

Shrewsbury Borough School

20 Obre Place

Shrewsbury, New Jersey 07702

Brent A. MacConnell
SUPERINTENDENT

(732)747-0882

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October 24, 2014

Dear Parent/Guardian:

I have recently received some updated information and guidance regarding our district's attendance policy from the New Jersey Department of Education. Up to this point, I have received numerous inquiries regarding the changes that the NJDOE required every district to make for the start of the school year. I have tried to interpret and implement these changes as directed despite their impact on all of our students and parents. The NJDOE has reversed its mandated changes for Policy & Regulation #5200 Attendance. For this school year, we have adopted a new and revised Policy & Regulation #5200 Attendance that is almost identical to our previous policy from last year.

I would like to thank you in advance for your understanding and cooperation throughout the year as you ensure the regular attendance of your child or children and for your efforts to document their absences from school. It is important that you call the absence line at (732) 747-0882, extension #259 to report the absence or late arrival of your child or children.

Please note that calling the school to report a student absence does not make an absence "excused." We rely on the system of parent/guardian reporting to ensure that we have complete accountability for all of our students. If students are not reported as "absent", the school will contact a parent/guardian immediately to ensure that no child's safety or well-being is in doubt. While this is an extra step for parents/guardians, it helps to ensure that your child is safe at all times.

According to our policy, a student will be considered to have attended school if he/she has been present at least four hours during the school day.

According to our policy, an "excused absence" is a student's absence from school for a full day or a portion of a day for one or more of the following reasons:

- a. The student's illness, (supported by a doctor's note);
- b. Family illness or death, (supported by a written letter from the parent);
- c. Excused religious observances, pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:36-14 through 16;
- d. Take Your Child to Work Day;
- e. Where appropriate, when consistent with Individualized Education Programs, the Individuals with Disabilities Act, accommodation plans under 29 U.S.C. 794 and 705(20), and individualized health care plans;
- f. The student's suspension from school;
- g. The student's required attendance in court;
- h. Necessary and unavoidable medical or dental appointments that cannot be scheduled at a time other than the school day (supported by a doctor's note), and
- i. An absence for a reason not listed above, but deemed excused by the Superintendent, upon a written request by the student's parent or legal guardian to the Building Principal or designee stating the reason for the absence and requesting permission for the absence to be an excused absence.

Please note that students will be excused to visit high schools, academic programs, or to take entrance exams to attend high school. Family vacations will not be considered excused under any circumstances.

Students with excused absences will not be considered for perfect attendance awards at the end of the school year.

Please understand that all documentation submitted and held on file in the main office from September 4th through today will be utilized to update your student's attendance records once the necessary program changes have been made to our Attendance Student Database.

If you believe that your child's absence is an excused absence, please forward a note or some type of documentation to the school within 48 hours of the reported absence so that the school secretary can accurately record your child's attendance.

If you should have any questions about our attendance policy, please contact me directly.

Sincerely,

Brent A. MacConnell
Brent A. MacConnell
Superintendent