SUMMARY
COMPREHENSIVE STUDENT ATTENDANCE POLICY

In accordance with state law and regulations it is the policy of the Pleasantville Union Free School District to ensure the maintenance of adequate attendance records verifying the attendance of all children at instruction and the creation of the means to examine attendance patterns so as to develop effective intervention strategies to improve student attendance.

It is the objective of this policy to encourage that each student attend school on time, for the maximum number of days and instructional periods possible. In furtherance of this objective, the District shall utilize strategies such as positive attendance incentives and appropriate disciplinary and other consequences, as well as the integration of attendance standards for the purpose of conferral of course credit.

Determination of Excused and Unexcused Absences, Tardiness and Early Departures

Based upon our District's education and community needs, values and priorities, the School 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, emergency medical and dental appointments, directed or authorized presence at the administrative offices or nurse's office, approved college visits (only juniors and seniors – prior approval of parents and counselors, not to exceed 4 days in a school year), approved cooperative work programs, military obligations, choral/instrumental sectionals, approved school-sponsored activities (including field trips, interscholastic athletics, musical and other competitions), scheduled absences that have evidence of an acceptable educational experience, or other such reasons as may be approved by the Board of Education.

Written excuse must be presented by the student on the day returning to school following such absences.

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, hair cut, obtaining learner's permit, road test, oversleeping).

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.

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 School District is not obligated to provide make-up tests or accept homework or other assignments from students who missed class due to an unexcused absence.

At the high school level, any student with more than 18 absences for a full year course and 9 absences for a semester course may not receive credit for the course. However, it is District policy that students with properly excused absences, tardiness and early departures for which the student has performed any assigned make-up work, assignments and/or tests shall not be counted as an absence for the purpose of determining the student's eligibility for course credit. An unexcused absence whether the work is made-up or not will count toward a student's eligibility for course credit. District procedures will specify how student tardiness and early departures will be calculated and factored into the District's minimum attendance standard.
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
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 within five (5) days. 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 letter, 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. Upon receipt of the letter, the parent should call the school.
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.

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.

Appeal Process

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