

ATTENDANCE PROCEDURES

The academic program at Middle Township High School places stringent, reasonable demands upon all students, regardless of their course of study. Schools are legally and morally responsible to prepare students to meet the New Jersey high school graduation requirements. In order for students to learn, regular class attendance is imperative. These attendance procedures address that responsibility.

ABSENCE - DEFINITION AND VERIFICATION: Student absences are deemed “excused” when the student is able to provide documentation **ONLY** for the following circumstances:

1. medical illness/injury
2. required court appearance
3. family death
4. college visitation

All notes from a licensed physician, dentist or legal agency must be submitted **WITHIN FIVE SCHOOL DAYS AFTER THE ABSENCE. NOTES TURNED IN AFTER THE FIVE DAY WINDOW WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED AND THE ABSENCE WILL BE MARKED UNEXCUSED.** These notes will be kept on file in the nurse's office for future reference, particularly in cases where an "appeal process" is instituted. **These absence days, although excused, will still accumulate as part of the 9 day maximum per semester.**

The following circumstances will not be considered an absence:

1. school field trip/activity
2. external suspension

Students who are absent with parent permission for reasons other than those listed above will be considered unexcused. Students who are absent **without parent permission will be considered truant** and will receive further disciplinary consequences.

Parents/Guardians will be notified via electronic message if their child is not marked present for a day of school. This call will be made even if the parent has notified the school of the reason for the absence, simply to confirm that the absence was recorded. If a parent disputes that the child was absent that day, they should call 465-1852 and dial ext. 5008.

****Students will be notified via letters home when they have reached 4, 7, 11, and 15 days unexcused absences.**

ABSENTEEISM

School attendance is the basic responsibility of the pupil and parent(s)/guardian(s). Individual records must be maintained by the parent(s)/guardian(s), keeping a personal record of each absence, tardy or early dismissal as verification data to be provided to the school in the event that an appeal is requested under this policy. State guidelines mandate that all schools have strong attendance procedures as part of the "THOROUGH AND EFFICIENT EDUCATION ACT."

For the purpose of this policy, there is no distinction between "excused" or "unexcused absences." **The number of days delineated in this policy is total allowable days.** Any subsequent absences (over 9 per semester) must have either a legal/medical documented excuse or be made up in a makeup session to be determined by the administration. In keeping with state and local Board minimal expectations, pupils attending Middle Township High School who accumulate more than 9 absences in a semester or more

than 18 absences in a year will be placed on "no credit" status. For the purpose of this policy, "no credit" means:

1. Students must attend one make-up session for each unexcused day, which exceeds the policy limits (9/18).
2. Students who fail to attend the make-up sessions will be placed on "no credit" status and will receive no credit for the school year, regardless of the grades earned.
3. SENIORS PLACED ON NO CREDIT STATUS DURING THE SENIOR YEAR MAY LOSE THE PRIVILEGE OF PARTICIPATING IN THE GRADUATION CEREMONY.

LOSS OF CREDIT

A student who exceeds 9 days absence (excused and unexcused) per semester will be placed on a "no credit" status. **The student will be required to "make up" all unexcused absences accumulated after they have accumulated nine absences in a semester.** The "no credit" sessions will consist of a prescribed number of makeup sessions, which the students are expected to attend and may take place on Saturdays throughout the school year. All students placed on no credit will be expected to attend. **Once a student is on no-credit, they will be placed on activity restriction until they fulfill their attendance obligation.**

When the appropriate number of makeup sessions are completed, full academic credit will be given on the official school records for all courses successfully passed during the school year.

ATTENDANCE APPEAL PROCESS

A student has the right to appeal the decision to place him/her on "no credit" status. Such an appeal should begin with a letter of explanation to the administration for the basis for the appeal. If this is denied, the student may then submit the appeal to the Superintendent's office and, if again denied, to the Board. **APPEALS MUST BE FILED NO LATER THAN JUNE 1st.**

MISCELLANEOUS PROVISIONS

1. Students who are under the age of 16 and are absent 5 or more cumulative days will have truancy charges brought against them.
2. Students who are over the age of 16 and are absent 10 or more consecutive days will be dropped from the rolls.
3. Students who transfer to MTHS will be expected to meet the same criteria under the attendance and academic policies. Previous academic and attendance records will be used to determine the student's status.

HOMEBOUND INSTRUCTION

Home instruction is designed to address temporary illness or injury. As soon as it has been determined that a student is unable to attend school will need confinement at his/her residence for at least a two-week period of time, the parent should submit a written determination from a physician documenting the need.

This physician's referral should be submitted to the Nurse's office at the school the student attends. This documentation **must contain** the following information:

1. student name and date of birth
2. diagnosis
3. the expected length of the period of confinement
4. physician's signature and the date of the request

Incomplete requests cannot be processed until the student's physician provides the necessary information.

FAMILY VACATION/COLLEGE VISITATION/MILITARY: The regular school calendar provides more than ample opportunity for families to plan vacations at a time when school is not in session. **SCHOOL AUTHORITIES WILL NOT EXCUSE FAMILY VACATION DAYS.** Family vacation days count as part of total allowable absent days. A form is available in the Main Office for students to notify the district of their intention to be absent due to family vacation. Such notice is for informational purposes and to assist students in obtaining their assignments. It is strongly recommended that such vacations not take place after May 15th to avoid a late placement on no-credit status.

EARLY DISMISSALS: Since early dismissals disrupt the educational process, parents are strongly encouraged to schedule doctor and legal appointments outside school hours when possible. When necessary, students must report to the office at the requested time. Only in case of emergency will instruction time be interrupted to call into a classroom. **Students who do not drive must be physically signed out by their parent/guardian in order to leave school. Students who are permitted to drive to school must have parent permission by way of written note, phone call, or email in order to receive permission to leave early.** All early dismissal requests will be submitted to Main Office prior to the start of homeroom. **All early dismissal requests are subject to administrative approval and must include:**

1. Student's name and departure time.
2. Purpose for the early dismissal. Early dismissals should be limited to medical or legal appointments. Such dismissals will only be excused when documentation from the medical/legal authority is provided. All other situations will be considered on an individual needs basis.
3. Parent signature.
4. A telephone number where the parent can be reached during the school day to confirm the permission. **If the parent cannot be reached, the early dismissal will not be granted.**
5. Students must have parental permission to leave school early, **regardless of their age.** Students must sign out in the office prior to leaving the building in order to document the time of their departure.

Any early dismissal prior to 9:15 will be counted as a full day's absence. Any early dismissal after 9:15 and prior to 12:34 will count as a half-day's absence. **In order for such absences to be excused, the student must submit a medical/legal note when they return to school. Students dismissed early unexcused will receive a zero for the day for any classes missed. Students will not be given the opportunity to make up any tests or quizzes due to unexcused early dismissals.**

LATENESS TO SCHOOL: Students are expected to be on time for school and to be present in period 1 no later than 7:40 am. Lateness will only be excused with medical and/or legal documentation. Other

extenuating circumstances must be explained in writing and are subject to administrative review. Parents who allow their child not to use school transportation are responsible for their arrival at school being on time. Additional consequences may be given to students who are chronically late.