

## SECTION J STUDENTS

### **3. Attendance (Voted 11/6/78, #78-447; 4/27/89, #89-196; 1/5/12, #12-2; 6/16/15, #15-41)**

Regular and consistent school attendance directly contributes to student success. The purpose of this policy is to provide minimum standards for student attendance in the Public Schools of Brookline, and to provide guidance to the elementary schools and the high school for the development of attendance related rules that are consistent with the requirements of G.L. c. 76, s. 1 and this Policy.

#### I. ATTENDANCE REQUIREMENTS

The School Committee is charged with enforcing school attendance. Under Massachusetts' law, regular attendance at school is required for all persons between the ages of 6 and 16, and parents/guardians are responsible for ensuring their children's attendance at school. G.L. c. 76, s. 1, 2.

All students enrolled in the PSB are required to attend school, including all scheduled classes, on each school day, and to arrive on time to school and to all scheduled classes. Students will be excused from attending school or class or from arriving late to school or class on a particular day only if one or more of the attendance exceptions set forth in Part III of this Policy applies. In all other cases, students who are absent from school or from class or who are consistently late to school or to class may be subject to disciplinary action, as may be provided in their school handbook, or as otherwise determined by the Superintendent or Superintendent's designee.

#### II. ATTENDANCE RULES AND PROCEDURES

All schools shall develop and maintain uniform school attendance rules and procedures that are consistent with this Policy. Such attendance rules and procedures shall include, at a minimum, the following:

1. A process for providing notice to students and their parents/guardians at the beginning of each school year of: (a) the PSB attendance requirements; (b) the range of consequences for a student's failure to attend or arrive on time to school or to scheduled classes at school; (c) the procedure parents/guardians shall use to report student absences or late arrivals to school or to scheduled classes at school; and (d) the requirement that parents/guardians provide updated contact information so that they may be reached during the school day;
2. A process for monitoring student attendance at school that is consistent with applicable law and the collective bargaining agreement between the School Committee and Brookline Educators' Union;
3. In the event that a student is absent from school and the parent/guardian has not informed the school of the absence, a process for notifying the student's parent/guardian as soon as reasonably possible but within no more than 3 days of the student's absence;
4. A process for notifying the parent/guardian of a student who has at least 5 days in which the student has missed 2 or more periods unexcused in a school year or who has missed 5 or more school days unexcused in a school year. The Principal, or the Principal's designee, shall make a reasonable effort to meet with the parent/guardian of a student who has 5 or more unexcused absences to develop action steps for student attendance. These action steps shall be developed jointly and agreed upon by the Principal, or Principal's designee, the student, and the student's parent/guardian and with input from

other relevant school personnel and officials from relevant public safety, health and human service, housing, and non-profit agencies;

5. A process for responding promptly to an individual student's failure to arrive on time to school or to scheduled classes at school, which process shall include notification to the student's parent/guardian;
6. A process for reporting an individual student's pattern of tardiness or absences to the student's parent/guardian and to the school Principal or Head of School or their designees and implementing remedial or disciplinary action, as appropriate; and
7. A process for establishing the scope of a student's responsibility for making up missed work or scheduled tests.

### III. EXCUSED AND UNEXCUSED ABSENCES:

A. Excused Absences: A student shall be deemed to have an excused absence from school or from class only under the following circumstances:

1. The student is experiencing personal illness;
2. The student has suffered personal trauma, such as the death of a family member;
3. The student is observing a religious holiday;
4. The student must attend a medical appointment that cannot be made outside of school hours. The student must provide proper documentation for such appointment. The School Committee discourages the making of appointments during the school day;
5. The student must participate in a legal proceeding requiring his/her personal appearance;
6. The student has been suspended from school;
7. The student is attending an approved school related trip, assembly, or meeting;
8. The student is attending a scheduled interview for formal opportunities outside of school which may include, but not be limited to employment, postsecondary education opportunity, or internship. The student must provide proper documentation for such interview;
9. Other, as deemed appropriate by the Principal or Head of School or their designees.

All such absences must be confirmed by an eligible parent/guardian.

B. Unexcused Absences: An unexcused absence is not covered by Section IIIA above. Examples of an unexcused absence may include, but may not be limited to:

1. Repetitive or chronic absence or tardiness due to illness or injury not documented by a doctor or other medical professional;
2. Non-emergency family situations; and
3. Family Vacations.

Refs: G.L. c. 76, s. 1 and 2; 603 CMR 27.00

**3 a. Student Demonstrations and Strikes:** (Voted 3/8/71, #71-99)

*Note this section was moved from Section J7 (Student Discipline) per vote on 3/12/15.*

Walkouts and demonstrations are **not** considered as planned absences and will be handled in conformity with normal policies for unauthorized classroom absence. Students must assume the responsibility for make-up work for all absences and the teachers are responsible for providing help for all excused absences. Parents and students should be aware that any absences affect academic standing.

The use of school facilities should not interfere with the normal school program. Meeting rooms may be made available to students and student-connected groups through normal procedures.

Staff Responsibility:

In the event of a walkout the staff has primary responsibility to cover students in class. A teacher wishing to accompany students out of the building in order to oversee their safety should ensure, with the approval of the department chairman or director, a supervised on-going classroom experience for those students wishing to remain in class. The chairman or director should notify the Head of School.