

THE HALLEN SCHOOL

Student Attendance Policy/ Procedures

Philosophy

Enrolled students are required by New York State Education Law to attend school on a daily basis unless they are legally excused.

Regular school attendance best serves an educational rather than a punitive purpose. Student attendance and academic achievement are strongly connected. By attending school regularly and punctually, a student can progress toward state and local learning standards, experience academic success, make progress toward achieving their IEP goals and objectives and become involved in a safe and stable learning community. All students and their parents should understand that regular, punctual attendance prepares students for successful employment. On the other hand, chronic absence often leads to dropping out of school and unemployment.

The Hallen School is committed to continuous improvement for both attendance and learning. To this end, teamwork is expected among students and their parents, teachers, administrators, other school staff and the community at large.

The following procedures are executed at the school:

Recording Attendance: Student attendance for the day must be recorded in ALMA on a daily basis. In grades 9–12 and in departmentalized schools (a school that is organized around academic subject departments) at any grade level, attendance also must be recorded for each period of scheduled instruction, via ALMA and by keeping a hard copy of attendance record in the attendance log book. Teachers are responsible for ensuring that accurate records of attendance are kept for each student on register. Hard copies of attendance log books documenting attendance must be kept on file at the school for 6 years after the student's expected date of graduation. The Principal must make these records available to those authorized to review, inspect, or audit them.

Recording Reasons for Absence: Hallen will make every effort to identify and document the reasons for student absences. Parents are expected to play an active and informed role in promoting their children's attendance and minimizing absences or lateness. When a parent anticipates an absence or lateness on any given school day, the parent is expected to inform school officials before the school day begins. Specific reason(s) for absence or lateness should be stated clearly and should be excusable. Excusable absences include personal illness, illness or death in the family, impassable roads or weather, religious observance, quarantine, required court appearances, medical or dental appointments, approved college visits, approved

cooperative work programs, or other reasons approved by the Commissioner of Education or the School Officials. All other absences will be defined as unexcused and will be considered truancy. If the school does not receive a call regarding an absence from a parent or guardian, a robocall will be sent home notifying a parent/guardian of the unexcused absence and request a call back. Once the parent calls to verify attendance, the reason for the absence is documented in ALMA.

District Contact: The student's respective school district will be contacted after 5 consecutive absences. A RDNA form (regarding student absence without establishing legal absence) will be sent to the district after 20 days of consecutive absences.

Recording Lateness/Early Departure: Hallen will keep records of late arrivals and early departures in accordance with school-defined policies. Lateness is defined as not being present in class and not being excusably accounted for at the beginning of the school day or at the beginning of any instructional period during the school day. A student who is marked late is considered present for the school day. No number of late arrivals constitutes an absence. A student is considered present for the day if s/he attends at least one instructional period. Frequent or unexcused lateness or early departures require the same follow-up and intervention procedures as absences.

Religious Accommodations: Schools must follow Chancellor's Regulation A-630 for recording early departures and excused absences due to religious observance.

Parent/Guardian Responsibilities: Hallen staff (attendance officer, counselor or administrator) will contact the parents of absent or tardy students when no advance notice of the absence or lateness has been provided. Emphasis will be placed on finding out why the absence or lateness has occurred. The student returning to school on the day after the absence must present a written excuse, signed by the parent or doctor, specifying the reason(s) for absence or lateness.

Ensuring Regular Student Attendance: Schools must establish and maintain a system for recognizing patterns of student absence. A student who misses the equivalent of 2 or more days per month, or 20 or more days in the school year, is considered chronically absent. The Hallen School team for the student will establish and implement specific interventions to reduce the number of times a student is chronically absent.

Attendance Coordinator: At each school, an attendance coordinator (administrator or pedagogue) is responsible for the overall operation of the school attendance program, under the supervision of the principal or his/her designee. This includes but is not limited to ensuring that student attendance is recorded accurately, all documentation is appropriately signed and available for review, parents are contacted following a student's absence, all documents related to attendance tracking are filed appropriately, and all

Attendance Incentives: Each year, Hallen will review and design a program to acknowledge and publicly celebrate efforts to improve attendance and sustain excellent attendance.

Consequences of Absence: A student's grades will not be reduced, nor will receipt of course

credit be denied, solely because of absenteeism, regardless of whether or not the reason is excusable. A student who is absent from school is responsible for all the work missed in class. During or after an excused absence, a student will be afforded reasonable opportunity to complete missed work, and the academic merit of such completed work will be reflected in course grades and credit. During or after an unexcused absence, a student may be denied an opportunity to make up uncompleted work associated with the absence. Failure to complete assigned work and/or to participate in classroom activities may serve as a criterion for course grades and credit. Non-academic sanctions such as loss of privileges or participation in extracurricular activities may be used to enforce attendance.

Incremental Interventions: Hallen will design and implement a program of incremental interventions to address substandard attendance and/or lateness to school or class. Each program will include, but not be limited to, the following:

- a) Levels of intervention that focus on removing barriers to regular attendance and progress incrementally from direct teacher involvement, to development of a comprehensive intervention plan, to legal recourse.
- b) Specific performance benchmarks for triggering interventions, with responsibilities assigned and specific steps outlined for each level of intervention.
- c) Provisions for School District and school site attendance/lateness policies and procedures to be explained orally and in writing to student and parents, with parent and student signature(s) required to verify commitment.
- d) Provision for maintaining verifiable personal contact with parents to engage their cooperation.
- e) Counseling that includes identification of root causes of absences or lateness.
- f) Opportunities for students to complete missed work either during or after an absence.
- g) An appeals process to ensure that all absences are treated equally and that there is accuracy and fairness in policy implementation.