

# ATTENDANCE POLICY

## PHILOSOPHY

Regular school attendance is a critical factor for academic success. Consistent, punctual school attendance, academic success, and school completion have a positive correlation. Since school is a partnership, parents are expected to make sure their child attends school on a regular basis.

Every student has a right and responsibility to partake of educational opportunities that will enable the student to develop to his or her fullest potential. Research repeatedly demonstrates that there is a strong correlation between good, punctual attendance and success in school. The regular contact of students with one another in the classroom and their participation in well-planned instructional activities are vital to this purpose. Therefore, the primary objective of Port Huron Schools is to have minimum attendance requirements for the granting of academic credit for courses taken by students in grades 9 - 12, thus establishing a practical mechanism to account to the parents of all students enrolled in our schools for the whereabouts of their student throughout each day. This information is also necessary for student safety and school management. Successful implementation of this Attendance Policy requires cooperation among all members of the educational and business communities.

Frequent absences for any reason may adversely affect the student's academic performance and can be disruptive to other students' educational process.

## Reporting Absences

We ask that the parent/guardian to notify the attendance office of the absence in person or by phone no later than the end of the day of the absence. Students are not allowed to leave the building during the school day without a pass from the Attendance Office. Passes can be obtained by a parent/guardian calling the Attendance Office and verifying the student's release. It is important that the parent/guardian and the attendance office both know anytime a student leaves the building. Any student leaving the building during the day without a pass will be considered off campus, and the Uniform Discipline Policy will apply.

## Attendance Policy

All students are limited to eleven (**11 parent excused, unexcused, and truant**) absences per class period each semester. Upon the **twelfth absence in any class period, the student will be required to continue to attend class**. In order to earn credit the student must follow the proper appeal procedure.

## STUDENT/PARENT/GUARDIAN NOTIFICATION

It is the responsibility of the student, parent, and staff to review student attendance. Teachers are strongly encouraged to contact parents when there is an attendance concern in their class. The following procedure will be used whenever possible to notify parents of classroom attendance concerns:

- Absences are recorded daily by teacher and/or attendance secretary at each high school. When an absence is not excused an automated phone call will be made to the primary contact number as listed in Skyward. Parent/guardian is responsible for notifying the school office if this phone number changes.
- Students and parents are responsible to track and review student attendance in Skyward on a regular basis to monitor student attendance.
- When a student has accumulated between eight and eleven (8-11) absences in any one class per semester: the student's assistant principal will meet with the student. A letter signed by the student and the assistant principal will be mailed home.
- **Student has accumulated twelve (12) absences in any one class per semester: A letter will be sent to the parent/guardian, signed by the Assistant Principal, stating the student must follow the appeal process in order to earn credit in that class.**

The Port Huron Schools considers a 15% absence rate as excessive. If the student is under the age of 16, and has missed 15% or more absences at any time, parents will be informed in writing of Michigan Law regarding compulsory attendance. A referral to county truancy officer may be made.

## ATTENDANCE CODES

### **Parent Verified Absences**

For an absence to be verified, we ask that the parent/guardian notify the attendance office of the absence in person or by phone no later than the end of the day of the absence. If the attendance office is unable to verify the absence within 48 hours, the student will be considered unexcused. Students will be expected to complete all missed assignments. This includes student illness verified by parent. These days will be counted toward the student's maximum number of absences allowed. This may be considered during the appeal process.

### **Excused Absences**

For an absence to be considered Excused and NOT count toward the 11 absence limit, the student or parent must submit the doctor/dentist/appointment documentation to the Attendance Secretary within 5 days of the absence. When documentation is provided to the Attendance Secretary, she will change the code to reflect that this is an Excused absence and return the documentation to the student or parent.

### **Medical Dispensation**

For any student who has a chronic medical condition, we ask for verification from a doctor. These days will not be counted toward the student's maximum number of absences allowed. (The doctor's note must state that the child has an ongoing medical condition that can cause them to be absent from school.)

### **Unexcused Absence**

If a student's absence is not verified in 48 hours by a parent/guardian or administrator, the absence is considered unexcused. Students will be expected to complete all missed assignments. Disciplinary consequences as outlined in the Port Huron Schools Student Code Handbook will apply.

### **Tardy Policy**

A proper learning environment is essential to learning. To maximize the amount of instructional time per period, students are expected to be in class promptly. By encouraging promptness, the school is aiding students in developing self-discipline and a sense of responsibility. Both teachers and administrators will deal with tardiness. A student is considered tardy if he/she is not in the classroom when the final tardy bell rings. Students must possess a pass from a staff member to be excused from a tardy. A student who is more than 10 minutes late without a pass is considered absent.

### **School Business**

School activities, which have been prearranged and approved by the building Principal or his/her designee, is considered "school business." College visits will be considered school business. Documentation may be required. These absences will be exempt from the absence limit.

### **Homebound**

For absences due to illness longer than one week, homebound services may be appropriate. Contact your child's school counselor.

### **Death/Funeral**

Parents/students are strongly encouraged to notify staff when students are absent due to a death of an immediate family member. These absences will be exempt from the absence limit.

### **Court Appearance**

Parents/students are required to provide documentation when a student is absent due to a court appearance. These absences will be exempt from the absence limit.

### **Truancy**

The absence from school or class without permission. The neglect of work or duty on the part of student or parent.

### **Out of School Suspension**

When other procedures fail to attain satisfactory behavioral changes, or where required by the nature of the problem, a student may be suspended from school. Suspensions will not be considered absences for the Attendance Policy.

## **MAKE UP WORK**

Make-up work as a result of being absent is the responsibility of the student. Immediately upon return to school following an absence, the student is to make arrangements with his/her teacher(s) to obtain assignments and to establish reasonable deadlines for the completion of make-up work. Whenever possible, this will be done at the convenience of the teacher(s). Differences of opinion in establishing deadlines will be resolved by the building Principal or his/her designee. Assignments missed as a result of an absence can be made up for full credit. If the absence is for a period of more than three consecutive days, it is imperative that the parent/guardian contact the school to obtain make-up work.

## **ABSENCE REDUCTIONS**

Homework lunch, detention, or after school programs can be used to forgive days of absence - this will be available to students the final marking period of each semester. Availability of these programs may vary by the high school the student attends. One hour of time is equal to one absence reduction in one class.

- Attend Homework Lunch for two days (30 min each) for 1 hour absence reduction
- Attend detention a total of one hour for 1 hour of absence reduction
- After school tutoring at school with a teacher one hour for 1 hour of absence reduction

Students will be required to provide documentation with the appeal form they submit. The basic idea is one hour of time allows for one hour of absence reduction. Other options for absence reduction may be available with prior administrator approval.

## **APPEAL PROCESS**

A student that has been denied credit for a class due to excessive absences may appeal that action in accordance with the following:

1. The student must have a passing grade.
2. The student must attend, and a parent/guardian may attend, the appeal hearing. Any deviation must be approved by a building administrator.
3. The student must file a written appeal to the Attendance Appeal Committee when they've been denied credit. The appeal will be accepted for two weeks prior to the first day of exams each semester.
4. This written appeal must be submitted to the Attendance Secretary by the last day of regular class and prior to final exams each semester.
5. The appeal must state the reasons for the appeal and additional documentation may be presented at that time. Documentation may include medical notes or evidence of absence reductions.
6. A meeting will be scheduled with the Attendance Appeal Committee after receiving the appeal.
7. The Attendance Appeal Committee will be composed of at least three faculty members from the respective school.
8. Improvement in the student's attendance throughout the semester will be taken into consideration in the appeal process.
9. Depending on the findings of the Attendance Appeal Committee, the following may result:
  - a. Grade earned
  - b. No credit with appeal committee contract to recover credit. Failure to fulfill contract obligations by the end of the next marking period results in grade changing to an "E"
10. The Attendance Appeal Committee will notify the student and parent of the Committee's decision in writing.
11. All decisions of the Appeals Committee are final, there is no further appeal.

How to earn credit back

- Test out according to district policy regarding testing out
- Attendance committee may recommend the following for a student to earn credit back

- Pass next marking period and miss no more than three (3) days
  - Community service - approved organization, a student must provide proof, number of hours to be determined by committee
  - Committee will give written notice of required attendance improvement including maximum number of days absent allowed and/or number of community service hours required and the date for completion
  - Decisions will be made based on individual student circumstances
- If a student does not fulfill the attendance appeal committee recommendation/contract by the required date, the student's grade will be recorded as an "E".

### **ATTENDANCE INCENTIVES**

Each high school will design and implement systems to acknowledge a student's effort to maintain or improve school attendance.

1. Students who meet established criteria will qualify for an exam exemption. See exam exemption policy.
2. Each high school will implement attendance incentives through their respective PBIS program.

#### **Additional Forms**

1. Student attendance appeal form
2. Exam exemption appeal form/policy
3. Attendance committee appeal contract to recover credit