

ATTENDANCE POLICY

I. Purpose/Statement of Objectives

Good attendance is a central component of the educational process. The educational program offered by Questar III is based upon student presence and requires continuity of instruction and classroom participation so students can successfully achieve State learning standards. This Board of Education 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.

II. Strategies to be Employed

Questar III 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 Questar III program to encourage good attendance and improve the attendance of all Questar III 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 Questar III 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 District Superintendent 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 Questar III 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. Non-departmentalized attendance shall be taken at the beginning of the school day or, for half-day programs, at the beginning of the school session. Each classroom teacher shall record the student's presence or absence in the applicable electronic attendance record. If any student is dismissed to be mainstreamed in another class, attendance will be taken again upon return to the Questar III classroom.

2. Departmentalized attendance shall be taken at the beginning of each period of scheduled instruction. Each classroom teacher shall record the student's presence or absence in a classroom record, and shall report all absences or tardiness in the applicable electronic attendance record. For Special Education students who are mainstreamed, attendance policy of the host school will be followed for the period during which the student is in the host school's classrooms.
 3. For all Questar III programs, late arrivals and early departures from school will be entered into the appropriate attendance system in accordance with the program's sign-in/sign-out system.
- B. Content/Form of Attendance Records. Questar III 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, Questar III personnel or an electronic calling system may 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 Questar III principal will be eligible for good attendance recognition or for rewards under the applicable building level positive behavioral incentive system (PBIS), where utilized. 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. 5 days unexcused absents – phone call to parents and contact with home school CSE, where appropriate.
 2. 10 days unexcused absences– letter to parents.
 3. 15 days unexcused absents – letter to parents and follow-up contact with home school CSE or principal advising that student could be at academic risk. Parents may be provided the opportunity to meet with Questar III staff to discuss the student’s absences.
 4. 20 days unexcused absents – letter to parents and follow–up contact with home school CSE or principal advising that absences may be referred to appropriate social services entities and that student may be at academic risk.
 5. 25 days unexcused absents – Questar III may contact appropriate social services entities for referral to PINS or educational neglect proceedings.
- C. Additional Attendance Considerations. Certain career and technical programs provided by Questar III have strict attendance requirements for the purposes of meeting the applicable pre-licensing training requirements. Additionally, students seeking to earn a Career Development and Occupational Studies (CDOS) Commencement Credential must complete and document work and community-based learning experiences. These “hours based” programs require that, in addition to and apart from attendance records, teachers of such programs maintain a record of time in program for each student. 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 letter that the student is at risk of failing to complete their required program hours. Parents may be provided the opportunity to meet with Questar III staff to discuss the student’s absences.

- D. Course credit. Questar III believes that there is a correlation between good attendance and active participation in the classroom with academic success. When students successfully complete courses, Questar III 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. Students seeking to earn a Career Development and Occupational Studies (CDOS) Commencement Credential must complete and document work and community-based learning experiences as described in subdivision C., above.
- E. Unexcused tardiness and absences will also subject a student to the range of penalties specified in the Questar III 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.
- B. The Assistant Superintendent(s) responsible for oversight of the Questar III instructional programs shall, through a committee of teachers, and school administrators, review no less than annually 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. Such Assistant Superintendent(s) shall make a report to the District Superintendent, which shall include, where appropriate, recommendations for revision of this policy.

VIII. Policy Review and Assessment

This policy shall be reviewed annually by the Board of Education after the annual report is made to the District Superintendent, 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 Board of Education, 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 Questar III 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 Questar III 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 Questar III 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: 7/2/02
AMENDED: 6/11/15