

ATTENDANCE POLICY

I. Purpose/Statement of Objectives

Good attendance is a central component of the educational process. The project based learning program offered by Tech Valley High School (TVHS) is based upon student collaboration and requires continuity of instruction and classroom participation so students can successfully achieve State learning standards. This attendance policy will ensure adequate records by verifying the attendance of all children at instruction in accordance with Education Law 3205 and 3210. It establishes a mechanism by which the patterns of pupil absence can be examined to develop effective intervention strategies to improve school attendance and achievement. This policy governs TVHS students, not home district policy.

II. Strategies to be Employed

TVHS will employ the following strategies to ensure good attendance of all of its students:

- A. Development of this policy and appropriate record-keeping guidelines to ensure that the attendance of all students is tracked and analyzed.
- B. Development of procedures to intervene on the individual student level when a student's attendance record demonstrates a need for improvement.
- C. Development of a TVHS program to encourage good attendance and improve the attendance of all TVHS students.

III. Definitions

For purposes of this policy, any reference to "parent" or "parents" shall include person or persons in parental relation to the student.

IV. Excused and Unexcused Absences

A. Excused Absences or Tardiness/Early Departure. The parents are responsible for notifying the school in writing, by email, or by telephone to the school office, of the reason for their student's absences or tardiness/early departures. Whenever possible, parents are encouraged to contact the school, in writing or by telephone, prior to the absence. The following circumstances will constitute excused absences, tardiness or early departure:

- 1. Personal illness
- 2. Illness or death in family
- 3. Medical appointments

4. Court appearance
5. Incarceration
6. Religious observances
7. Quarantine
8. Supervised education project or TVHS sponsored activity
9. Approved cooperative work program
10. Military obligation
11. Pre-approved college visits for high school juniors and seniors
12. Inclement weather
13. Absence authorized by the home school district (including home school district closure or delay)
14. Suspension from school
15. Any other absence excused by the discretion of the TVHS principal or his or her designee

- B. Unexcused Absences or Tardiness/Early Departure. Absence, tardiness, or early departure for any reason not included in the list set forth in Section III-A, is an unexcused absence, tardiness or early departure. Absences, for reasons set forth in Section III.A, for which a student does not have pre-approval from TVHS or the student's home school district, or for which school was not notified in writing, by email, or by telephone of the reason for the absences within five (5) school days of his/her return to school, will also be recorded as an unexcused absence.

Parent requests excusing their child from school for reasons not included above (e.g., to take a driver's test, to get a haircut, to go shopping, to go on a family trip, oversleeping, car trouble or an unspecified reason) are unexcused absences or tardinesses.

V. Record Keeping:

- A. When Attendance Will Be Taken. Attendance will be taken as follows:

1. Attendance shall be taken each period. Each classroom teacher shall record the student's presence or absence in the applicable electronic attendance record.

- B. Content/Form of Attendance Records. TVHS maintains an electronic permanent register of attendance (“electronic attendance record”) for all students enrolled in instruction. Attendance will be maintained by each teacher in accordance with this policy. The electronic attendance record will be reviewed and updated, as necessary, on a building-level basis by the building principal. In accordance with Commissioner’s regulations, entries into the electronic attendance record shall be considered verified, as accurate, under oath or affirmation. The record shall include the following information for each student: name; date of birth; names of parents or persons in parental relation; address where student resides; phone number(s) where parent(s), or person(s) in parental relation can be contacted; date of enrollment; a record of the student’s attendance on each day of scheduled instruction recorded and coded as provided in the student management system and this policy; a record of each scheduled day of instruction during which the school is closed for all or part of the day due to extraordinary circumstances; and date when student withdraws or is dropped from enrollment.
- C. Absences, tardiness, and early dismissal. Absences, tardiness, and early dismissal will be recorded in the electronic student management system by coding whether the absence is excused or unexcused in accordance with this policy, and the reason for such absences, tardiness and early dismissal where excused.
- D. Contacting parents. In the event that a student is absent from school without a previous notification to the teacher or building principal, TVHS personnel or an electronic calling system will call the student’s home or the contact phone number listed on the student’s emergency contact form. If contact is not made with a parent a message will be left for the parent to call the school. Parents will be contacted regarding chronic absences, tardiness or earlier departures in accordance with Section VI. of this policy.

VI. Rewards for Good Attendance, Contacting Parents, and Receipt of Course Credit

- A. Rewards for Good Attendance. In addition to the likelihood of enhanced educational progress, good attendance will be the basis for student recognition awards or other incentives. Any student who exhibits exemplary attendance as determined by the TVHS principal will be eligible for good attendance recognition. In addition, incentives for improving student attendance will be considered during program reviews and at faculty meetings as appropriate. Good attendance will be a positive endorsement factor in any letter of recommendation written by a school employee.
- B. Contacting Parents. Chronic absences and tardiness, are disruptive to the educational process. The following procedures will be used to address excessive absences.
1. 3 days consecutive unexcused absence with no parent response – contact home school, with a request to attempt contact with parent.
 2. 5 days absent – conference with student and email sent home, with copy to home school district
 3. 10 days absent– formal letter to parents and request to conference, with a copy to the home school district.
 4. 15 days absent – letter to parents and follow-up contact with home school CSE or principal advising that student could be at academic risk. Parents will be requested to discuss the student’s absences.
 5. 20 days absent – letter to parents and follow–up contact with home school CSE or principal advising that absences will be referred to appropriate social services entities for educational neglect proceedings and that student may be at academic risk.
 6. 25 days absent – TVHS will contact appropriate social services entities for referral to PINS.
- C. Additional Attendance Considerations. Certain courses offered at TVHS have strict attendance requirements for the purposes of meeting college attendance requirements. Teachers of such programs shall notify the principal when any student is at risk of failing to complete their required program hours. Parents of such students shall be notified by that the student is at risk of failing to complete their required program hours. Parents will be provided the opportunity to meet with TVHS staff to discuss the student’s absences.

- D. Course credit. TVHS believes that there is a correlation between good attendance and active participation in the classroom with academic success. When students successfully complete courses, TVHS recommends that credit be granted by the student's home school district. Students and parents should be aware of any policies of their home school district relating to attendance and awarding course credit. Unexcused tardiness and absences will also subject a student to the range of penalties specified in the TVHS Code of Conduct.

VII. Development of an Attendance Intervention Strategy:

- A. Each principal or designee shall review pupil attendance records and consult with guidance counselors and other staff members as appropriate to identify patterns of unexcused absences, tardiness or early departures, and to initiate appropriate action at the building level to address these patterns.
- B. TVHS shall, through a committee composed of the principal, teachers and other staff designated by the principal, review quarterly building level attendance records and develop an attendance intervention strategy consistent with this policy in the event that these attendance records suggest that overall student attendance is declining, or should be improved. The TVHS principal shall make an annual report to the District Superintendents and the Operating Board, which shall include, where appropriate, recommendations for revision of this policy.

VIII. Policy Review and Assessment

This policy shall be reviewed annually by the Operating Board after the annual report is made to the District Superintendents, as provided in paragraph VII, above. If the attendance records show a decline in attendance, the Board shall revise this policy as is necessary to improve attendance.

IX. Distribution and Public Awareness:

- A. Public Meeting. This Policy shall be adopted only after it has been presented at a public meeting of the Operating Board, duly noticed, that provides for the participation of school personnel, parents, students, and any other interested persons.
- B. Plain Language Summary. A plain language summary of this Policy shall be distributed to parents and persons in parental relationship to all TVHS students at the beginning of each school year.

- C. Distribution to Staff. Each teacher and administrator shall be notified that this Policy is available on the TVHS website. Additionally, each new teacher or administrator shall be provided with a copy of this Policy upon employment.

- D. This Policy shall be published on the TVHS website and a copy will be made available to any member of the community upon request.

References: Education Law, sections 3205 and 3210
8 NYCRR 104.1

ADOPTED: