

COMPREHENSIVE DISTRICT ATTENDANCE PLAN

➤ **Background:**

Beginning with the 2003-2004 school year, all schools were required to adopt a Comprehensive Attendance Plan and distribute it to all parents of students in the district.

Enclosed you will find, the Monticello Central School District Comprehensive Attendance plan which was adopted by the Board of Education. The attendance plan includes the following provisions:

- ◆ A statement of objectives or goals of the district regarding attendance.
- ◆ A description of district strategies to meet objectives or goals.
- ◆ Definitions of Excused and Unexcused Absences.
- ◆ A description of record keeping/general procedures.
- ◆ A description of school plan regarding attendance and course credit.
- ◆ A description of incentives and sanctions to improve attendance.
- ◆ A description of the process of notification of parents, students, and staff.
- ◆ A description of district intervention strategies.
- ◆ Responsibilities for monitoring attendance of students.

Each principal will be reviewing the attendance plan at the beginning school year with students. We believe that good attendance is fundamental to each student receiving an excellent education. We hope that you will support the district's goal of promoting maximum attendance by all students. Nothing is more powerful than direct contact with parents stressing the importance of good attendance. Any questions about the attendance plan may be directed to your Principal.

I. Statement of Objectives

It is the goal of the Monticello Central School District to promote consistent school attendance by its students since there is a clear connection between student academic success and consistent school attendance. Toward this goal, the Monticello Central School District hopes to promote a partnership with parents and students to maximize school attendance. With this in mind, the District Objectives in establishing a Comprehensive District Plan for Attendance are to:

- A. Increase student performance and the completion of school by students.
- B. Be able to identify the whereabouts of every student for safety purposes.
- C. Insure compliance with compulsory education laws.
- D. Determine the district's average daily attendance for state aid purposes.
- E. Identify attendance patterns to design strategies for improvement.
- F. Promote a sense of responsibility on the part of students, parents and staff to insure maximum attendance by students.

II. Strategies to Meet Objectives

The Monticello Central School District will seek to improve attendance by students through a partnership with parents, staff, and students. It will examine and analyze data related to attendance to identify areas for improvement. Based on this data, it will seek to develop new specific strategies to address these issues. Some of the strategies currently in place include:

- A. Notification of parents at the beginning of each school year of the importance of daily attendance through the distribution of the Comprehensive District Attendance plan, use of the Superintendent's Weekly Bulletin, and letters from the Principals.
- B. Use of direct contact, telephone calls, to parents when children are absent.
- C. Use of direct contact by teachers with parents through telephone calls, teacher conferences, and notes home.
- D. Counseling by Guidance Counselors/Social Workers of students and parents.
- E. Use of Attendance Officers for visits to chronically absent students.
- F. Instructional Support Team discussions for appropriate interventions.
- G. Use of DAS (Designated Assessment Service) or PINS (Persons in Need of Supervision) petitions to Family Court.
- H. Attendance Incentives for those students who maintain positive attendance.

* The *Comprehensive District Attendance Plan* and letters from Principals will be distributed to parents in English and/or translated version.

III. Excused and Unexcused Absences

We recommend that parents call the school when their child is going to be absent or tardy. It is required that when a child returns from school from an absence, is tardy/late to school, or departs school early that the child have a written note explaining the reasons for the absence, tardiness, or early departure.

A. Excused Absences, Tardiness, and Early Departures:

Are defined as absences, tardiness, and early departures from class or school due to personal illness, illness or death in the family, impassable roads or weather emergency, religious observance, quarantine, required court appearance, attendance at health clinics, approved college visits, approved cooperative work programs, participation in approved school programs, military obligations.

B. Unexcused Absences: All other absences, tardiness, and early departures are considered unexcused.

All absences, tardiness and early departures must be accounted for through a note by the parent. Without a written note, all absences, tardiness, and early departures are unexcused.

IV. Record-Keeping and General Procedures

- A. Attendance is taken each day at the beginning of the day in the elementary schools. It is taken each period of the day at the Middle School and High School.
- B. The nature of the absence, tardiness, or early departure is recorded on the student's record. Excused and Unexcused absence, tardiness, and early departure are denoted through the district coding system.
- C. Parents will be called by the school on the first day of each absence; this may be accomplished by an automated caller or by direct contact by school personnel.
- D. Upon their return to school students are required to bring a note, dated and signed by parents, explaining the reasons for their absence or tardiness.

V. Attendance and Course Credit

The Board of Education recognizes an important relationship between class attendance and student performance. Consequently, each marking period, a student's final grade may be based on class participation as well as student's performance on homework, tests, papers, projects, etc.

Students are expected to attend all scheduled classes. Consistent with the importance of the classroom participation, unexcused absences, tardiness, and early departures will affect a student's class participation grade for the marking period.

When students are absent, it is expected and required that work will be completed; work that is not completed will receive a failing grade.

In considering the retention of students in grades K-8, the student's record of attendance is one of the factors that will be considered by the Principal in retaining a student.

VI. Incentives and Sanctions

- A. Incentives: To encourage students to maintain and improve their school attendance, the District recognizes students' success by:
1. Students with perfect or near-perfect attendance are recognized by quarterly awards in each school through awards and publishing of their names.
 2. Mid-year and end-of-year awards are given to students with perfect or near-perfect attendance.
- B. Disciplinary Consequences:

Unexcused Absences, Unexcused Tardiness, and Unexcused Early Departures will result in disciplinary action consistent with the district's code of conduct. Those penalties may include, but are not limited to:

1. Letters to parents
2. Lunch Detention
3. After-school detention
4. In-school suspension
5. Filing of a DAS or PINS Petition
6. Filing an *Educational Neglect Report*

In addition, designated staff members, including teachers, attendance officers, guidance counselors, assistant principals, and principals, will contact parents regarding attendance plan, explain the ramifications of Absences, Tardiness, and Early Departures, stress the importance of class attendance and discuss appropriate intervention strategies to correct the situation.

VII. Notification of Parents, Students, and Staff

- A. Parents will receive a plain language summary of this plan by mail at the start of the school year.
- B. The district will provide all faculty and staff with a copy of the attendance plan at the beginning of the school year; new staff will receive a copy upon their employment.
- C. All faculty and staff will meet at the beginning of each school year to review the attendance plan to clarify individual roles in its implementation.
- D. Copies of this plan will also be made available to any community member upon request.
- E. Principals will meet with students at the beginning of the school year to discuss the plan; a summary of the plan will be included in Student Handbooks.
- F. School newsletters and publications will include periodic reminders of the components of this plan.
- G. At Open Houses or meeting with parents, the plan and the importance of attendance will be reviewed with parents. These will be opportunities to reinforce the importance of good attendance by students.

VIII. Intervention Strategies:

- A. Letters are sent to parents with attendance problems.
- B. Designated staff members, including teachers, attendance officers, guidance counselors, assistant principals, and principals, will contact parents regarding attendance plan, explain the ramifications of unexcused Absences, Tardiness, and Early Departures, stress the importance of class attendance and discuss appropriate intervention strategies to correct the situation.
- C. Meetings with parents will discuss strategies for improving student attendance.
- D. In each school, Instructional Support Teams, a team composed of the Principal, teachers, Pupil Personnel Staff, will meet and discuss interventions where appropriate.
- E. The School Attendance Officer, at the direction of the Principal, will file a DAS or PINS Petition on chronic absentee problems.

IX. Responsibilities:

- A. Attendance information shall be taken by a teacher and/or designated attendance clerks. The record shall include the student's presence, absence, tardiness and/or early departure. District codes will delineate the specific reason for absence.
- B. Information on the attendance register shall be entered by the designated attendance clerk in each school. The register shall include the name, date of birth, full name of parents, address where the pupil resides, telephone number(s) to contact parents, date of pupil's enrollment, record of pupil's attendance, date the pupil withdraws or is dropped from school, record of days school was closed for all or part of the day because of extraordinary weather conditions.
- C. Pupil attendance records will be reviewed by the Principal of each school.
- D. The Superintendent will discuss with the Board of Education building level attendance Data annually for the purpose of reviewing each school's progress.

X. Annual Review by the Board of Education:

The Board of Education shall annually review school-level student attendance records and, if such records show a decline in student attendance, the Board of Education shall revise this Comprehensive Attendance plan and make revisions to the plan it deems necessary to improve student attendance.