

2019

5660

Non-Instructional/Business Operations 1 of 4

SUBJECT: MEAL CHARGING AND PROHIBITION AGAINST MEAL SHAMING**School Food Service Program**

It is the District's goal to provide students with access to nutritious no- or low-cost meals each school day and to ensure that a student whose parent/guardian has unpaid meal charges is not shamed or treated differently than a student whose parent/guardian does not have unpaid meal charges.

Unpaid meal charges place a large financial burden on the District. The purpose of this policy is to ensure compliance with federal requirements for the USDA Child Nutrition Program and to provide oversight and accountability for the collection of outstanding student meal balances to ensure that the student is not stigmatized, distressed, or embarrassed.

The intent of this policy is to establish procedures to address unpaid meal charges throughout the District in a way that does not stigmatize, distress, or embarrass students. The provisions of this policy pertain to regular priced reimbursable school breakfast, lunch and snack meals only. Charging of items outside of the reimbursable meals (a la carte items, adult meals, etc.) is expressly prohibited.

All necessary staff will be trained annually on the implementation of this policy.

Applying for the Free/Reduced Meal Program/Parent Outreach

The District will send every family an application to enroll in the free or reduced-price meal program. In addition, the District will:

- a) Make every attempt to determine if the student is directly certified to be eligible for free or reduced-priced meals.
- b) Make at least two additional attempts (not including the application package) to reach the student's parent or guardian to fill out a meal application.
- c) Contact the parent or guardian to;
 - 1) Offer assistance with a meal application
 - 2) Determine if there are other issues within the household that have caused the child to have insufficient funds to purchase a school meal
 - 3) Offer any other assistance that is appropriate

The District may in accordance with 7 CRF 245.6(d) complete and file an application for a free or reduced-price meal for a student if the District becomes aware that a student who has not submitted a meal application is eligible for free or reduced priced meals.

The Liaison for Homeless Children and Youth will coordinate with the Food Services Department to ensure such students are receiving free meals in accordance with federal law.

Continued

2019

5660

Non-Instructional/Business Operations

2 of 4

SUBJECT: MEAL CHARGING AND PROHIBITION AGAINST MEAL SHAMING**Access to Meals**

- a) Free meal benefit eligible students will be allowed to receive a free breakfast and lunch meal of their choice each day. A la carte items or other similar items must be paid/prepaid.
- b) Reduced meal benefit eligible students will be allowed to receive a free breakfast and lunch of their choice each day. A la carte items or other similar items must be paid/prepaid.
- c) Full pay students will pay for meals at the District's published paid meal rate each day. The charge meals offered to students will be reimbursable meals available to all students, unless the student's parent or guardian has specifically provided written permission to the District to withhold a meal. A la carte items or other similar items must be paid/prepaid.

Prepaid Accounts

Students/Parents/Guardians may pay for meals in advance via myschoolbucks.com or with a check payable to Lewiston-Porter School District. Further details are available on the District's webpage at www/lew-port.com. Funds should be maintained in accounts to minimize the possibility that a student may be without meal money on any given day. Any remaining funds for a particular student will be carried over to the next school year.

To obtain a refund for a withdrawn or graduating student, a written or e-mailed request for a refund of any money remaining in the student's account must be submitted. Students who are graduating at the end of the year will be given the option to transfer any remaining money to a sibling's account through a written request.

Unclaimed funds must be requested within one school year. Unclaimed funds will then become the property of the District Food Service Program.

Charging School Meals/Snacks

It is the right of the District to receive compensation for food that is sold during the school year. **It is solely the responsibility of the parent(s)/guardian(s) to provide their child with a meal or the means to purchase a meal.** This funding may come through the state as reimbursement, which is why families are encouraged to fill out a free and reduced meal application to assess their child's eligibility for free meals. If students are not eligible for free meals, the payment for individual meals must come from the parent/guardian. This policy regarding school meal charges is in accordance with New York State child nutrition guidelines and is consistent with other districts in the area.

If a participating student does not have the money to purchase a meal, the student will be provided a reimbursable meal and no action will be taken against the student to collect unpaid meal fees.

In addition, **no snacks will be charged** and no snacks will be sold to a student who has a negative account balance. This policy applies to all paying students, whether they are paying full or reduced-price.

Meal Account Parent/Guardian Notification

The following protocols will be used to notify parents/guardians of accounts with low or negative balances:

Prepaid Meals	Elementary/Secondary
2 remaining meals	Food Service Manager will notify Administration. Administration will contact the parent/guardian.
1 remaining meal	Food Service Manager will notify Administration. Administration will contact the parent/guardian.
None remaining – first instance	Food Service Manager will notify Administration. Administration will contact the parent/guardian.
Exhausted - Letter will be generated by the Food Service Department and sent home to the parent/guardian.	Food Service Manager will notify Administration. Administration will contact the parent/guardian.

Minimizing Student Distress

- a) Staff will not publicly identify or stigmatize any student in line for a meal or discuss any outstanding meal debt in the presence of any other students.
- b) Students with unpaid meal charges will not be required to wear a wristband or handstamp, or to do chores or other work to pay for meals.
- c) Staff will not throw away a meal after it has been served because of the student's inability to pay for the meal or because of previous unpaid meal charges.
- d) Staff will not take any action directed at a student to collect unpaid meal charges.
- e) Staff will deal directly with parents/guardians regarding unpaid meal charges.

Continued

2019

5660

Non-Instructional/Business Operations

4 of 4

SUBJECT: MEAL CHARGING AND PROHIBITION AGAINST MEAL SHAMING

Delinquent Account Information

In the event that pre-paid meals have been exhausted, as indicated in the above chart:

- a) A letter will be generated by the Food Service Department and sent to the household which will include the amount to be paid for a \$0 balance, including an application for free/reduced price lunch.
- b) If full payment is not received within five (5) school days, the District Business Office will be notified of the problem.
- c) A call will be placed to the child’s home by the District Business Office when a child owes charges that have exceeded the limits outlined above.
- d) If repeated requests for payment are not answered and the student returns to school with no means to obtain a meal, the District may consider this a case of neglect. The matter will be turned over to the School Social Worker which may lead to a referral to the Niagara County Social Service Agency and/or the District may pursue payment in small claims court. Parents will be notified of such mandated action.

Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act of 2004, PL 108-265
 Child Nutrition Act 1966, 42 United States Code (USC) Section 1771 et seq.
 Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act 1946, 42
 United States Code (USC) Section 1751 et seq.
 Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, 29 United
 States Code (USC) Section 794 et seq.
 Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), 20
 United States Code (USC) Sections 1400-1485
 7 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Parts 15B, 210 and 220
 Education Law Sections 902(b), 915, 918, 1604(28), 1709(22), 1709(23) and 2503(9)(a)
 8 New York Code of Rules and Regulations (NYCRR) Sections 200.2(b)(1) and 200.2(b)(2)
 Social Services Law Section 95

Adoption Date: 10/15/2019

2019

7110

Students

1 of 8

SUBJECT: COMPREHENSIVE STUDENT ATTENDANCE POLICY**Statement of Overall Objectives**

The District is an active partner with students and parents in the task of ensuring that all students meet or exceed the New York State Learning Standards. The District recognizes that consistent school attendance, academic success and school completion have a positive correlation, and therefore, the District has developed, and, if necessary, will revise a Comprehensive Student Attendance Policy to meet the following objectives:

- a) Increase school completion for all students;
- b) Raise student achievement and close gaps in student performance;
- c) Identify attendance patterns in order to design attendance improvement efforts;
- d) Know the whereabouts of every student for safety and other reasons;
- e) Verify that individual students are complying with education laws relating to compulsory attendance;
- f) Determine the District's average daily attendance for State aid purposes.

Responsibilities of StakeholdersResponsibilities of School Personnel

All school personnel will encourage students to be in school every day and staff will maintain accurate attendance records. Attendance office personnel, working with school administration, are responsible for the maintenance of attendance records, notification to parents / persons in parental relation of student absences, and the promotion of good student attendance.

Responsibilities of Parents / Persons in Parental Relation

Parents / persons in parental relation of student are to call the Attendance Office when their child is absent or tardy. A message can be left on the answering machine by calling the child's school.

Responsibilities of Students

Students must attend school each day. A student who is absent is to provide a valid written explanation for the absence from his/her parent / person of parental relation. This is to be given to the appropriate school personnel upon returning. It is the responsibility of the student, working with their teacher, to make up all class work missed. The responsibility lies with the student to contact the teachers to determine what assignments have been missed and when they are due. Failure to make up missed work may negatively impact a student's overall progress or achievement.

Continued

2019	7110
Students	2 of 8

SUBJECT: COMPREHENSIVE STUDENT ATTENDANCE POLICY

Description of Strategies to Meet Objectives

The District will:

- a) Create and maintain a positive school building culture by fostering a positive physical and psychological environment where the presence of strong adult role models encourages respectful and nurturing interactions between adults and students. This positive school culture is aimed at encouraging a high level of student bonding to the school, which in turn should lead to increased attendance.
- b) Develop a Comprehensive Student Attendance Policy based upon the recommendations of a multifaceted District Policy Development Team that includes representation from the Board, administrators, teachers, students, parents and the community. The District will hold at least one public hearing prior to the adoption of this collaboratively developed Comprehensive Student Attendance Policy.
- c) Maintain accurate recordkeeping via a Register of Attendance to record attendance, absence, tardiness or early departure of each student.
- d) Utilize data analysis systems for tracking individual student attendance and individual and group trends in student attendance problems.
- e) Develop early intervention strategies to improve school attendance for all students.

Determination of Excused and Unexcused Absences, Tardiness and Early Departures

Based upon our District's education and community needs, values and priorities, the District has determined that absences, tardiness and early departures will be considered excused or unexcused according to the following standards.

- a) **Excused:** An absence, tardiness or early departure may be excused if due to personal illness, illness or death in the family, impassable roads due to inclement weather, religious observance, quarantine, required court appearances, attendance at health clinics, approved college visits, approved cooperative work programs, military obligations or other such reasons as may be approved by the Board.
- b) **Unexcused:** An absence, tardiness or early departure is considered unexcused if the reason for the lack of attendance does not fall into the above categories (e.g., family vacation, hunting, babysitting, haircut, obtaining learner's permit, road test, oversleeping).

Student Attendance Recordkeeping/Data Collection

The record of each student's presence, absence, tardiness and early departure shall be kept in a register of attendance in a manner consistent with Commissioner's Regulations. An absence, tardiness or early departure will be entered as "excused" or "unexcused" along with the District code for the reason.

Continued

2019

7110

Students

3 of 8

SUBJECT: COMPREHENSIVE STUDENT ATTENDANCE POLICY*Attendance shall be taken and recorded in accordance with the following:*

- a) For students in non-departmentalized kindergarten through grade eight (i.e., self-contained classrooms and supervised group movement to other scheduled school activities such as physical education in the gym, assembly, etc.), such student's presence or absence shall be recorded after the taking of attendance once per school day, provided that students are not dismissed from school grounds during a lunch period. Where students are dismissed for lunch, their presence or absence shall also be recorded after the taking of attendance a second time upon the student's return from lunch. For purposes of APPR and Teacher-Student Data Linkages (TSDL), classroom attendance for all students K-12 must be recorded on a subject by subject basis for Teacher of Record Determinations.
- b) For students in grades 9 through 12 or in departmentalized schools at any grade level (i.e., students pass individually to different classes throughout the day), each student's presence or absence shall be recorded after the taking of attendance in each period of scheduled instruction.
- c) Any absence for a school day or portion thereof shall be recorded as excused or unexcused in accordance with the standards articulated in this policy.
- d) In the event that a student at any instructional level from grades K through 12 arrives late for or departs early from scheduled instruction, such tardiness or early departure shall be recorded as excused or unexcused in accordance with the standards articulated in this policy.

A record shall be kept of each scheduled day of instruction during which the school is closed for all or part of the day because of extraordinary circumstances including adverse weather conditions, impairment of heating facilities, insufficiency of water supply, shortage of fuel, destruction of or damage to a school building, or such other cause as may be found satisfactory to the Commissioner of Education.

Attendance records shall also indicate the date when a student withdraws from enrollment or is dropped from enrollment in accordance with Education Law Section 3202(1-a).

At the conclusion of each class period or school day, all attendance information shall be compiled and provided to the designated school personnel who are responsible for attendance. The nature of the absence, tardiness or early departure shall be coded on a student's record in accordance with the established District/building procedures. A petition to Family Court, or other prescribed intervention strategies may result if a student under 16 years of age continues a poor attendance pattern.

Student Attendance/Course Credit

The District believes that classroom participation is related to and affects a student's performance and grasp of the subject matter and, as such, is properly reflected in a student's final grade. For purposes of this policy, classroom participation means that a student is in class and prepared to work.

Consequently, for each marking period a certain percentage of a student's final grade will be based on classroom participation as well as the student's performance on homework, tests, papers, projects, etc. as determined by the building administrator and/or classroom teacher.

Continued

2019

7110

Students

4 of 8

SUBJECT: COMPREHENSIVE STUDENT ATTENDANCE POLICY

Students are expected to attend all scheduled classes. Consistent with the importance of classroom participation, unexcused student absences, tardiness, and early departures will affect a student's grade, including credit for classroom participation, for the marking period.

The Board requires that students attend all scheduled classes every day. For students in grades K – 5, promotion to the next grade may be in jeopardy due to excessive absenteeism. As these students approach 28 days of absence for full year classes, written notification and interventions will be implemented. For students in grades 6 – 12, course credit may be denied if they accumulate 28 absences in a full year course or 14 absences in a half-year course and 10 absences in a 13 week course. Consistent with the importance of classroom participation, unexcused student absences, tardiness, and early departures will affect a student's grade, including credit for classroom participation, for the marking period. However, where a student earns a passing grade, credit will not be denied for the course(s). If a student identified as having a disabling condition by the Committee on Special Education does not meet the attendance requirements, he/she will be referred to the Committee on Special Education (CSE) before any other action is taken.

A student who is absent from school must provide a valid written explanation including date and a specific reason for the absence, signed by a parent / person in parental relation to the Attendance Office when he/she returns. A student who is absent for an appointment is encouraged to be in attendance for as much of the day as possible. ***A student who misses twenty minutes or more of a class period (50% of class time) is considered absent from that class.***

For students in grades 6 – 12, any student with excessive absences in a course may be denied credit for the course. For any absence, it is the responsibility of the student and parent / person in parental relation, working with the classroom teacher, to make up all missed assignments, assessments and class work within a reasonable time. Once a student has reached the maximum days of absence for a class, the teacher will cease to grade any papers from the student. If the teacher continues to collect and grade papers, the student may receive a grade for the course. The teacher should maintain a folder of collected work pending a possible review process. A student who violates the attendance policy must remain in class in order to receive instruction. Once a student in grades 6 – 12 has reached the maximum number of absences, that student must remain in class in order to qualify for admittance to summer school. A student in violation of the attendance policy may be removed for discipline reasons, such as interrupting the learning environment, pursuant to building discipline policy.

For summer school and courses meeting 1/2 year or 1/4 year, the same policy will apply and a calculation of the absences will be prorated accordingly.

Transfer students and students re-enrolling after having dropped out will be expected to attend a prorated minimum number of the scheduled class meetings during their time of enrollment.

Students will be considered in attendance if the student is:

- a) Physically present in the classroom or working under the direction of the classroom teacher during the class scheduled meeting time; or

Continued

2019

7110

Students

5 of 8

SUBJECT: COMPREHENSIVE STUDENT ATTENDANCE POLICY

- b) Working pursuant to an approved independent study program; or
- c) Receiving approved alternative instruction.

Students who are absent from class due to their participation in a school sponsored activity are to arrange with their teachers to make up any work missed in a timely manner as determined by the student's teacher. Attendance at school sponsored events where instruction is substantially equivalent to the instruction which was missed shall be counted as the equivalent of regular attendance in class.

Upon returning to school following a properly excused absence, tardiness or early departure, it shall be the responsibility of the student to consult with his/her teacher(s) regarding arrangements to make up missed work, assignments and/or tests in accordance with the time schedule specified by the teacher.

Notice of Minimum Attendance Standard/Intervention Strategies Prior to the Denial of Course Credit

In order to ensure that parents/persons in parental relation and students are informed of the District's policy regarding minimum attendance and course credit, and the implementation of specific intervention strategies to be employed **prior to the denial of course credit to the student for insufficient attendance**, the following guidelines shall be followed:

- a) Copies of the District's Comprehensive Student Attendance Policy will be mailed to parents/persons in parental relation and provided to students at the beginning of each school year or at the time of enrollment in the District.
- b) School newsletters and publications will include periodic reminders of the components of the District's Comprehensive Student Attendance Policy. Copies of the Attendance Policy will also be included in parent/student handbooks.
- c) At periodic intervals, a designated staff member(s) will notify, by telephone, the parent/person in parental relation of the student's absence, tardiness, or early departure and explain the relationship of the student's attendance to his/her ability to receive course credit. If the parent/person in parental relation cannot be reached by telephone, a letter shall be sent detailing this information.
- d) A designated staff member will review the District's Attendance Policy with students who have excessive and/or unexcused absences, tardiness or early departures. Further, appropriate student support services/personnel within the District, as well as the possible collaboration/referral to community support services and agencies, will be implemented prior to the denial of course credit for insufficient attendance by the student.

Notification Process

Procedures: Parents / persons in parental relation will be notified directly by school administration when a student's attendance has exceeded the following schedule:

Grades K – 5: Written notification will be given at 7, 14 & 21 absences. Written notification of possible retention will occur at 28 absences. With the progression of written notification, meetings will be established between parents / persons in parental relation and school personnel to discuss and implement strategies up to and including denial of grade level promotion.

Continued

2019

7110

Students

6 of 8

SUBJECT: COMPREHENSIVE STUDENT ATTENDANCE POLICY

Grades 6 -12: **For Full-Year courses**, written notification will be given at 7, 14 & 21 absences. Written notification of loss of credit will occur at 28 absences by certified mail. **For Half-Year (Semester) courses**, written notification will be given at 5 & 10 absences. Written notification of loss of credit will occur at 14 absences by certified mail. **For Thirteen Week courses**, written notification will be given at 4 & 7 absences. Written notification of loss of credit will occur at 10 absences by certified mail.

Notice of Students who are Absent, Tardy or Depart Early Without Proper Excuse

A designated staff member shall notify by telephone the parent/person in parental relation to a student who is absent, tardy or departs early without proper excuse. The staff member shall explain the District's Comprehensive Student Attendance Policy, the District's/building level intervention procedures, and, if appropriate, the relationship between student attendance and course credit. If the parent/person in parental relation cannot be reached by telephone, the staff member will provide such notification by mail. Further, the District's Attendance Policy will be mailed to the parent/person in parental relation to promote awareness and help ensure compliance with the policy.

If deemed necessary by appropriate school officials, or if requested by the parent/person in parental relation, a school conference shall be scheduled between the parent/person in parental relation and appropriate staff members in order to address the student's attendance. The student may also be requested to attend this conference in order to address appropriate intervention strategies that best meet the needs of the student.

Chronic Absenteeism

Chronic absenteeism is defined as missing at least 10% of enrolled school days in a year for any reason, excused or unexcused. Chronic absenteeism differs from truancy because it emphasizes missed instructional time rather than unexcused absences. Missed instructional time can increase a student's risk for disengagement, low achievement, and dropping out, among other things.

Students who miss at least 5% of enrolled school days in a year are at risk of becoming chronically absent. In light of this, the District will implement intervention strategies for students who miss 5% or more of the enrolled school days in a year.

Attendance Incentives

In order to encourage student attendance, the District will develop and implement grade-appropriate/building-level strategies and programs including, but not limited to:

- a) Attendance honor rolls to be posted in prominent places in District buildings and included in District newsletters and, with parent/person in parental relation consent, in community publications;
- b) Monthly drawings for prizes at each grade level to reward perfect attendance;
- c) Special events (e.g., assemblies, guest speakers, field days) scheduled on days that historically have high absenteeism (e.g., Mondays, Fridays, day before vacation);
- d) Grade-level rewards at each building for best attendance;
- e) Classroom acknowledgment of the importance of good attendance (e.g., individual certificates, recognition chart, bulletin boards);

Continued

2019

7110

Students

7 of 8

SUBJECT: COMPREHENSIVE STUDENT ATTENDANCE POLICY

- f) Annual poster/essay contest on importance of good attendance;
- g) Assemblies collaboratively developed and promoted by student council, administration, PTA/PTO and other community groups to promote good attendance.

Consequences

Unexcused absences, tardiness and early departures will result in consequences as described in the District's *Code of Conduct*. Consequences may include, but are not limited to, in-school suspension, detention and denial of participation in interscholastic and extracurricular activities. Parents/persons in parental relation will be notified by designated District personnel at periodic intervals to discuss their child's absences, tardiness or early departures and the importance of class attendance and appropriate interventions. Individual buildings/grade levels will address procedures to implement the notification process to the parent/person in parental relation.

Intervention Strategy Process

In order to effectively intervene when an identified pattern of excused absences, unexcused absences, tardiness or early departures occur, designated District personnel will pursue the following:

- a) Identify specific element(s) of the pattern (e.g., grade level, building, time frame, type of excused absences, unexcused absences, tardiness or early departures);
- b) Contact the District staff most closely associated with the element. In specific cases where the pattern involves an individual student, the student and parent/person in parental relation will be contacted;
- c) Discuss strategies to directly intervene with specific element;
- d) Recommend intervention to Superintendent/designee if it relates to change in District policy or procedure;
- e) Implement changes, as approved by appropriate administration;
- f) Utilize appropriate District and/or community resources to address and help remediate student unexcused absences, tardiness or early departures;
- g) Monitor and report short and long term effects of intervention.

Appeal Process

A parent/person in parental relation may request a building level review of their child's attendance record.

A parent/person in parental relation of a student who is in jeopardy of grade level promotion or has been denied course credit, may file for a case review with an administrator within 5 days of notification of possible retention or loss of credit. Students in grades 9 – 12, in certain instances, may file an appeal on

Continued

2019

7110

Students

8 of 8

SUBJECT: COMPREHENSIVE STUDENT ATTENDANCE POLICY

their own behalf. Parents / persons in parental relation and/or students presenting appeals should be prepared with proper documentation. *Parents / persons in parental relation and/or students in grades 6 –12 will be allowed to file one appeal per school year.*

Building Review of Attendance Records

The Building Principal will work in conjunction with the building attendance clerk and other designated staff in reviewing attendance records at the end of each term. This review is conducted to identify individual and group attendance patterns and to initiate appropriate action to address the problem of unexcused absences, tardiness and early departures.

Annual Review by the Board of Education

The Board shall annually review the building level student attendance records and if such records show a decline in student attendance, the Board will make revisions to the Policy and plan deemed necessary to improve student attendance.

Community Awareness

The Board shall promote necessary community awareness of the District's Comprehensive Student Attendance Policy by:

- a) Providing a plain language summary of the policy to parents or persons in parental relation to students at the beginning of each school year and promoting the understanding of such a policy to students and their parents/persons in parental relation;
- b) Providing each teacher, at the beginning of the school year or upon employment, with a copy of the policy; and
- c) Providing copies of the policy to any other member of the community upon request.

Education Law Sections 3024, 3025, 3202, 3205, 3206, 3210, 3211 and 3213
8 NYCRR Sections 104.1, 109.2 and 175.6

Adoption Date: 10/15/2019