

POLICY

Mansfield Township

Board of Education

Section: Teaching Staff Members

3212. ATTENDANCE

Date Created: June, 2019

Date Edited: June, 2019

3212- ATTENDANCE

The regular and prompt attendance of teaching staff members is an essential element in the efficient operation of the school district and the effective conduct of the educational program. Staff member absenteeism disrupts the educational program and the Board of Education considers attendance an important component of a staff member's job performance.

A teaching staff member who fails to give prompt notice of an absence, misuses sick leave, fails to verify an absence in accordance with Board policy, falsifies the reason for an absence, is absent without authorization, is repeatedly tardy, or accumulates an excessive number of absences may be subject to appropriate consequences, which may include the withholding of a salary increment, dismissal, and/or certification of tenure charges.

In accordance with N.J.S.A. 18A:30-1, sick leave is defined to mean the absence from work because of a personal disability due to injury or illness or because the staff member has been excluded from school by the school medical authorities on account of contagious disease or of being quarantined for such a disease in the staff member's immediate household. No teaching staff member will be discouraged from the prudent, necessary use of sick leave and any other leave provided for in the collective bargaining agreement negotiated with the member's majority representative, in an individual employment contract, or provided in the policies of the Board. In accordance with N.J.S.A. 18A:30-4, the Superintendent or Board of Education may require a physician's certificate to be filed with the Secretary of the Board in order to obtain sick leave.

The Superintendent, in consultation with administrative staff members, will review the rate of absence among the staff members. The review will include the collection and analysis of attendance data, the training of teaching staff members in their attendance responsibilities, and the counseling of teaching staff members for whom regular and prompt attendance is a problem.

N.J.S.A. 18A:27-4; 18A:28-5; 18A:30-1 et seq.

Adopted: 10 June 2019

REGULATION

Mansfield Township

School District

Section: Teaching Staff Members

3212. PROFESSIONAL STAFF ATTENDANCE REVIEW AND IMPROVEMENT PLAN

Date Created: June, 2019

Date Edited: June, 2019

3212. PROFESSIONAL STAFF ATTENDANCE REVIEW AND IMPROVEMENT PLAN

A. Review of Attendance Data

1. A record shall be kept of the attendance of each teaching staff member, including teachers, educational services personnel, and administrators. Any absence, for part or all of a school day, shall be recorded along with the reason for the absence. The record will distinguish sick leave, professional days, unpaid leaves of absence, personal leave, and other approved leaves. The employee's attendance record will include notation of verification of an absence where such verification is required by Policy No. 3432. The employee's rate of absence shall be calculated every pay period and entered on his/her attendance record. An employee's attendance record shall be part of the employee's personnel file.
2. At the end of each school year, a cumulative attendance record shall be assembled for each school and for the district.
3. An attendance summary shall be prepared from the cumulative attendance record. The attendance summary shall show the rate of absence for each school and for the district. The attendance summary shall be posted in each school of the district.
4. A record shall be made of the appointment of substitutes for absent employees and the wages paid to substitutes.

B. Attendance Improvement Plan

1. Planning

The Superintendent will meet with Building Principals and appropriate administrators to discuss the attendance summary. The attendance summary shall be analyzed for patterns of absence, such as excessive absenteeism in a given school or work place, among certain groups of employees, for certain specific causes, or on certain days of the week, month, or year. Specific strategies for reducing the rate of absence shall be developed.

2. Implementation

- a. The Building Principal shall be responsible for implementing the district's plan for the improvement of professional staff member attendance in his/her school building.
- b. The Principal shall encourage the regular attendance of the teaching staff members in his/her building. He/She shall maintain contact with absent employees and confer personally with each employee who returns from an absence of any duration, impressing upon employees the district's concern for their health and well-being. The Principal shall, by appropriate means, recognize teaching staff members whose attendance is exemplary.

- c. The Principal shall incorporate, and shall direct other supervisors to incorporate, a teaching staff member's attendance record in his/her evaluation.
- d. The Principal may require teachers to evaluate the work done by substitutes in their absence.
- e. The Principal shall report to the Superintendent any teaching staff member whom he/she suspects of misusing sick leave or falsifying the reasons for absence.

3. In-service Training

The Principal shall meet with the teaching staff members assigned to his/her building at the beginning of each school year to inform employees of Board policy and district regulations on attendance, to familiarize employees with the forms to be used in reporting and verifying absences, to review with employees the cost of absenteeism to the district and the value of accumulated sick leave to the employee, and to acquaint employees with the degree to which attendance will affect evaluation reports.

4. Counseling

- a. The Building Principal may, in his/her discretion, call a conference with a teaching staff member where the number and/or pattern of the members' absences or the reasons offered for the member's absences indicate a misunderstanding of the teaching staff member's responsibility to the school district or the possible misuse of the privilege of paid leave.
- b. Prior to the giving of any admonition or reprimand or imposition of discipline of any kind, the Principal shall determine the nature of the absences and consider any extenuating circumstances.
- c. A written report of any attendance conference shall be prepared and retained with the teaching staff member's evaluations. The member shall, in accordance with Board policy on teaching staff member evaluation, be permitted to examine the report and affix his/her comments, if any, to the report.

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REGULATION

Mansfield Township

School District

Section: Teaching Staff Members

3212.01. ATTENDANCE

Date Created: June, 2019

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3212.01. ATTENDANCE

Certified Staff

The following guidelines shall apply to attendance for certified staff members:

- A. A record of teaching staff attendance will be maintained annually indicating the individual attendance of all teaching staff members. The record shall record absences in increments of one-half day and include absences for sick, personnel, professional, annual leave, and leaves of absence;
- B. Any absence, for part or all of a school day, shall be recorded along with the reason for the absence. The record will distinguish sick leave, professional days, unpaid leaves of absence, personal leave, and bereavement. The employee's attendance record will include notation of verification of the reason for the absence if required;
- C. Any employee on an attendance improvement plan or who has a record of absenteeism shall be required to provide verification (doctor's note) of any absence;
- D. Each individual's rate of attendance as well as the district's rate of attendance shall be calculated annually;
- E. An employee's attendance record is considered a part of his or her personnel file;
- F. Attendance records will be compiled by school and district on a monthly basis and an attendance summary prepared from this information;
- G. A record of substitutes utilized in the district will be maintained on a monthly basis and indicates the teaching staff member for whom the substitute served;
- H. The Building Principal shall develop appropriate means to recognize teaching staff members whose attendance is exemplary;
- I. The Building Principal shall confer personally with staff members following an absence for reasons of illness to convey to the staff members a sense of the district's concern for their health and wellbeing;
- J. The Superintendent shall meet with the administrators in the district to review the attendance summary when attendance rates of the teaching staff fall below State of New Jersey minimum standards. The administration shall review the attendance to develop specific strategies for reducing absentee rates;
- K. The Building Principal shall be responsible for the implementation of any corrective actions and/or attendance improvement plans developed and initiated in the district for staff in general and individual staff members;

- L. Teaching staff member's attendance, when within the limitations of the collective bargaining agreement, may only be considered in an evaluation when it becomes an impediment to the educational goals of the district;
- M. The Superintendent shall include the importance of regular attendance and the need for the district to maintain staff attendance rates at or above State standards in the staff development program for the district staff;
- N. The Superintendent will prepare an annual attendance report for the teaching staff.

Absence

An absence is defined as any occasion when an employee does not report to work on a scheduled day of work.

Lateness/Tardy

Being late or tardy is when an employee arrives any time after the time scheduled to begin work. Showing a pattern of tardiness such as, arriving late to work in the morning, leaving work prior to the end of the employee's work schedule, returning late from lunch or break shall subject an employee to disciplinary action.

Procedures for Excused Tardiness

- A. The employee is required to contact their immediate supervisor and report any expected delay in arrival, the expected time of arrival and the reason for the delay prior to reporting to an assigned work position late;
- B. The supervisor may accept the following reasons for up to two late arrivals per marking period:
 - 1. Car malfunction;
 - 2. Traffic issue;
 - 3. Personal reasons such as a child care problem or family crisis;
 - 4. Inclement weather.
- C. The supervisor shall document each incident of reported late arrival for each employee under their supervision and record each excused tardiness. The record shall include the following:
 - 1. Date and time the staff member called in the late arrival;
 - 2. Expected arrival time reported by the employee;
 - 3. Reason given for the late arrival;
 - 4. The actual time the employee arrived to the work assignment;
 - 5. If the tardiness was excused.
- D. Any employee reporting that they will be late but cannot give an acceptable reason shall be considered unexcused;

- E. Employees reporting more than two incidents of late arrival in one marking period shall not be excused and may be subject to attendance review, an attendance correction plan and loss of pay;
- F. Any unreported late arrival shall be considered an unexcused tardy.

Unexcused Tardiness

- A. Staff tardiness reports will be reviewed by Principal/supervisor bimonthly (every two months) in order to identify tardiness problems early enough to address them and to assist the employee in identifying ways to alleviate or ameliorate the situation. Chronic tardiness is considered to be:
 - 1. More than twice (2) weekly or more than six (6) times in a given month.
 - 2. If the tardiness is in excess of the above and the Principal/supervisor and employee cannot resolve whatever the problem is, they will request a conference with the Superintendent for assistance and resolution.

Procedures for Unexcused Tardiness

- A. Disciplinary actions for employees failing to report a late arrival to their supervisor or for employees that are unexcused for reporting to work late shall be subject to the following:
 - 1. First tardy - verbal warning;
 - 2. Second tardy - written warning;
 - 3. Third tardy one - The attendance improvement plan shall be developed by the supervisor and shall be a signed agreement between the school and the employee.
- B. If the unexcused tardiness continues and/or the employee violates the attendance improvement plan, further progressive disciplinary action will be taken and may include suspension without pay, certification of tenure charges and termination.

Unexcused Absences

Unexcused absences shall include the following:

- 1. Any unreported failure to be present for work;
- 2. Reported but not preapproved absences that exceed the individual employee's available sick, personal and vacation time;
- 3. Reported absences due to illness that cannot be verified by a physician.

An employee that has no accrued time to use, may request in advance of the time needed, to be given an unpaid leave of absence.

Vacations, holidays, scheduled days off and approved absences or leaves of absence are considered excused for the purpose of determining whether disciplinary action for attendance.

Procedures for Unexcused Absences

- A. Any employee failing to properly notify the supervisor of an unscheduled absence and/or reporting any absence in excess of time accrued shall be subject to the following disciplinary actions:
1. First unexcused- verbal warning;
 2. Second unexcused - written warning;
 3. Third unexcused - The attendance improvement plan shall be developed by the supervisor and shall be a signed agreement between the school and the employee.
- B. If the pattern of unexcused absences continues and/or the employee violates the attendance improvement plan, further progressive disciplinary action will be taken and may include suspension without pay, certification of tenure charges and termination.
- C. An employee who is absent for three (3) or more consecutively scheduled work days, without notifying his/her supervisor may be terminated for job abandonment, considered voluntary resignation and may not be eligible for rehire.

Reporting Absences

Teachers who will be absent from school must report to AESOP by 6:00 a.m. If absences will continue into the following day, teachers are encouraged to notify their respective schools before 2:00 p.m. on the initial day of absence so that the substitute who is covering can be retained. Teachers must also report their absence to AESOP.

Recognition

As an incentive, employees with perfect attendance shall receive letters of recognition at the end of the school year.

Critical Illness or Death-in-Family

The Board of Education provides through policy and contract provisions for leave for critical illness or death-in-family.

Critical illness means illness which one attending physician considers sufficiently serious to require the staff member's presence at the bedside. Immediate family means husband, wife, children, and any other members of the same home; or father and mother, brothers, sisters, grandfather and grandmother, father-in-law and mother-in-law, sister-in-law, brother-in-law, regardless of residence.

1. The staff member must notify their Principal or immediate supervisor.
2. The staff member must submit medical certification from the attending physician within ten (10) days of return to work. Medical certification is required for this said absence.

Personal Days

The Board of Education through policy and contractual provisions provides a maximum of three (3) days per year for business and activities that necessarily must be transacted on days when school is in session.

Work-Connected Absences

The accident reports, which include employer's first report of accident, the employee's report, and the supervisor's accident investigation report must be filed immediately with the office of the Board Secretary.

Only school nurses, school secretaries, and/or personnel in the Board Secretary's Office are to make appointments for work-related injuries; thus, employees must not make initial appointment with physicians nor seek reimbursement for visitations to non-authorized physicians who will not be reimbursed by Workers Compensation.

The Board Secretary's Office should be notified by phone as soon as possible after an emergency, followed by accident reports.

If an employee is absent as a result of injury or illness arising out of his/her employment, the Board of Education will pay his/her wages or salary for the period of such absence up to one (1) year and will not charge such absence against the employee's annual or accumulative sick leave. The payments of wages or salary shall be made regardless of any temporary disability benefits, but shall be reduced by the amount of any worker's compensation award made for temporary disability.

Leave Without Pay

1. To qualify for health leave employees must submit certification from a licensed physician to verify pregnancy, disability, and/or to indicate ability to continue or return to work. Leave dates should be inclusive in the document and all other leave exhausted before applying/utilizing leave under the Family Leave Act.
2. The Family Leave Act provides medical benefits for twelve weeks. A request for leave under this act should be submitted to the staff member's supervisor at the time disability leave is requested or at least two weeks in advance of depletion of all other paid leave.
3. Employee must return with a note from personal or family member's physician authorizing return to work or confirming illness of family member. This document should be turned over to the Board Secretary.

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