



Colts Neck Township Schools

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January 2, 2019

Dear Colts Neck Families,

Welcome back and Happy New Year! I sincerely hope you enjoyed the winter break. With our return, I would like to take this opportunity to share an important reminder about your child(ren)'s attendance and how absences are documented and reported to the State.

The Colts Neck Township School District is committed to working with parents/guardians to uphold high standards for regular attendance in accordance with N.J.S.A. 18A:38-27 and New Jersey Administrative Code 6A:16-7.6 and 6A: 32-8. In order to meet these standards, law requires that a student must be present at school for four or more hours in order for the child to be considered "present." The purpose of this letter is to provide information about mandatory absentee reporting procedures and classifications. Please be advised that while district administrators remain committed to providing individualized attention and consideration to all students' absences, the district must adhere to certain statutory guidelines when it comes to recording and reporting absences. The district maintains three classifications for recording absences: excused, school district excused, and unexcused.

Excused Absence:

Effective September 2017, the district made changes in Genesis to reflect mandatory State attendance rules and regulations for students in New Jersey public schools. Colts Neck Township Board of Education Policy & Regulation 5200 - **ATTENDANCE** reflects the New Jersey Department of Education's classification of **all** student absences as "unexcused" unless it meets one of the following State-approved exceptions:

- Religious observance (N.J.A.C. 6A:32-8.3(h));
- A college visit (up to 3 days per school year, only for students in grades 11 and 12);
- "Take Our Children to Work Day"
- Participation in observance of Veterans Day (N.J.S.A. 18A:36-13.2) or district board of election membership activities (N.J.S.A. 18A:36-33); or
- The closure of a busing district that prevents a student from having transportation to the receiving school.

What does this mean for my child? If your child is absent for one of the five reasons listed above, your child will be marked with an "excused absence". *These absences **will not** count toward truancy, nor chronic absenteeism totals.*

School District Excused:

A student who is absent for a full day with a *school district excused* absence pursuant to the school district's definition of "excused" must be recorded as absent for that day, with an internal/school recording keeping notation of "excused". Your child's principal will review and consider school district excused notations for determinations of truancy; however, a school district excused absence **will count** toward chronic absenteeism.

As per Board of Education Regulation 5200 - **ATTENDANCE**, some examples of school district excused absences that still count toward chronic absenteeism calculations (as defined by the State) are as follows:

- The student's illness: supported by a written letter from the parent upon student's return to school;
- The student's illness: supported by notification to the school by the student's parent;
- The student's suspension from school; and
- Family illness or death.

What does this mean for my child? A school district excused absence that is not one of the State - excused reasons listed above, **will count** as an absence in the determination of whether the student was chronically absent for the year, but will be given consideration in the determination of truancy.

Unexcused Absences and Truancy:

Board of Education Regulation 5200 - **ATTENDANCE** defines truancy as follows:

Truancy means ten or more cumulative unexcused absences that count toward truancy of a student between the ages of six and sixteen as determined by the Board's Attendance Policy and Regulation pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:16-7.6(a)4.iii. and the definition of school day pursuant to N.J.A.C. 6A:32-8.3. Any absence not listed as a State exemption above shall be an unexcused absence counted toward truancy.

What does this mean for my child? Absence reasons that are not listed in Board of Education Regulation 5200 - **ATTENDANCE**, **will count** as unexcused absences and be included within cumulative totals when determining truancy **and** chronic absenteeism. Please note, absence totals are cumulative and do not have to be consecutive.

By making your child's school attendance a priority, you will be taking an important step in supporting your child's school success, and setting a good example.

The New Jersey School Performance Report contains both district and school information regarding chronic absenteeism. Information about the district's absences are provided at the end of each school year in accordance with statutory reporting requirements. This information is then translated and incorporated into Colts Neck Township's Performance Report.

Should you like to review the complete New Jersey Department of Education's guidelines regarding attendance, please visit: <http://www.state.nj.us/education/students/safety/behavior/attendance/>

If you have any questions or concerns about your child's attendance record, please feel free to contact your child's principal.

Educationally yours,

MaryJane Garibay, Ed.D.
Superintendent of Schools