

EFFECT OF ATTENDANCE ON CREDITS EARNED

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A. INTRODUCTION

1. In accord with New Jersey State Laws and regulations (N.J.S.A. 18:A 38-25, 26) the Sterling Board of Education will grant students one (1) unit of credit for each class period per week of the school year.
2. All Board approved curricular offerings at Sterling High School are designed to achieve a maximum educational effect within the State mandated minimum school year of 180 days.
3. The Board of Education, however, recognizes that pupil participation in regularly scheduled learning activities is essential for the instruction to be thorough and efficient. It further feels that the process of education requires regular classroom attendance, participation in classroom activities, and interaction with classmates and the teacher.
4. The Board of Education recognizes individual student effort and after school private instruction, but not as a substitute for regular classroom attendance. Students and their parents must, likewise, recognize this difference and the benefits derived or lost.
5. In the best interest of the welfare of its students, of the integrity of its curricular offerings, and of State regulations, the Sterling Board of Education will grant full credit for course work in which a student has been in attendance for the required instructional time.
6. The Board of Education recognizes that normal illness necessitates absence from school, and this policy provides consideration for such absences.

B. DEFINITION OF EXCESSIVE ABSENCE

Most courses are designed and implemented in such a way that an eight percent absence can be overcome with makeup work by many pupils who receive additional instruction through home instruction and/or summer school, and are, therefore, able to attain minimum expected competence.

1. Excessive Absence



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Pupils shall not receive credit in any course from which they have an unexcused absence:

- a. 7 or more class periods if a semester course
- b. 4 or more class periods if a quarter course
- c. 13 or more class periods if a yearlong course
- d. 10 or more class periods if a three – quarter (3/4) course
- e. 3 or more class periods if for a twenty-two (22) day mini block
- f. 5 or more class periods in a physical education class

2. Mitigating Circumstances

Absence for the following verified reasons shall not count in the maximums listed in section 1:

- a. illness which is documented by a physician's written certification, received within five (5) school days after return from absence,
- b. illness or disability which requires approval of home instruction by the Board of Education
- c. absence which is excused in advance to meet religious obligations permitted by statute,
- d. legitimate school activity approved in advance by the school principal,
- e. death in the immediate family.

3. Family Vacations

Family vacations with prior notification will not be considered truancy but will not be approved absences in terms of the attendance policy.

4. Physician's Certificate



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- a. Any pupil who is absent three (3) or more consecutive school days due to illness shall be required to furnish a physician's certification that he/she is free of contagion as a condition for returning to school.
- b. Any unusual chronic illness should be documented with a physician's note in the nurse's office.

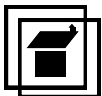
5. Verified Absence

Notes from parents or guardian are required to explain pupil absence.

- a. Pupils are to submit such notes to their homeroom teachers, who in turn will send them to the attendance office.
- b. Such notes shall be on file in the vice principal's office.
- c. Legitimate, verified notes from parents, which explain pupil illness, may be considered in determining if a "no credit" status shall be assigned; however, any legitimate verified note from a parent/guardian is NOT considered a verified reason as stated in section 2. Unless very unusual circumstances exist, no more than eight (8) days per semester shall be affected by "mitigating" circumstances.
- d. Absences not explained by parental notes within three (3) school days after the pupil returns to school may not be considered in the appeal process.
- e. Telephone calls from parent(s) or guardian(s) advising school officials of pupil absences shall be encouraged; however, such telephone calls may not be considered in lieu of required written notes to be entered in the pupil's record.

6. Tardiness

Lateness to class and lateness to school should be treated according to provisions of Board Policy; however, if tardiness to school overlaps into over half of the instructional class periods, pupils shall be considered absent for the entire class period.



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- a. If a student is late to school, that student is subject to discipline as outlined in the discipline policy. (Three (3) unexcused lateness's to school will equal one (1) day of absence. Three (3) unexcused early dismissals from school will equal one (1) day of absence.)
- b. The principal or designee shall communicate this policy and practice to parent(s), guardian(s), and pupils via summer, fall and winter newsletters, student handbook and public address system announcements, and the web page. The practice also shall be mentioned to parents on "Back to School Night" and at the eighth grade orientation sessions.
- c. The attendance office will count every three (3) unexcused latenesses to class as one day of absence regarding student's attendance for that course.

C. MAKE-UP WORK

Pupils returning to school shall be afforded a reasonable opportunity to make up missed work equal to the number of days missed. Additional time may be requested by the student. The student is responsible to see their teacher immediately upon return regarding work missed during an absence to make arrangements for completion.

D. MATTERS OF LAW

In instances where a pupil is absent from school for six (6) or more consecutive school days and is not determined to be medically disabled, the pupil's parent(s) or guardian(s) shall be issued a notice via certified mail to return the pupil to school.

1. Pupil Below Age 16

If the notice is unsuccessful in achieving a pupil's attendance, the parents or guardians of a pupil who is below age sixteen (16) shall be sent a three (3) day notice to cause their child to attend school. Failure of the parents or guardians to respond to the second notice shall result in a vice principal filing charges against the parents or guardians before the appropriate juvenile authorities with N.J.S.A. 18A:38-31.

2. Pupils Age 17 and Older



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If the first notice is unsuccessful in achieving pupil attendance, parents or guardians of pupils who are age seventeen (17) or older and adult pupils, shall be presented with a second notice requiring the pupil to attend school within three (3) days or be dropped from the attendance roll. If the second notice is unsuccessful, the pupil shall be dropped from the roll.

- a. Parents, guardians or adult pupils may appeal to the principal for readmission.
- b. Summer school credits will not be accepted.
- c. A withdraw/failure shall be entered on the permanent record for each course taken at the time the pupil was dropped from the roll.

E. EXCESSIVE ABSENCE APPEARANCE

Any pupil who is absent three (3) or more class periods from a health class, five (5) or more class periods from a physical education class, seven (7) or more class periods from a semester course, four (4) or more class periods from a quarter course, ten (10) or more class periods from a three quarter course, or thirteen (13) or more class periods from a year long course.

1. Pupils shall remain in class and continue to participate in the course.
2. On the (7th unexcused -Semester), (10th unexcused Three quarter) or (13th unexcused – Year long) day of absence from school or class, the vice principal shall notify the parents or guardians of the violation of the attendance policy, which will require a formal conference with the principal.
3. If the principal is completely aware of the absence circumstances because of communication with the family, and the number of absences is justified, the appearance may be waived.
4. The expected outcome of an appearance before the principal is to determine to which courses the "no credit" designation will apply, and to establish a number of additional days of absence, if any, which will be allowed before the opportunity for the student to attend a summer school program either at Sterling or another district if Sterling does not offer a summer school program.



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F. SEMESTER COURSES

For semester courses, pupils who are absent (unexcused) in excess of seven (7) class periods, will not receive Credit and must attend a summer school program or equivalent in order to earn the required credits for said course unless specific approval is granted by the school principal due to extenuating circumstances.

QUARTER COURSES

For quarter courses, pupils who are absent (unexcused) in excess of four (4) class periods, will not receive Credit and must repeat the course or attend a summer school program or equivalent in order to earn the required credits for said course unless specific approval is granted by the school principal due to extenuating circumstances.

YEAR LONG COURSE

For yearlong courses, pupils who are absent (unexcused) fewer than thirteen (13) class periods (under this policy) do not jeopardize their credit status. Pupils who are absent in excess of thirteen (13) class periods, will not receive Credit and must repeat the course or attend a summer school program or equivalent in order to earn the required credits for said course unless specific approval is granted by the school principal due to extenuating circumstances.

THREE - QUARTER COURSE

For three quarter courses, pupils who are absent (unexcused) fewer than ten (10) class periods (under this policy) do not jeopardize their credit status. Pupils who are absent in excess of ten (10) class periods, will not receive Credit and must repeat the course or attend a summer school program or equivalent in order to earn the required credits for said course unless specific approval is granted by the school principal due to extenuating circumstances.

NOTE: In health class, the 22 day mini-block pupils who are absent (unexcused) in excess of three (2) absences will not receive credit. In PE class, students who are absent in excess of five (4) absences will not receive credit.

G. PROCEDURES

Teachers are responsible for classroom attendance records and the determination of when a pupil has reached levels of excessive absence.



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1. Warning Notices

Within three (3) school days after the pupil has been absent three (3) times from a semester course, or two (2) times from a quarter course, six (6) times from a year long course, or four (4) times from a three quarter course, correspondence will be sent to the parents informing them of their student's potential "No Credit Status". The Vice Principal will also be notified.

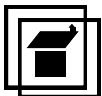
2. No Credit Assignments

Within three (3) school days after a pupil has exceeded the maximum absence level permitted by section B-1 of this policy, the vice principal shall mail a "No Credit" warning status notice to the parents or guardians and forward a copy to the pupil's guidance counselor. Prior to sending the notice:

- a. The vice principal shall examine the pupil record to determine if the level of absence warrants consideration of a "no credit" status.
- b. If the record reveals no mitigating circumstances, the vice principal shall require the pupil and parents or guardians to come to a conference where the consequences and implications of a "no credit" status will be explained and the pupil's attendance records will be reviewed to determine if a "no credit" status is appropriate. During the conference, the vice principal may agree to permit additional absence to accrue before assigning a "no credit" status, if circumstances warrant.
- c. If the pupil record reveals a number of verified, justifiable absences, the vice principal need not require a conference. In such cases, however, the vice principal shall communicate a concern over the excess absence to parents or guardians, or to adult pupils and shall designate the number of additional days of absence which will be permitted to accrue before a "no credit" status will be considered.

H. APPEAL PROCESS

To preserve doctrines of fairness and due process, pupils and/or parents/guardians shall have the following appeal rights:



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1. Request to meet with the principal and others to explain mitigating circumstances. The principal may grant or deny the appeal, but if granted, the principal shall establish the number of days which have been considered "mitigating". Additional absence exceeding that number will result in reassignment to the "no credit" status.
2. Appeals to the Superintendent must be made in writing within ten (10) calendar days.

NOTE: Appeal forms may be obtained from the General Office.

Adopted: 24 March 2011
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15 September 2016
17 October 2019
2 March 2023

