

# NEW BEDFORD PUBLIC SCHOOLS

## Attendance Protocol and Procedures



*Every Day Counts!*



# NEW BEDFORD PUBLIC SCHOOLS

## Attendance Protocol and Procedures

### Table of Contents

Letter from the Superintendent	Page 3
General Attendance Information	Page 4
Attendance Protocol for Parent/Guardian	Page 7
Attendance Protocol for School Staff	Page 10
Sample Documents	Page 17
Glossary of Terms	Page 20
Attendance Protocol and Procedures Acknowledgement	Page 21

# NEW BEDFORD PUBLIC SCHOOLS

## Attendance Protocol and Procedures

Dear School Community,

Academic success can be achieved in many ways and being physically present in school every day is critical to future success. If a child is present and engaged, this will ensure that he/she is on the path to tapping into and maximizing their individual potential. We are working together to make school a memorable experience beginning in kindergarten and lasting through high school into post-secondary education and/or training.

We must work together to strengthen our bond and enhance our communication between the schools and families. Because as students grow older and take more ownership for their own learning, it is even more important that we emphasize the need to attend school daily.

**Absences:** Some absences we know are unavoidable due to health related issues or other serious circumstances. However, when students miss too much school—**excused or unexcused**—they can easily fall behind academically.

A chronically absent child, **missing 18 or more days**, is less likely to have academic success and will have social challenges as well. We know that chronic absenteeism in:

- **Kindergarten and 1st grade:** students are much less likely to read at grade level by the end of 3rd grade.
- **6<sup>th</sup> grade,** chronic absence is a proven early warning sign for students at risk for dropping out of school.
- **9<sup>th</sup> grade,** good attendance can predict graduation rates more than 8<sup>th</sup> gradescores.

### **School Engagement is Critical!**

We want all our children to be mentally prepared, physically ready and excited to learn each day. To help ensure that your child is ready each day here a few practical tips to help support regular attendance:

- Establish regular bed time.
- Develop a consistent morning routine.
- Prepare clothes and backpacks the night before.
- Ensure your children go to school every day unless they are truly sick.
- Do not schedule vacations or doctor's appointments during the school day.
- Communicate with teachers and counselors if your child has anxiety about going to school.
- Create back-up plans for getting to school in unforeseen circumstances.
  - Call on a family member, neighbor, or another parent to take your child to school.

Let us know how we can best support you and your children, so they can be in school and engaged in the lesson every day. Student success is our collective achievement. If you have any questions or need more information, please contact your child's school.

Sincerely,



Thomas Anderson, Superintendent

# NEW BEDFORD PUBLIC SCHOOLS

## Attendance Protocol and Procedures

### General Attendance Information

#### The Importance of School Attendance

There is a growing body of research that highlights the connection between school attendance and student achievement (Attendance Works, 2014). Our philosophy at New Bedford Public Schools is that we all own and impact school attendance. Everyone from our students' families, to the classroom teachers, front office staff, support personal, administrators, and all other school employees have an opportunity to positively impact the lives of our students. When a student is absent from school, they cannot learn at the same rate as their peers. Absenteeism puts the student at risk of falling behind and missing out on achieving critical learning objectives to be successful in the future.

Consistent and regular attendance in all classes, every day, is essential for student growth and life-long achievement. Regular school attendance is linked to higher graduation rates, lower drop-out rates, higher college attendance rates and higher paying jobs. It is therefore most important that a specific set of expectations be established to ensure a clear understanding of the conditions under which a student may have an allowable absence.

At the start of every school year, the New Bedford Public Schools Attendance Protocol will be distributed to all families in the NBPS district. A copy of this protocol will also be made available online on the New Bedford Public Schools website, [www.newbedfordschools.org](http://www.newbedfordschools.org). You may also find the link to this protocol in your school's handbook.

Research shows that students who attend school every day are more likely to graduate from high school, more likely to be ready upon high school graduation, and are more likely to be successful in their career. Students who miss school frequently are at greater risk for dropping out of school, incarceration, substance abuse and homelessness. The Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education defines chronic absenteeism as **"any student who misses more than 10% of school due to excused and/or unexcused absences"** (e.g. school is in session for 30 days and the student is absent a total of 3 or more excused and unexcused days). If a student is absent for 18 days out of the 180-day school year, this student is considered chronically absent by the DESE.

Tardiness is also detrimental to a child's education. A student who is 10 minutes late for school every day will end up missing 30 hours of instruction during the year, which equals a full week of school.

The New Bedford Public Schools is committed to helping all students reach their goals. Our school-based attendance teams work closely with school administrators, teachers, counselors, nurses and community partners to ensure students are attending school regularly and following school rules.

#### Role of Schools and School-Based Attendance Teams

All schools will monitor and analyze student attendance data and its impact on learning in order to build and support systems and relationships for improved school attendance. The attendance teams

# NEW BEDFORD PUBLIC SCHOOLS

## Attendance Protocol and Procedures

will work to ensure students are receiving the necessary supports and services in school to be successful.

School-based attendance teams will monitor data on tardiness and attendance, review at-risk students, develop action plans for students, and engage families, resources, and interventions to support the student. Teams will meet 1-2 times per month to discuss progress and/or barriers to improving the attendance and evaluate what changes to interventions, supports, or resources are needed. School-based attendance teams may consist of support personnel such as school adjustment counselors, administrators, and attendance officers.

### **Role of Attendance Officers**

School Attendance Officers support schools in improving attendance, minimizing habitual school offenses, preventing truancy, and intervening in cases of chronic absenteeism. School Attendance Officers are committed to the success of students, and maintain communication via telephone, letters, perform residency verification, consult with juvenile court, and make home visits with parents/guardians of children who have difficulty with attendance. Attendance Officers work with various community partners and agencies, such as the Family Resource Center and the Department of Children and Families, to offer support and assist families in ensuring their children are in school every day, on time. School Attendance Officers are mandated to take legal action if truancy continues and children are being denied a consistent and comprehensive education.

### **What is an excused absence?**

Excused absences may include:

- An illness or injury that prevents the student from attending school.
- A death in the immediate family (parent, sibling, grandparent, aunt, uncle, cousin) or other significant personal or family crisis.
- Court appearances: Students should present evidence of the requirement of the court appearance.
- Medical or psychological tests during the school day: The parent must show evidence (such as a note from the health center) that the tests could not be scheduled outside of school hours.
- Religious holy days: In order to accommodate the religious beliefs of students, such absences will be marked “constructively present” upon submitting a valid note signed by a parent or guardian.
- Visits to special education schools for students with disabilities.
- Dismissal from school by a nurse: If a nurse dismisses a student from school due to illness, this student is excused from school for 24 hours.
- Students of active duty personnel shall have additional excused absences at the discretion of the District for visitations relative to leave or deployment.
- Other situations: From time to time, situations over which the school, parent, and student have little, or no control may cause absences (for example, transportation that does not operate during inclement weather). These absences are excusable. The principal may determine that the student in this situation shall be marked “constructively present.”

# NEW BEDFORD PUBLIC SCHOOLS

## Attendance Protocol and Procedures

### Is a suspension considered an absence?

- Suspension from school is not an absence. In cases of suspension, the school will provide an opportunity for the student to maintain academic standing in school by being provided a list of assignments, homework, and tests. Students will be expected to use the time out of school constructively. Suspensions will be recorded as **constructively present (CP)**.

### What is an unexcused absence?

Unexcused absences may include:

- Family vacations: School vacations and holiday periods allow ample time for family vacations. Each absence for this reason is unexcused. School-based rules will regulate make-up work.
- Babysitting
- Skipping class
- Other situations: From time to time, situations such as “illness of members of an extended family,” or “conflicts with parents’ work schedule” may develop. These are viewed as unexcused absences.

### What is truancy?

- Students are considered truant by DESE when they have an unexcused absence

# NEW BEDFORD PUBLIC SCHOOLS

## Attendance Protocol and Procedures

### Parent / Guardian

#### Attendance Information and Impact

Parents/guardians have a legal responsibility to ensure their child is in school every day school is in session. It is a high priority for the New Bedford Public School District to monitor attendance and address the reasons why some students are chronically absent. In addition, it is the mission of the New Bedford School District to work with families and community partners to ensure students arrive at school on time, every day, ready to learn.

All absences must be verified with proper documentation. Failure to submit proper documentation will result in an unexcused absence. A parent/guardian note does not excuse an absence if the absence does not meet the criteria to be excused.

#### **State Law Chapter 76 sec 18. Regarding Attendance**

- The following Massachusetts state laws outline the responsibilities of parents and guardians for monitoring and preventing children's absences from school:
  - The Commonwealth of Massachusetts states that parents are required to ensure children between the ages of 6 to 16 attend school. (Chapter 76, section 19 of the MA General Laws)
  - Educational professionals are mandated to report to the Department of Children and Families (DCF) if they suspect a child is suffering from educational neglect.
  - If truancy persists, School Attendance Officers are mandated to file a Child Requiring Assistance application with Juvenile Court. If a student is in elementary school, a criminal complaint for Failure to Cause School Attendance will be filed against the parent. ([www.mass.gov/courts/selfhelp/family/cra.html](http://www.mass.gov/courts/selfhelp/family/cra.html))
  - Families that receive benefits under Transitional Aid to Families with Dependent Children are subject to specific attendance requirements.

#### **What do I do if my child is absent?**

A student must be in attendance at least half of the school day in order to be considered present. If the student arrives to school later than the times listed below, they will be considered absent:

*Elementary School: 11:30am (except Pulaski School)*

*Pulaski School: 12:00pm*

*Middle School: 10:55am*

*New Bedford High School: 10:57am*

*Whaling City Jr./Sr. High School/Trinity Day Academy/Parenting Teens Program: 10:10am*

Similarly, if students are dismissed with more than half the school day remaining, they will be considered absent. If a student is absent, they must submit a note of explanation for absences. Written explanations must comply with the existing school policy. The note must include the dates of the absence(s) and the reason for the absence(s). Additionally, it must be written in ink and signed by the parent/guardian. The teacher who takes the official attendance for an absent student must keep the note(s) on file.

# NEW BEDFORD PUBLIC SCHOOLS

## Attendance Protocol and Procedures

If your child is going to be absent from school, it is your responsibility to **call your child's school** and inform them that your child will not be present. You may find your school's phone number here:

<b>Elementary Schools</b>	<b>Phone Number</b>
Ashley Elementary	508-997-4511 Ext. 40550
Brooks Elementary	508-997-4511 Ext. 41550
Campbell Elementary	508-997-4511 Ext. 42550
Carney Academy	508-997-4511 Ext. 43550
Congdon Elementary	508-997-4511 Ext. 44550
Devalles Elementary	508-997-4511 Ext. 45550
Gomes Elementary	508-997-4511 Ext. 46550
Hathaway Elementary	508-997-4511 Ext. 48550
Hayden-Mcfadden Elementary	508-997-4511 Ext. 49552
Jacobs Elementary	508-997-4511 Ext. 47550
Lincoln Elementary	508-997-4511 Ext. 51550
Pacheco Elementary	508-997-4511 Ext. 52550
Parker Elementary	508-997-4511 Ext. 53550
Pulaski Elementary	508-997-4511 Ext. 54550 & 54551
Renaissance Community School	508-997-4511 Ext. 55550
Rodman Elementary	508-997-4511 Ext. 56550
Swift Elementary	508-997-4511 Ext. 57550
Taylor Elementary	508-997-4511 Ext. 58550
Winslow Elementary	508-997-4511 Ext. 59550
<b>Middle Schools</b>	<b>Phone Number</b>
Keith Middle School	508-910-0900
Normandin Middle School	508-985-4300
Roosevelt Middle School	508-961-3170
<b>High School and Other Schools</b>	<b>Phone Number</b>
New Bedford High School	508-997-4511 Ext. 20732 and 20730
NBHS Grade 9	508-997-4511 Ext. 20277
NBHS Grade 10	508-997-4511 Ext. 20278
NBHS Grade 11	508-997-4511 Ext. 20275
NBHS Grade 12	508-997-4511 Ext. 20276
Trinity Day Academy	508-997-4511 Ext. 28550
Whaling City Jr./Sr. High School	508-997-4511 Ext. 38550
Parenting Teens	508-997-4511 Ext. 34550

# NEW BEDFORD PUBLIC SCHOOLS

## Attendance Protocol and Procedures

**Parent / Guardian:**

**Template to Notify School of Child's Absence**

*Parents: This is a helpful template that you may use anytime you need to submit a note regarding your child's absence. Please refer to pages 5-6 for a list of excused absences.*

\_\_\_\_\_ (Street)

\_\_\_\_\_ (City) (Zip Code)

\_\_\_\_\_ (Home Telephone)

\_\_\_\_\_ (Date)

Dear Principal \_\_\_\_\_:

The purpose of this letter is to request that you excuse the absence of my child,

\_\_\_\_\_ (Name of Student), on \_\_\_\_\_ (Date(s) of Absence)

My child was absent from school for the following reason:

- An illness or injury
- A death in the immediate family
- Significant personal or family crisis
- Court appearance
- Medical or psychological test
- Religious holy day
- Visits to special education school
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Please provide a brief explanation: (Additionally please attach any medical or other necessary documentation).

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

I understand that he/she must make up any class work and homework missed as a result of this absence.

If you have any questions, I can be reached either at work \_\_\_\_\_ (Telephone Number) or at home \_\_\_\_\_ (Telephone Number)

Sincerely,

\_\_\_\_\_ (Signature of Parent/Guardian)

# NEW BEDFORD PUBLIC SCHOOLS

## Attendance Protocol and Procedures

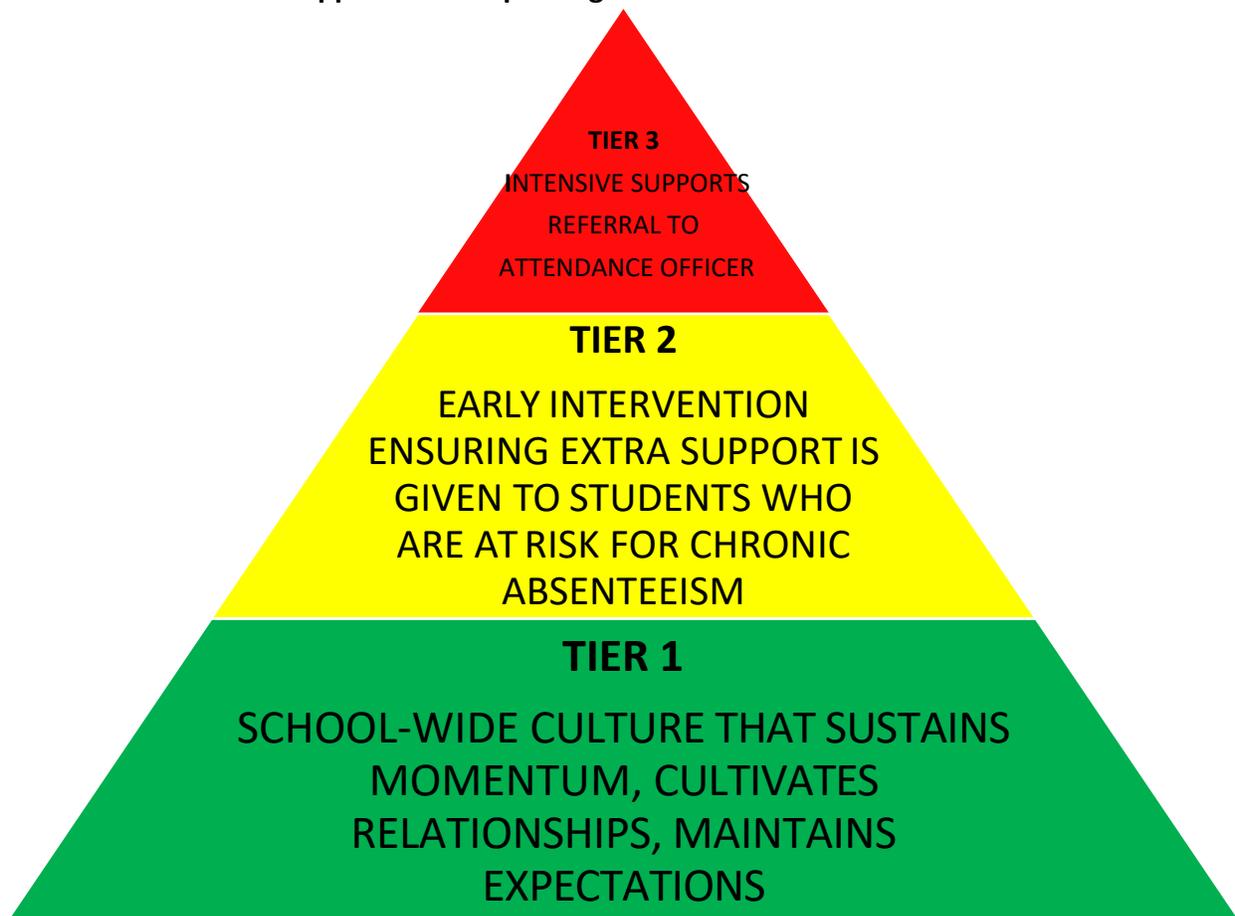
### School Attendance Framework and Practice for School Staff

#### Overview

Attendance is a key factor in the success of the students of New Bedford Public Schools. Consistent with ensuring attendance is the necessity of school staff to maintain accurate, timely, and appropriate referrals on the attendance of our students. Accordingly, all staff must recognize the importance of record keeping related to student attendance and achievement. The accuracy of data gathered in all phases of attendance-record management is central to the notification process for students and parents concerning penalties and rewards for certain attendance patterns.

Principals and Building Administrators bear the final responsibility for attendance in their schools and for ensuring that performance evaluations reflect the efforts of appropriate staff in meeting this important responsibility.

#### 3-Tiered Approach to Improving School Attendance and Tardiness



# NEW BEDFORD PUBLIC SCHOOLS

## Attendance Protocol and Procedures

### Sample School-Based Action Steps to Improving School Attendance and Tardiness

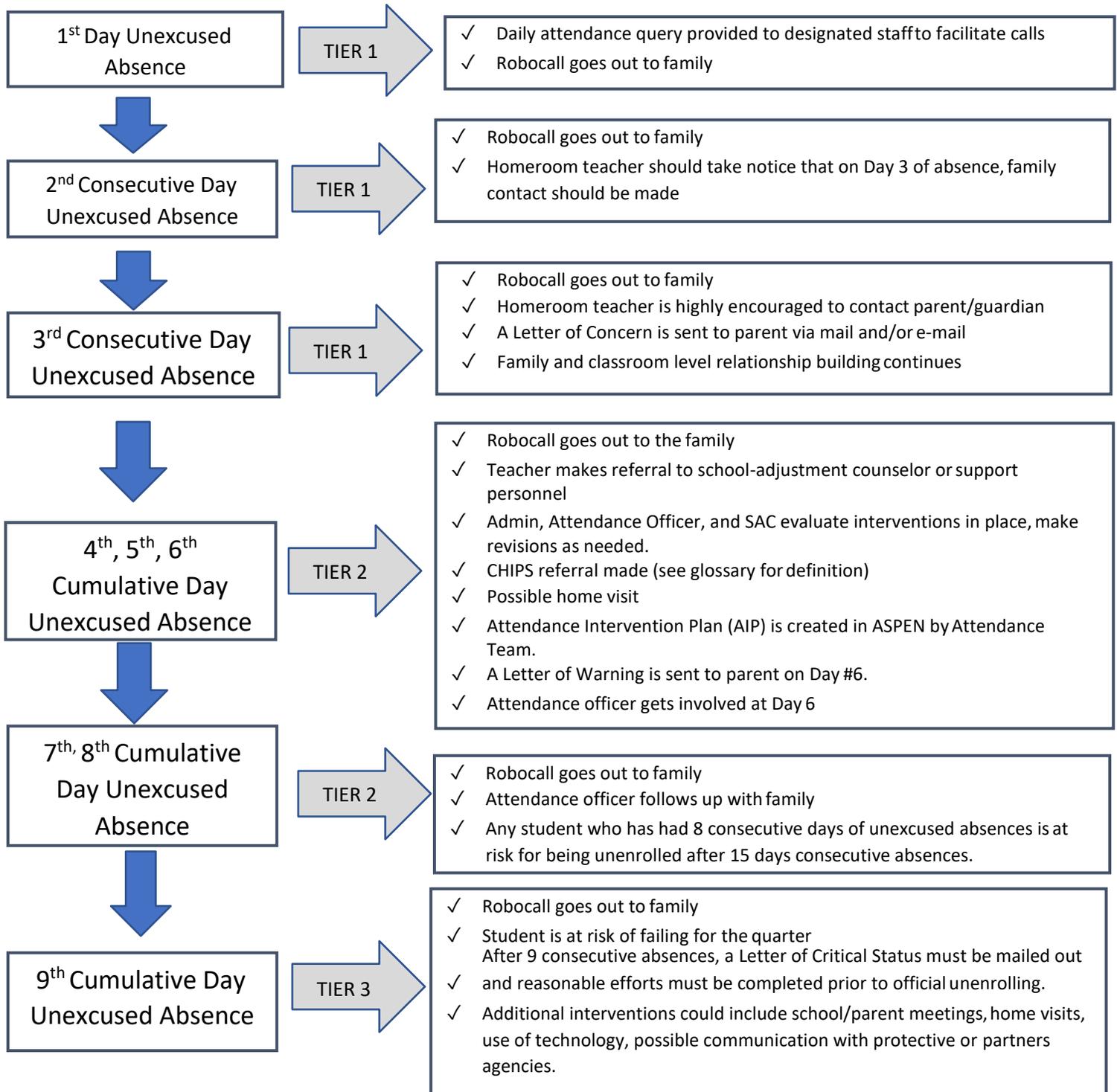
	<b>Tier 1</b>	<b>Tier 2 (in addition to Tier 1)</b>	<b>Tier 3 (in addition to Tier 1 &amp;2)</b>
Point of Contact	Teachers Administrators	Teachers School Adjustment Counselor Support Personnel Administrators	Attendance Officer School Adjustment Counselor Administrators Support Personnel
Monitoring Data	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Routinely - Review data on tardiness and attendance</li> <li>Identify which students, and how many, fall into the different tiers</li> <li>Establish a plan to improve the attendance</li> <li>Follow up on each absent day with a phone call (Robo Calls)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Routinely - Review attendance weekly for Tier 2 students</li> <li>Identify underlying causes for continued absenteeism</li> <li>Identify early intervention supports, or academic standing (i.e. nurse supporting medical needs/issues).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Routinely - Identify students who have chronic absenteeism</li> <li>Review attendance daily</li> <li>Identify academic standing</li> </ul>
Family Engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Send Letter of Concern</li> <li>Create and maintain a school climate that encourages students to come every day</li> <li>Focus on the culture of attendance (i.e. warm greeting in the morning, positive experiences in front office)</li> <li>Strengthen relationships with every student</li> <li>Inform parents of procedures for reporting an absence and the attendance policy</li> <li>Increase family engagement through culturally competent activities and opportunities to build relationships</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Send Letter of Warning and call to inform family about student's attendance/tardiness</li> <li>Work together to remove barriers</li> <li>Help parents understand that attending school is a law</li> <li>Teachers should reach out to the parents when student is absent</li> <li>Identify family needs, coordinate with Wraparound Coordinator</li> <li>Maintain contact with parents to ensure support is provided</li> <li>Identify academic needs and supports</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Send Letter of Critical Status</li> <li><a href="#">Referral form</a> is completed by SAC, Guidance, or Admin for Attendance Officer</li> <li>At least once per month, Attendance Officer meets with school attendance team (admin, support staff, etc.)</li> <li>Assess student and family needs, intensify outreach</li> <li>Communicate with family and Wraparound Coordinator to determine which community supports and services student is involved with</li> <li>Refer families as needed to additional community partners</li> <li>Maintain communication with family</li> <li>BBST referral</li> </ul>

# NEW BEDFORD PUBLIC SCHOOLS

## Attendance Protocol and Procedures

### School-based Procedures Unexcused Absences:

*\*Record ALL CONTACTS in ASPEN*



# NEW BEDFORD PUBLIC SCHOOLS

## Attendance Protocol and Procedures

### Establishing School-wide Incentives for Attendance

*New Bedford Public Schools are actively working to provide school-wide incentives for attendance. Positive rewards for attending school on-time everyday can be an effective way to improve school-wide attendance. Schools may adopt ideas like the ones below, or may implement other creative ways of engaging the school community in rewarding and incentivizing school attendance.*

- City-wide Champions Cup for schools with overall improved or excellent attendance
- School certificates awarded to students for excellent attendance throughout the month or year
- Extra “free” time, such as recess, homework passes, or time at the end of class for students with excellent attendance
- Interclass competition and a reward, such as a pizza party on a Friday, for the class with the best monthly attendance
- AttenDANCE: A dance open only to students with excellent attendance. A great way for students to encourage their peers!
- Recognition for improved, or excellent, attendance – not perfect attendance.
- Timeliness awards to reward students who show up on time to school, or who have improved in tardiness.
- Positive notes or phone calls home to families with students who have improved attendance
- Name on the “Attendance Wall” in the hallway or classroom
- Recognition during morning announcements

### Daily Acts to Improve Attendance School-wide

*Improving school-wide attendance is an on-going and daily process. There are many things that all school staff strive to do to improve school attendance:*

- Greet each student by name every day
- Aim to have every student feel connected to an adult in the school
- Inform students that when they are not in school, they are missed
- Ask students for ideas on attendance incentives
- Form positive relationships with students’ families with communication and engagement

**Please refer to your local attendance officer for additional positive attendance incentives.**

Resources from [www.attendanceworks.org](http://www.attendanceworks.org)

# NEW BEDFORD PUBLIC SCHOOLS

## Attendance Protocol and Procedures

### Protocol for School-Based Attendance Team Meetings:

*Attendance must be the focus of the school-based attendance team meetings!*

- One week (5 school days) prior to meeting, Attendance Officer sends Principal list of 10-15 highest need students (based on attendance)
  - Format of list: NAME, DATE OF BIRTH, TRU (Truancy) or HSO (Habitual)
- Principal then reviews list, makes any changes necessary with additional high need students
- Attendance officer collects data from ASPEN to support concerns
  - Note: ALL documentation of attendance and behavioral concerns MUST be recorded in ASPEN.
- Meeting Schedule:
  - Frequency: At least once per month
  - Length: 1.0 – 1.5 hours
  - Structure: First 1.0 hour, discussion of highest need students related to attendance
  - Structure: Remaining time may be spent discussing behavioral concerns
  - Attendance officers may print out and bring student profile from ASPEN to review needs and steps taken to ensure services and supports are in place.

### How Schools Record Extended Absences/Special Circumstances

- Verified medical reasons: The student should be recorded as absent, but if the student is receiving academic instruction during the excused absence, then the student should be recorded as constructively present (CP) on those days.
- Truancy: If the student is absent for an extended period of time and it is inexcusable, the student will be recorded as absent.
- Student is expected to be enrolled in school, but does not show up at the start of the school year: The student will be recorded as absent. If the student does not show up by October 1<sup>st</sup>, he/she will be unenrolled and recorded as a dropout. For students under 16 years of age, the student will be unenrolled. If the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) finds the student reported as enrolled in another district, the dropout will not be counted for the first district.
- Student has dropped out of school: Student should be reported as a dropout. If the student is younger than 16 years old, the student should be treated as truant (not a dropout).
- Student has moved to another city/town or state and as a result is no longer attending school in the same district and no documentation has been provided that the student has enrolled in school elsewhere: The student is reported as a dropout. If they return to school, or the school receives documentation that the student is enrolled somewhere else, the enrollment status will be corrected.
- Student receives in-school-suspension: Student is not recorded as absent, but rather in-school suspension (ISS).

# NEW BEDFORD PUBLIC SCHOOLS

## Attendance Protocol and Procedures

- Student receives out-of-school suspension: Student is recorded as absent, except for each day that they receive academic instruction from the district for more than half the school day, and is recorded as out of school suspension (OSS).
- Students who are suspended will remain enrolled.
- Students who are expelled and still receive instruction will remain enrolled.
- Student leaves MA public school system to attend an adult education program. The program leads to a high-school diploma, contingent on the state competency determination requirement: The student should be reported as a transfer to adult ed program.

**Schools must make reasonable efforts before unenrolling a student.** The following efforts are considered “reasonable efforts.” All efforts must be documented in ASPEN.

- Home visits, with a purpose of establishing a relationship with the family to determine barriers that lay in the way of attendance
- Certified mailings of respective letters
- Phone calls to families
- Should include all stakeholders and staff directly connected to the student as, but not limited to, staff that directly supports Special Education, English Language Learners, McKinney-Vento and any other appropriate staff and stakeholders that might be connected to the student and or family.
- Contacts to collaterals, such as:
  - Department of Children and Families
  - Community Partners
  - Service providers and counseling agencies
- Use of technology to contact student and/or family

**How a school documents when a student is at risk of unenrollment:**

- Any student who has had 8 consecutive days of unexcused absences is at risk of being automatically unenrolled after 15 days of consecutive absences.
- Referral to attendance officer must be made when a student is at risk of being automatically unenrolled
- Student is at risk of failing for the quarter at 8 unexcused absences.
- After 9 consecutive absences, a letter regarding risk of unenrollment must be mailed out and reasonable efforts must be completed prior to officially unenrolling.
- Please see attached Reasonable Efforts form for a full list of reasonable efforts to be made when a student is at risk of unenrollment.
- Principal must sign the reasonable efforts form **including documentation in Aspen journal** before final approve of unenrolling students. \_\_\_\_\_

Please [complete this Unenrollment form](#) to record reasonable efforts made.

Submit all responses to [unenrollment@newbedfordschools.org](mailto:unenrollment@newbedfordschools.org).

Final authorization to unenroll **MUST** be approved by Principal.

# NEW BEDFORD PUBLIC SCHOOLS

## Attendance Protocol and Procedures

### Sample District Letters



THOMAS ANDERSON  
SUPERINTENDENT

### NEW BEDFORD PUBLIC SCHOOLS

PAUL RODRIGUES ADMINISTRATION BUILDING  
455 COUNTY STREET  
NEW BEDFORD, MASSACHUSETTS 02740  
[www.newbedfordschools.org](http://www.newbedfordschools.org)

(508) 997-4511

*"We are committed to developing a community of learners who are academically proficient, demonstrate strong character and exhibit self-confidence."*

KAREN A. TREADUP  
DEPUTY SUPERINTENDENT

ANDREW O'LEARY  
ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT  
OF FINANCE & OPERATIONS

HEATHER EMSLEY  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF  
HUMAN CAPITAL SERVICES

KIMBERLI A. BETTENCOURT  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF  
SPECIAL EDUCATION & STUDENT SERVICES

SONIA WALMSLEY  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF  
EDUCATIONAL ACCESS & PATHWAYS

### **LETTER OF CONCERN**

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

Your child, \_\_\_\_\_, has a total of \_\_\_\_\_ unexcused absences.

This letter is sent to make you aware of these absences. Regular attendance at school is an important part of every student's success and is necessary in order to gain the greatest benefit from his/her educational experience.

Students who are frequently absent from school miss direct instruction and regular contact with their teachers. Massachusetts General Law (M.G.L. Chapter 76) and New Bedford Public Schools Attendance Policy require regular daily attendance. When absences accumulate, it may ultimately result in academic difficulty for your child.

In addition, we are reminding you that each absence must be accompanied by a written excuse. Only eligible excuses will result in an excused absence. If the written excuse is not received within three (3) days of the absence, then the absence becomes an unexcused absence or truancy. This may result in your child repeating his/her current grade.

Your child's academic success is important to us. Please contact the school by calling \_\_\_\_\_ and let us know how we can assist you in helping your child improve his/her attendance.

Sincerely,

Attendance Specialist

Cc: Cumulative Folder

Support Personnel

# NEW BEDFORD PUBLIC SCHOOLS

## Attendance Protocol and Procedures



THOMAS ANDERSON  
SUPERINTENDENT

### NEW BEDFORD PUBLIC SCHOOLS

PAUL RODRIGUES ADMINISTRATION BUILDING  
455 COUNTY STREET  
NEW BEDFORD, MASSACHUSETTS 02740  
[www.newbedfordschools.org](http://www.newbedfordschools.org)

(508) 997-4511

*"We are committed to developing a community of learners who are academically proficient, demonstrate strong character and exhibit self-confidence."*

KAREN A. TREADUP  
DEPUTY SUPERINTENDENT

ANDREW O'LEARY  
ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT  
OF FINANCE & OPERATIONS

HEATHER EMSLEY  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF  
HUMAN CAPITAL SERVICES

KIMBERLI A. BETTENCOURT  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF  
SPECIAL EDUCATION & STUDENT SERVICES

SONIA WALMSLEY  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF  
EDUCATIONAL ACCESS & PATHWAYS

### LETTER OF WARNING

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

Your child, \_\_\_\_\_, has a total of \_\_\_\_\_ unexcused absences.

Your child is currently in violation of the New Bedford Public Schools Attendance Policy. If this violation is not addressed, it may result in your child repeating his/her current grade.

In addition, we are reminding you that each absence must be accompanied by a written excuse. If the written excuse is not received within three (3) days of the absence, then the absence becomes a truancy.

To rectify this situation, please contact the school within five (5) days of the date on this letter and speak directly to the Attendance Specialist. Our district has additional supports and resources that are available to you and your family to support our shared goal of academic success for your child. We can discuss these supports when you contact the school.

Please contact: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

We look forward to hearing from you soon,

Sincerely,

Attendance Specialist

Cc: Cumulative Folder  
Support Personnel

# NEW BEDFORD PUBLIC SCHOOLS

## Attendance Protocol and Procedures



THOMAS ANDERSON  
SUPERINTENDENT

### NEW BEDFORD PUBLIC SCHOOLS

PAUL RODRIGUES ADMINISTRATION BUILDING  
455 COUNTY STREET  
NEW BEDFORD, MASSACHUSETTS 02740  
www.newbedfordschools.org

(508) 997-4511

*"We are committed to developing a community of learners who are academically proficient, demonstrate strong character and exhibit self-confidence."*

KAREN A. TREADUP  
DEPUTY SUPERINTENDENT

ANDREW O'LEARY  
ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT  
OF FINANCE & OPERATIONS

HEATHER EMSLEY  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF  
HUMAN CAPITAL SERVICES

KIMBERLI A. BETTENCOURT  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF  
SPECIAL EDUCATION & STUDENT SERVICES

SONIA WALMSLEY  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF  
EDUCATIONAL ACCESS & PATHWAYS

### LETTER OF CRITICAL STATUS

Parent/Guardian: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

**Your child, \_\_\_\_\_, has a total of \_\_\_\_\_ unexcused absences.**

Massachusetts General Law (M.G.L. Chapter 76) and New Bedford Public Schools Attendance Policy require regular daily attendance.

Your son/daughter has reached **CRITICAL STATUS** due to their number of unexcused absences, which means **he/she could be retained in his/her current grade.** To avoid grade retention or the filing of a civil action (specifically a CRA Truancy petition against your son/daughter) you must respond **within five (5) days** of this letter to schedule a conference with both you and your child.

Please contact: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

We look forward to working with you to improve your child's school attendance.

Sincerely,

Attendance Specialist

Cc: Cumulative Folder  
App. Support Personnel

# NEW BEDFORD PUBLIC SCHOOLS

## Attendance Protocol and Procedures

### Glossary of Terms

**Chronic Absenteeism:** Percent of students absent more than 10% of the days they are enrolled in school.

**Constructively Present (CP):** Excused absence due to religious holiday, inclement weather, verified medical reasons, or **academic work completed during a suspension.**

**Truancy:** When a student has an unexcused absence.

**Excused Absence:** When a student is absent from school for a pre-determined reason deemed appropriate by the school district (see page 5-6).

**Unexcused Absence:** When a student's absence does not meet the criteria for an excused absence (see page 6).

**In-School Suspension (ISS):** When a student is given a mandatory punishment in school during which the student should expect to learn and conduct all school activities under the supervision in ISS. Student will not be marked absent.

**Tardy:** When a student is late to school, they must arrive at school before half the school day is finished (for specific times, see page 8.)

**Out of School Suspension (OSS):** When a student is given a mandatory leave from school as a form of punishment. Students will be marked absent, except on the days when the student is receiving academic instruction to complete missed school work.

**Robocalls:** Robo-calls are automatic calls generated by the school system to notify parents that a student is not in school. Robocalls should be recorded in the voices of school attendance officers and should be delivered in multiple languages. If a student is tardy, a robocall will still go out to the family until the student is coded from "absent" to "tardy" in the system.

**CHIPS (Child In Need of Possible Services):** Team comprised of support personnel, which may include school guidance counselor, school adjustment counselor, and wraparound coordinator.

**Attendance Intervention Plan (AIP):** An Attendance Intervention Plan (AIP) is a tool to help families, students, and schools remain in communication about a student's goals for attendance during the school year. This plan is a working document, shared between school staff, student's family, and attendance officer. The Attendance Intervention Plan will be generated by the school-based attendance team after the student's 6th unexcused.

# NEW BEDFORD PUBLIC SCHOOLS

## Attendance Protocol and Procedures

### Attendance Protocol and Procedures Acknowledgment

I have read the New Bedford Public Schools' Attendance Protocol and Procedures and understand that my daily attendance is directly related to my learning and success. I further understand to achieve academic success I must not have excessive absences to school. I agree to communicate with my parent/guardian, teachers, counselors and/or staff if any issues arise that prevent me from attending school.

---

*Signature of Middle or High School Student*

*Date*

I have read the New Bedford Public Schools' Attendance Protocol and Procedures and understand that my child's daily attendance is directly related to their learning and success. I further understand to achieve academic success; my child must not have excessive absences to school. I agree to communicate with my child's teachers, counselor and/or staff if any issues arise that prevent my child from attending school.

---

*Signature of Parent/Guardian*

*Date*