tardy or unexcused absence applies to each individual class the student is late for or absent from. This may apply to more than one class. In addition, when homeroom is dissolved, the student’s previous unexcused absences and unexcused tardies will be reflected in the student’s first period class.

**For Elementary Schools:** Total unexcused tardy and unexcused early dismissal time accumulated throughout the year will be assessed to the student’s academic record as determined by the school administrator.

1.4 The Board of Education's policy "Attendance Requirements for Students under 18 Years of Age with Respect to Truancy", 5113.2, will be strictly enforced.

1.5 The school administrator or administrative designee will be responsible for administering policy.

**2.0 Waiver Policy:** A student who has accumulated more absences than allowed by the policy, but who feels that the situation warrants special consideration, may appeal to the administration for a waiver increasing the number of allowable absences for that particular student. At the discretion of the administration, the parent may be requested to appear at the hearing to verify the legitimacy of the appeal.

2.1 If extenuating circumstances exist, parents and students have the right to a waiver of the denial of credit and/or promotion. The waiver must be requested in writing within five (5) days after notification of credit withdrawal and directed to the school principal.

**Attendance Requirements for Course Credit or Promotion, continued**

2.2 Each school will set up an Appeals Board to consider the waiver, consisting of the principal and two teachers to informally hear all requests. Other pupil personnel faculty may be invited by the Appeals Board to participate when appropriate. All parties directly involved may attend the informal hearing. The Appeals Board will meet as soon as possible after individual students have exceeded their absences.

- 2.3 The Appeals Board will consider:
- a. Presentation by parent/legal guardian
  - b. Documentation from medical personnel
  - c. The student's attendance record
  - d. The student's request to earn back lost credit
  - e. Other information deemed appropriate by the administration

2.4 A student may be allowed an attendance appeal hearing on a yearly basis. However, a successful waiver for promotion or restoration of credit may only be granted twice in grades K-5, once in grades 6-8, and once in grades 9-12.

2.5 Decisions of the Appeals Board are final. Waivers granted or denied must become a part of student's permanent cumulative file and recorded into the computer data base.

