CSD File: JH

CANDIA SCHOOL DISTRICT
ATTENDANCE, ABSENTEEISM AND TRUANCY

Absences

The Board requires that school-aged children enrolled in the District attend school in accordance with all applicable state laws and Board policies. The educational program offered by the District is predicated upon the presence of the student and requires continuity of instruction and classroom participation in order for students to achieve academic standards and consistent educational progress.

Attendance shall be required of all students enrolled in the District during the days and hours that school is in session, except that the Principal may excuse a student for temporary absences when receiving satisfactory evidence of conditions or reasons that may reasonably cause the student's absence.

The Board considers the following to be excused absences:

1. Illness
2. Recovery from an accident
3. Required court attendance
4. Medical and dental appointments
5. Death in the family
6. Observation or celebration of a religious holiday
7. Such other good cause as may be acceptable to the Principal or permitted by law

Any absence that has not been excused for any of these reasons will be considered an unexcused absence.

In the event of an illness, parents must call the school and inform the District of the student's illness and absence. For other absences, parents must provide written notice or a written excuse that states one of these reasons for non-attendance. The Principal has the authority to request that parents provide documentation supporting the stated reason for non-attendance, and to render the absence unexcused if such documentation is insufficient.

If parents wish for their child to be absent for a reason not listed above, the parent must provide a written explanation of the reason for such absence, including why the student will be absent and for how long the student will be absent. The Principal will make a determination as to whether the stated reason for the student's absence constitutes good cause and will notify the parents via telephone and writing of his/her decision. If the Principal determines that good cause does not exist, the parents may request a conference with the Principal to again explain the reasons for non-attendance. The Principal may then reconsider their initial determination. However, at this juncture, the Principal's decision shall be final.

Family Vacations/Educational Opportunities

Generally, absences other than for illness during the school year are discouraged. The school Principal or his/her designee may, however, grant special approval of absence for family vacations, provided written approval is given in advance. Parents are asked to write a note to the Principal at least two weeks before the trip. The Principal will notify the child's teacher if the request is approved. This advance planning will allow the teacher enough time to work with parents and the student regarding completion of schoolwork.

Truancy

Truancy is defined as any unexcused absence from class or school. Any absence that has not been excused for any of the reasons listed above will be considered an unexcused absence.

Ten half-days (5 full days) of unexcused absence during a school year constitutes habitual truancy.

A half-day absence is defined as a student missing more than two hours of instructional time and less than three and one-half hours of instructional time.

Any absence of more than three and one-half hours of instructional time shall be considered a full-day absence.

The Principal or his/her designee is hereby designated as the District employee responsible for overseeing truancy issues.

Intervention Process to Address Truancy

The Principal shall ensure that the administrative guidelines on attendance properly address the matter of truancy by including a process that identifies students who are habitually truant, as defined above.

When the Principal identifies a student who is habitually truant or who is in danger of becoming habitually truant, he/she shall commence an intervention with the student, the student's parents, and other staff members as may be deemed necessary. The intervention shall include processes including, but not limited to:

1. Investigates the cause(s) of the student's truant behavior;
2. Considers, when appropriate, modification of his/her educational program to meet particular needs that may be causing the truancy;
3. Involves the parents in the development of a plan designed to reduce the truancy;
4. Seeks alternative disciplinary measures, but still retains the right to impose discipline in accordance with the District's policies and administrative guidelines on student discipline;

Parental Involvement in Truancy Intervention

When a student reaches habitual truancy status or is in danger of reaching habitual truancy status, the Principal will send the student's parent a letter which includes:

1. A statement that the student has become or is in danger of becoming habitually truant;
2. A statement of the parent's responsibility to ensure that the student attends school; and
3. A request for a meeting between the parents and the Principal to discuss the student's truancy and to develop a plan for reducing the student's truancy.

Developing and Coordinating Strategies for Truancy Reduction

The Board encourages the administration to seek truancy-prevention and truancy-reduction strategies along with the recommendations listed below. However, these guidelines shall be advisory only. The Superintendent is authorized to develop and utilize other means, guidelines and programs aimed at preventing and reducing truancy.

1. Coordinate truancy-prevention strategies based on the early identification of truancy, such as prompt notification of absences to parents.

2. Assist school staff to develop site attendance plans by providing development strategies, resources, and referral procedures.
3. Encourage and coordinate the adoption of attendance-incentive programs at school sites and in individual classrooms that reward and celebrate good attendance and significant improvements in attendance.

Parental Notification of Truancy Policy

The Superintendent shall also ensure that this policy is included in or referenced in the student handbook and is sent to parents annually at the beginning of each school year.

Legal References:
RSA 189:34, RSA 189:35-a, RSA 193:1, RSA 193:7, RSA 193:8, RSA 193:16, NH Admin Rules, Sec. Ed 306.04 (a)(1) NH Admin Rules, Sec. Ed 306.04 (c)

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